

Caribbean Examinations Council



CSEC[®] Modern Languages

**SYLLABUS
SUBJECT REPORTS**

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CSEC® Modern Languages Free Resources

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Modern Languages

The Modern Languages Syllabus focuses on developing students' ability to communicate in two of the languages in use in the Caribbean region. As students develop the competence to listen, speak, read and write in French and Spanish and interpret aspects of the culture in which the languages are embedded, they acquire the means to facilitate deeper interaction with our Caribbean neighbours.

The syllabus is organised around three main concepts: Functions and Notions, Settings and Topics, and Grammar and Lexis. In the syllabus, emphasis is placed on the students' ability to use the target language in a functional way. Therefore, the basic functions needed for communication are identified. Functions, however, are performed in particular contexts and, therefore, the settings in which the functions are likely to be performed are identified.

The approach used in organising the syllabus seeks to shift attention away from a purely structural approach to a more communicative one. It is expected that students following this syllabus will be able to carry out these functions in the target language based on the following topics: Home and Family, School and Career, Sports and Recreation, Daily Routines, Shopping and Travel.



CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate
CSEC®**

MODERN LANGUAGES SYLLABUS

Effective for examinations from May/June 2007

Including 2007 amendments



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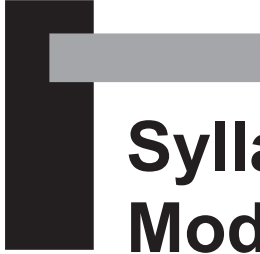
The Modern Languages Syllabus (CXC 27/0/SYLL 96) was revised in 2005 for first examination in 2007.

Teaching is expected to commence on the revised syllabus in September 2005.

The amendments to the syllabus
are indicated by italics.

Please check the website, www.cxc.org for updates on CXC's syllabuses.





Syllabus for Examinations in Modern Languages

◆ RATIONALE

Language and communication are central to our everyday interactions. Global trends and technological advances have reduced distances, bringing nations and languages into our homes, connecting us with every part of the globe and increasing opportunities for trade, travel and employment. This syllabus will contribute to the development of the Ideal Caribbean Person as articulated by the CARICOM Heads of Government through the exploration of beliefs, values and behaviors, students develop respect for human life, cultural heritage and the environment thus enabling them to view the target culture from a perspective of informed understanding.

Language must be seen as integrally linked to culture. The study of French and Spanish provides an opportunity for Caribbean students to develop an understanding and appreciation of the cultural and historical contexts of Caribbean societies. Students will acquire certain skills, attitudes and knowledge that will contribute to their growing understanding of themselves and their environment. Students develop multiple literacies and independent and critical thinking in the context of foreign language learning and in keeping with the UNESCO Pillars of Learning.

The Modern Languages syllabus focuses on developing students' ability to communicate in two of the languages in use in the Caribbean region. As students develop the competence to listen, speak, read and write in French and Spanish and interpret aspects of the culture in which the languages are embedded, they acquire the means to facilitate deeper interaction with our Caribbean neighbours. The topics selected for the syllabus reflect areas of interest to secondary school students. Language learning, therefore, provides an opportunity for students to compare their own experiences with those of their peers in Francophone and Hispanic Caribbean countries.

In designing the syllabus care has been taken to ensure that it reflects current trends in the teaching and assessment of modern languages at the secondary level. Ultimately, students will be equipped to meet the needs of living, studying and working in a multilingual region and in a culturally and linguistically diverse world.

◆ AIMS

The syllabus aims to:

1. *encourage the acquisition of fundamental language skills needed to function successfully in practical everyday situations requiring the use of the target language(s);*
2. *develop an understanding of the standard spoken and written forms of French and Spanish;*

3. *encourage communication in French and Spanish in a manner acceptable to native speakers;*
4. *encourage students to appreciate their own culture and those of their neighbouring Francophone and Hispanic countries;*
5. *develop a foundation for further study and the world of work.*

◆ **GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF THE SYLLABUS**

On completion of the syllabus, students should:

1. *understand and respond appropriately to spoken French and Spanish from a variety of sources;*
2. *communicate orally in French and Spanish in everyday situations;*
3. *elicit and provide opinions and information;*
4. *express ideas and emotions;*
5. *read and understand material written in French and Spanish;*
6. *communicate appropriately and accurately in writing in French and Spanish;*
7. *develop insight into the cultures of the Francophone and Hispanic peoples of the region.*

The General Objectives may be grouped under the following headings:

1. RECEPTIVE

On completion of the syllabus, students should:

- (i) *understand the language as spoken clearly and simply;*
- (ii) *understand the language as written in selected or adapted texts.*

2. PRODUCTIVE

On completion of the syllabus, students should speak and write the language in a manner that is understood by the native speaker.

◆ SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE SYLLABUS

Students should be able to:

1. *respond appropriately to spoken forms of French and Spanish in everyday situations, for example, questions and directions;*
2. *identify the main points of a conversation and a continuous passage;*
3. *use appropriate pronunciation and intonation when reading in French and Spanish;*
4. *respond appropriately to simple written statements and instructions in French and Spanish in everyday situations, for example, questions and directions;*
5. *answer questions based on a continuous passage or dialogue, factual reports, written explanations, or other graphic stimuli;*
6. *respond appropriately to written material in French and Spanish using everyday situations;*
7. *give explanations, directions and descriptions;*
8. *request explanations, directions and descriptions;*
9. *participate in conversations based on everyday topics;*
10. *respond orally in everyday situations in a manner acceptable to native speakers;*
11. *express ideas at a level of linguistic accuracy acceptable to a native speaker;*
12. *write simple information and statements related to practical everyday situations;*
13. *write simple information and statements relevant to students' experiences;*
14. *express ideas and opinions in continuous writing in French and Spanish, for example, in compositions, letters and dialogues.*

◆ STRUCTURE OF THE EXAMINATIONS

The Modern Languages Syllabus provides for examination at the General Proficiency level.

◆ WEIGHTING OF THE SKILLS

The General Proficiency examination, places the emphasis on the production of the language and the ratio of Productive skills: Receptive skills is 58:42.

◆ PROFILE DIMENSIONS

The Receptive and Productive skills will be examined under four Profile Dimensions: Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing. These profiles will indicate the following types of performance:

- Listening** - the ability to demonstrate comprehension of meaning conveyed through oral/aural stimuli.
- Reading** - the ability to demonstrate comprehension of meaning conveyed through pictorial or written stimuli.
- Speaking** - production of spoken language in response to oral, aural or written stimuli.
- Writing** - production of the written language in response to written and/or pictorial stimuli.

◆ SUGGESTED TIME-TABLE ALLOCATION

It is recommended that a minimum of five 40-minute periods per week should be allocated to the coverage of the syllabus in the last two years of study.

◆ CERTIFICATION

For the General Proficiency examination, in addition to the overall grades, a report will be given on the four profile dimensions.

◆ FORMAT OF THE EXAMINATIONS

GENERAL PROFICIENCY

Paper 01 (1 hour 20 minutes) A 60-item Multiple Choice test in two Sections at the General Proficiency level.

PART A - Listening Comprehension (30 Items)

Sections 1 - 4: Similar format to that of the Basic Proficiency examination. However, all of the questions in Section 4 will be different from those of Basic Proficiency.



PART B – Reading Comprehension (30 Items)

Sections 1 – 4: Similar format to that of the Basic Proficiency examination. However, all the questions will be different from those of Basic Proficiency.

Paper 02

(2 hours 15 minutes)

A written paper in **four** sections. All sections are compulsory.

Section 1: Requires candidates to provide written responses in the target language to a series of situations described in English.

Section 2: *Requires candidates to choose **one** of the following:*

- (i) *an informal letter of about 130-150 words to be written in the target language; OR*
- (ii) *a composition of about 130-150 words to be written in the target language.*

Section 3: *Requires candidates to choose one of the following:*

- (i) *a contextual announcement of between 80-100 words which requires candidates to complete information using cues in English; or*
- (ii) *a contextual dialogue of between 80-100 words which requires candidates to complete information using cues in English.*

Section 4: *Requires candidates to answer questions in English based on a Reading Comprehension passage in the target language.*

Paper 03

(10-15 minutes per candidate)

An oral examination in the target language in three sections.

Section 1: *Requires candidates to respond orally to situations and/or instructions given in English.*

Section 2: *Requires candidates to read a passage aloud.*

Section 3: *Requires candidates to participate by responding to 4 questions on each of **four** topics. These questions will be different from those of Basic Proficiency.*

Weighting of Skills to be Assessed

Weighting Table: General Proficiency

Paper	Section	Mark Allocation				Total Marks	(%)
		Receptive		Productive			
		Listen	Read	Speak	Write		
Paper 01	1	30				60	(25)
	2		30				
Paper 02	1				30	100	(42)
	2				30		
	3				20		
	4		20				
Paper 03	1			25		80	(33)
	2			10			
	3	20		25			
Marks		50	50	60	80	240	
% Per Profile		21	21	25	33	100	(100)

◆ CONTENT

The syllabus content at pages 8 to 19 has been organised around three main concepts: Functions and Notions, Settings and Topics and Grammar and Lexis. These form the headings for three parallel columns, which should NOT be considered separately. In the Syllabus, emphasis is placed on the students' ability to use the target language in a functional way. Therefore, the basic functions needed for communication are identified. It is intended that these functions should be the core of the instructional planning process.

Functions, however, are performed in particular contexts and, therefore, the settings in which the functions are likely to be performed are identified. The last column provides some examples of the relevant grammar and vocabulary. However, these are not exhaustive as they are intended to be examples only.

This approach used in organising the syllabus seeks to shift attention away from a purely structural approach to a more communicative one. It is expected that students following this syllabus will be able to carry out these functions in the target language. A brief summary of the core topics and the tenses, which students are expected to know, follows. These lists are intended to be a reminder of the basic knowledge to be acquired by the student and should not be used in isolation from the rest of the syllabus.

I. Oral Examinations

Candidates should be able to carry out guided conversations based on the following topics:

- (a) Home and Family
- (b) School and Career
- (c) Sports and Recreation
- (d) Daily Routines
- (e) Shopping
- (f) Travel

II. Use of Tenses and Moods

Candidates should be able to use the following tenses and moods as they are relevant to particular functions:

Tense

French

Present
Future
Imperfect
Perfect
Pluperfect
*Past Historic
Conditional

Spanish

Present
Present Continuous
Future
Preterite
Imperfect
Past Continuous
Present Perfect
Pluperfect
Conditional

*For recognition at General Proficiency only.

Moods

French

Indicative

Imperative

Infinitive

The Present Subjunctive

Spanish

Indicative

Imperative

Infinitive

**Present Subjunctive

*Imperfect Subjunctive**

Voice

Active Voice, Passive Voice

*For recognition at General Proficiency only

ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS	SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS	
		FRENCH	SPANISH
Greetings and responses	In the classroom, in public places, at home.	Bonjour / Bonsoir. Salut, ça, va? Quoi de neuf? Très bien, merci. A vous aussi/A vous de même.	Buenos días. ¿Que tal?/ ¿Como te va?/ ¡Hola! ¿Qué pasa? ¿Qué hay de nuevo? Muy Bien Igualmente.
Farewells	In the classroom, in the home, in the street, in social situations, at the airport, at the train station.	Au revoir, A bientôt/ à tout à l'heure / à plus tard. Bonne nuit / Bon voyage.	!Hasta la vista! !Hasta luego! Adios Vaya con Dios!
Introductions	Amongst peers, younger to older, female to male, less distinguished, to more distinguished.	Je te/vous présente. C'est Voici.	Le presento Quiero presentar Este es
Addressing persons	On formal and social occasions, in public places, in the classroom, in the family, telephone conversations.	Monsieur, Mon cher, Mon copain, Mon ami. Mon vieux, Chéri.	Señor, Compañero, Don, Doña Mi amigo.
Beginning and ending of letters	From the country of the target	Cher + prénom.	Estimado amigo,



FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS	SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS	
		FRENCH	SPANISH
	language to the home country and vice versa, excuses, invitations.	Mon cher, Je vous embrasse Amitiés/ A bientôt/ Bien des choses / Ecris-moi vite. Grosses bises.	Querido, Un abrazo de tu amigo/ Con cariño Besos y abrazos/ Cariños y saludos de.
Holiday Greetings	At Christmas, New Year, Easter.	Joyeux Noël, Bonne Année Bonne fête Bonnes vacances Meilleurs voeux, Joyeuses Pâques	Feliz Navidad/ Feliz Año Nuevo/ Próspero año nuevo/Felices Pascuas.
Birthday wishes and other greetings for other festive days/celebrations	At home, in the street, at fêtes	Bon anniversaire Bonne fête des Mères,	Feliz cumpleaños Feliz día de Madres.
Toasts	Dinners, Weddings, Flag-raising ceremonies, State visits.	Vive.....! Que.....! A votre/ta santé!	!Qué viva.....! !Salud!
Thanking, expressing gratitude	Letter, social situations.	Merci Je vous remercie Je vous (t') en prie Je vous suis reconnaissant(e) Etre obligé Merci bien/ beaucoup Il n'y a pas de quoi. De rien	Muchas gracias Mil gracias De nada No hay de que
Apologising	At home, at school, at work and other public places. On the telephone, in letters.	Etre désolé de, S'excuser de, Pardon!	Me disculpo Siento Lo siento, ¡Perdone!
Expressing regret and disappointment	At home, at school, at work, in other social situations.	Je suis déçu(e) de Je regrette que + subj. Je te plains. Pardon! Tant pis Quel dommage!/ Hélas C'est dommage.	Lo siento mucho ¡Qué lástima!
Congratulations	On passing an examination; on winning a prize/contest; on a fine performance in sports, games, dances and other activities.	Je vous félicite! Félicitations! Bravo!	¡Le felicito! ¡Te felicito! ¡Felicitaciones! ¡Felicidades!

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS	SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS	
		FRENCH	SPANISH
Expressing good wishes	On undertaking a venture.	Bonne chance! Bon courage! Je vous/ te souhaite Bon séjour.	¡Buena suerte! ¡Que le vaya bien! ¡Que te vaya bien!
Expressing Sympathy and Condolences	On the occasion of a death, illness and misfortune.	Condoléances! Mes plus sincères condoleances. (Toutes) mes condoléances.	¡Mi más profundo pésame! ¡Te acompaño en tus sentimientos!
Calling attention	In the home, in school, in the street and other public places.	Attention! Tiens! Hé! Ecoute! Venez/Viens voir Pardon, monsieur S'il vous plaît... Au secours! Au voleur!	¡Cuidado! ¡Mira! ¡Dios mío! ¡Qye! ¡Ojo! ¡Hola!
Expressing requests	All settings and topics.	Vouloir/aimer bien. Aimeriez-vous? Voulez-vous? Veuillez Voudriez-vous? S'il te/vous plait	Querer Quisiera Hágame el favor Tenga la bondad de Por favor.
Inviting	All settings and topics.	Vouloir Je voudrais Cela me plairait S'il n'y a pas d'inconvénient	Querer, Quisiera Invitar a Gustar si no te conviene, si no tiene inconveniente.

2. GIVING, SEEKING AND RESPONDING TO INFORMATION

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS	SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS	
		FRENCH	SPANISH
Identifying	In the home, in school, in stores and banks, in restaurants/ hotels/ airports/train stations/ports, in the city, in the country.	Etre Qu'est-ce que c'est? C'est, ce sont. Est-ce que c'est? Etes-vous mécanicien? A qui	Ser ¿Qué es? Es/son. ¿Qué es esto? ¿Es Vd. mecánico?



FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS	SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS	
		FRENCH	SPANISH
		est le livre? Il est français?	¿De quién es el libro? ¿El es venezolano?
		Il s'appelle.... Ta maison, c'est laquelle? Je suis le cadet/l'aîné.	El se llama... ¿Cuál es tu casa? Yo soy el menor/mayor.
Completing an application form	Offices, embassies, educational institutions, job locations.	Nom Adresse Âge Date et lieu de naissance	Nombre Dirección Edad Fecha y lugar de nacimiento.
Describing	Description of persons, places, things.	Il y a C'est le premier/dixième Une voiture bleue Un vieil homme Une femme mariée	Hay Primero a décimo Un buen muchacho Un hombre rico Una mujer casada
Describing how things are done	All settings and topics.	Bien Vite Lentement Avec soin Sans hésiter Il est sorti en courant *Fini le repas....	Bien Rápido Lentamente Con cuidado Sin vacilar Salió corriendo Terminada la comida.
Describing weather, time, season	Temperate and tropical places.	Il pleut Il fait beau au clair de lune Il est midi Il est deux heures Tôt Tard Ce mois Cette année Ce matin Aujourd'hui Hier, cette nuit La semaine prochaine La semaine dernière L'année prochaine L'année dernière Il y a deux ans Il attend depuis deux	Llueve Hace buen tiempo Hay luna Es mediodía Son las dos Temprano Tarde Este mes Este año Esta mañana Hoy Ayer Anoche Hace dos días que espera Hace dos días que esperaba Me voy el lunes

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS

SETTINGS AND TOPICS

GRAMMAR AND LEXIS

FRENCH

SPANISH

jours
 Il attendait depuis
 deux jours
 Nous rentrons tôt le
 lundi
 Je pars lundi
 On se verra dans
 deux jours

Voy a la iglesia los
 domingos

Au printemps, à tout
 à l'heure

En été.
 La saison sèche /le
 carême
 La saison des
 pluies/l'hivernage
 Un cyclone
 Un ouragan

En el verano
 El verano
 El invierno
 El ciclón
 El huracán
 La estación
 lluviosa/seca

*For General Proficiency only

Narrating

Imaginative and personal
 incidents.

L'argent a été volé
 On a volé l'argent
 La porte s'ouvre
 Il allait tomber
 Elle venait de manger
 quand...
 Il a décidé de faire
 Il voulait faire

El dinero fue
 robado
 Se robó el dinero
 Robaron el dinero
 El iba a caer
 Acababa de comer
 cuando...
 Decidió hacer
 Quería ir a casa

Quantifying and listing

In shops, hotels, markets,
 supermarkets, in the home, in
 schools and other public places.

Je voudrais de la
 viande/du beurre/des
 oranges
 Je ne veux pas de lait
 En voilà une
 De la monnaie?...je
 n'en ai pas
 Un ... un million
 Je fais chimie,
 boilogie, français
 espagnol...
 Deux kilos de ...
 Un litre de
 Une bouteille de
 Combien de?
 Beaucoup de
 Bien des
 Trop de
 Assez de
 Aucun

Quisiera carne

 Uno..a un millón
 Estudio la química,
 la biología, el
 español
 Dos kilos de...
 Un litro de...
 Una botella de...
 ¿Cuántos?
 Mucho
 Demasiado
 Bastante
 Ninguno

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS	SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS	
		FRENCH	SPANISH
Locating	All settings and topics.	Au/à la Sur Dans Contre, à côté de Au fond de/autour de L'Afrique L'Europe Le Canada Le Sénégal La France La Martinique Les Etats-unis La Havane Le Havre	Sobre, en, al lado de Alrededor de La Argentina El Perú El Canadá Los Estados Unidos La Habana
		Chez moi, vers, en haut, tout droit, là-bas, à gauche, à droite, au nord/nord-ouest, au sud/ au sud-est, À l'ouest, dans le nord de	Hacia arriba Hacia abajo Todo derecho A la derecha A la izquierda Al norte/noreste Al sur/sudeste
Questioning and Inquiring	All settings and topics.	Quoi? Lequel? Où? Pourquoi? Quand? Comment? Que? N'est-ce pas?	¿Qué? ¿Cuál? ¿Dónde? ¿Por qué? ¿Cómo? ¿Quién? ¿No sé si... Me pregunto? ¿verdad?

3. EXPRESSING OPINIONS

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS	SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS	
		FRENCH	SPANISH
Expressing agreement and disagreement	All settings and topics	ne...pas ne...que, seulement Ni...non plus Ne without pas Pas without ne	No. No más de/que, solamente Ni...tampoco Equivocarse Tener razón



FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS

SETTINGS AND TOPICS

GRAMMAR AND LEXIS

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS	SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS	
		FRENCH	SPANISH
Expressing confirmation and denial	All settings and topics	Avoir raison/tort Oui, si, mais si. Non, mais non. Pas question. Entendu, bien sûr. être d'accord Etre d'accord avec qqn Etre d'accord pour Croire, penser, voir Entendre	Si, no. ¡De ninguna manera! ¡Nunca! ¡Bueno! Estar de acuerdo con Creer, ver parecer
		Il est évident que Il n'y a pas de doute que. Il ne fait aucun doute J'estime que.. Je sais que Je pense que Nier C <input type="checkbox"/> est faux	Es claro que No hay duda que Creo que... Sé que ... Negar.
Expressing possibility, doubts, disbelief, conjecture, certainty, uncertainty	All settings and topics	Pouvoir Peut-être Impersonal expressions Etre sûr/certain Mais bien sûr! Certainement! Sans doute! Absolument!	Poder Tal vez, quizás acaso Impersonal expressions Estar seguro ¡Seguramente! Sin duda! ¡Por supuesto!
Expressing opinions		Je pense que Je crois que Je dirais Ça se dit A son avis, selon/ d'après.	Creo, pienso, me parece A mi parecer En mi opinion

4. EXPRESSING EMOTIONS, ATTITUDES AND OTHER RESPONSES

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS

SETTINGS AND TOPICS

GRAMMAR AND LEXIS

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS	SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS	
		FRENCH	SPANISH
Expressing approval, happiness, liking, satisfaction, disapproval, dislike, dissatisfaction	All settings and topics	Vouloir, désirer aimer être bien, être content de approuver, plaire à, satisfaire	Gustar, estar bien estar contento con, de Satisfacer No tener



FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS	SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS	
		FRENCH	SPANISH
		Allez! Chouette Zut alors! C'est bon C'est bien ne pas aimer détester Être contre/ désapprouver	inconveniente ¡Dale!/ ¡Qué asco!
Expressing preference	All settings and topics	Préférer/aimer mieux	Preferir, gustar más, más que, menos que.
Expressing interest, lack of interest	All settings and topics	Negation. Impersonal expressions Plaire à être intéressé par	Negation Impersonal expressions Tener interés en Interesarse en Quisiera
Expressing surprise	All settings and topics	S'intéresser à Avoir envie de S'étonner de Être surpris être étonné Surprendre Ça m'étonne que + subjunctive Ça ne m' □ C'est étonnant/ surprenant Quelle surprise Ça alors!	Estar sorprendido ¡Qué sorpresa! ¡Qué alegría!
Expressing hope	All settings and topics	Penser, espérer, compter, vouloir N'est-ce pas?	Esperar, pensar Que + subjunctive
Expressing worry, fear	All settings and topics	The expletive Ne Avoir peur, craindre de + infinitive, craindre que + subjunctive S'inquiéter, se soucier. Oh là là!	Temer, tener miedo
Insisting	All settings and topics	Insister sur/pour que	Insistir en,

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS	SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS	
		FRENCH	SPANISH
		+ subjunctive Avoir l'intention de Répéter Devoir Savoir Rappeler Il faut + infinitive Il faut que + subj. Il est nécessaire que + subj.	Pensar + infinitive Repetir Deber Saber Hay que + infinitive Hace falta Necesita
Expressing want, wish, desire	All settings and topics	Désirer Chercher Avoir besoin de Aimer Vouloir Tenir à Il me faut Avoir la bonté de	Desear Buscar Querer Tener ganas de Necesitar
Expressing willingness	All settings and topics	Vouloir bien Voulez-vous...? Volontiers Avec plaisir.	Querer Tener la bondad de Con gusto
Granting/seeking permission	All settings and topics	Permettre à .. de Dire à ... de Donner la permission à ... de D'accord Laisser Demander la permission Faire une demande Pouvoir Permettez-moi Je me permets de S'il vous plaît	Permitir Dejar Dar permiso a Rogar Pedir Poder Permítame Me permite + infinitive
Expressing obligation	All settings and topics	Devoir/ Il faut Il faut que + subj; Il est nécessaire que + subj; Etre obligé de	Deber Hay que Necesita que Tener que
Expressing prohibition	All settings and topics	Défendre à ... de Interdire à ... de Arrêter de	Impedir Dejar de Evitar

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS	SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS	
		FRENCH	SPANISH
Expressing commands, instructions, directions	All settings and topics	Empêcher de Ne pas permettre Il est interdit de Il ne faut pas	Prohibirse
		Infinitives Negative infinitives Voulez-vous	Infinitives Negative infinitives Tener la bondad
Suggesting a course of action	All settings and topics	Question forms: positive and negative Imperatives S'il vous/te plaît	Question forms: negative and positive Imperatives
		1 st person plural imperative Question forms Suggérer/proposer de	1 st person plural imperative Question forms Sugerir/proponer
Advising	All settings and topics	Dire de Inviter à *Si + the imperfect tense Aller + infinitive	¿Qué te parece si ...? Ir a + infinitive
		Valoir la peine On y va? Pourquoi pas?	¿Por qué no?
Warning	All settings and topics	Positive and negative Il vaudrait mieux que + subj. Conseiller Donner des conseils	Positive and negative Aconsejar Dar consejo
		Il vaut mieux Ça vaut la peine	Más vale Vale la pena
Warning	All settings and topics	Conditional or If clauses Prévenir, avertir, alerter	Conditional or If clauses Avisar, prevenir
		Exclamations: Attention!	Exclamations: ¡Cuidado! ¡Ojo! ¡Peligro!

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS	SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS	
		FRENCH	SPANISH
Promising	All settings and topics	Aller + infinitive Promettre. Offrir Donner la parole	Ir a + infinitive Prometer Ofrecer/ofrecerse Dar la palabra
Threatening	All settings and topics	Aller + infinitive Menacer Conditional clauses Attention! Si tu continues à + inf...future	Ir a + infinitive Amenazar Conditional clauses
5. CONNECTIVES			
Time Sequence	All settings and topics	Puis, ensuite, alors, finalement, enfin, d'abord, en premier lieu	Pues, luego, entonces, después, por lo tanto, así que.
*For General Proficiency only			
Addition	All settings and topics	Et puis, ensuite, de plus	y, e, de ahí, también, además
Reinforcing	All settings and topics	En plus, de plus, en outre, et encore, d'ailleurs	Además, es más, aun más, sobre todo
Similarity	All settings and topics	Aussi bien que, comme, également	Así como, tanto como
Introduction	All settings and topics	Il y avait une fois Il était une fois Une fois Par un...jour	Había una vez Una vez
Summarising	All settings and topics	Bref, en tout, en gros, en somme Cela va sans dire/ il va de soi Finalement	En breve, en resumen, al fin y al cabo A fin de cuentas
Result, consequence	All settings and topics	De sorte que (+ subj.) Il résulte que Par conséquent, donc Clauses of consequence	De manera que De resultado. Por consecuencia/ por consiguiente/a consecuencia de. Clauses of

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS	SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS	
		FRENCH	SPANISH
Deduction, induction	All settings and topics.	Donc, ainsi, et ainsi de suite	consequence Así, pues, por lo tanto, por eso.
Conclusion	All settings and topics.	Pour conclure, finalement, en fin de compte, en conclusion	En conclusión, por fin, finalmente
Explication	All settings and topics.	C'est-à-dire, autrement dit, Exprimer autrement Vouloir dire Signifier	Es decir, o sea, en otras palabras. Querer decir
Exemplification/illustration	All settings and topics.	Par exemple. Et caetera Selon/d'après Citer Donner des exemples	Por ejemplo. etcétera Según Citar Dar ejemplos
Contrast and co-ordination	All settings and topics	Au contraire, quand même, mais, d'un côté ... de l'autre côté, de plus, donc, ou, ou bien et ne ... ni ... ni	Al contrario, pero, sino, por otra parte Y, e No ... ni ... ni
Replacement	All settings and topics	Sinon, au lieu de, à la place de, en échange Pourtant, cependant, néanmoins. *Quoique/bien que + subj. *Clauses of concession	En lugar de, en vez de Sin embargo; no obstante, aún Aunque *Clauses of concession

*For General Proficiency only

**LIST OF CARIBBEAN WORDS
SPANISH**

A. NATURE

1. General Vocabulary

el invierno	-	winter
la invierna	-	rainy season
la sequía	-	drought
el verano	-	dry season
el barranco/la barranca	-	gully
el cerro	-	hill

2. Fauna

el aguti	-	agouti
la cabra/el chivo	-	goat
el caiman/el lagarto	-	alligator
el camarón	-	shrimp
el cangrejo	-	crab
la concha	-	shell
el cotorro/el loro	-	parrot
la jagüilla/el quequeo	-	wild boar
la langosta	-	lobster
la lagartija	-	small lizard
el tiburón	-	shark
la tortuga	-	turtle
el colibrí	-	humming bird

3. Flora (including fruit and vegetable)

el aguacate	-	avocado
la anona	-	custard apple
el ayote/la calabaza	-	pumpkin
el bambú	-	bamboo
la berenjena	-	eggplant
la caña de azúcar	-	sugar cane
el caimito	-	star apple
el camote	-	sweet potato
el chayote/el güisquil	-	cho cho
la ciruela Americana	-	golden plum
el frijol	-	bean
la guayaba	-	guava
el guineo	-	banana
el limón	-	lime
el maíz	-	corn
la malanga	-	eddo
el mango	-	mango
el mazapán	-	breadfruit
la naranja	-	orange
el ñame	-	yam
el ócorro	-	okra
la papaya	-	pawpaw
la piña	-	pineapple
el plátano	-	plantain
el tamarindo	-	tamarind
la toronja	-	grapefruit
el tulipán	-	hibiscus
el cocotero	-	coconut tree
el banano	-	banana tree
el mangotero	-	mango tree
el aguacatero	-	pear tree
el palmero	-	palm tree

B. COUNTRY AND INHABITANTS

1. Country

Anguilla	-	Anguilla
Antigua y Barbuda	-	Antigua and Barbuda
Barbados	-	Barbados
Belice	-	Belize
Cuba	-	Cuba
El Caribe	-	The Caribbean
Dominica	-	Dominica
La Guyana	-	Guyana

2. Inhabitants

el de Anguilla	-	Anguillan
él de Antigua y Barbuda	-	Antiguan and Barbudian
barbadiense	-	Barbadian
beliceño	-	Belizean
cubano	-	Cuban
caribeño	-	Caribbean
dominicano	-	Dominica
guyanés	-	Guyanese



Country (cont'd)**Inhabitants (cont'd)**

La Guyana Francesa	-	French Guyana	guyanés francés	-	Grench Guyanese
Grenada	-	Grenada	grenadiense/grenadine	-	Grenadian
Guadalupe	-	Guadeloupe	Guadalupense	-	Guadaloupean
			guadalupeño	-	
Haiti	-	Haiti	haitiano	-	Haitian
Jamaica	-	Jamaica	jamaiquino } jamaicano }	-	Jamaican
Las Antillas	-	The West Indies	antillano	-	West Indian
Martinica	-	Martinique	martiniqueño } martiniqués }	-	Martinican
Montserrat	-	Montserrat	él de Montserrat	-	Montserratan
La República Dominicana	-	Dominican Republic	dominicano	-	Santo Domingan
San Cristóbal	-	St. Christopher/St. Kitts			
Santa Lucía	-	St. Lucia	él de Santa Lucia	-	St Lucian
San Vicente	-	St. Vincent	vicentino	-	Vincentian
Surinam	-	Suriname	surinamés } surinameño }	-	Surinamese
Trinidad y Tobago	-	Trinidad and Tobago	trinitario	-	Trinidadian
Islas Virgenes	-	Virgin Islands	el de las Islas Virgenes	-	Virgin Islander
			tobagonés	-	Tobagonian
			el mestizo	-	Mestizo
			el indio	-	Indian
			el indígena	-	Native
			el mulato	-	Mulatto
			el criollo	-	Creole

C. HOME AND FAMILY**1. General**

la choza/champa	-	hut
la hamaca	-	hammock

2. Food and Drink

el arroz con frijoles	-	rice and beans	el aji/chile/picante	-	hot pepper
la empanada	-	patty made of fish or meat	el gazpacho	-	cold vegetable soup
el arepa	-	small bake made of corn flour	el taco	-	a crisp type of savoury
la paella	-	a rice dish with seafood	la tortilla	-	type of savoury pancake or roti. Varies in size and shape from country to country.

Food and Drink (cont'd)

El tamal	-	type of meat pie made of cornmeal dough
el ron	-	rum

D. OCCUPATION

la commadrona/la partera	-	Midwife	el finquero/el granjero	-	farmer
el pescador	-	Fisherman	la canoa	-	canoe
la azada	-	Hoe	el machete	-	cutlass
la red	-	Drawnet			

E. RELIGION

el espanto	-	evil spirit	El hechicero/el brujo	-	obeahman
el hechizo	-	Obeah	Musulmán	-	moslem
Hindú	-	hindoo, East Indian	El vudú	-	voodoo
el curandero	-	bush doctor	cristiano	-	christian

F. SOCIETY AND POLITICS

el Banco Caribeño de Desarrollo	-	Caribbean Development Bank	la comunidad caribeña	-	CARICOM
el tercer mundo	-	Third World	la mancomunidad el partido político	-	Commonwealth Political Party

G. CULTURE

El Carnaval	-	carnival	La bomba	-	Puerto Rican Dance
La corrida de toros	-	bullfighting	El Merengue	-	Popular Dance in the Spanish Caribbean
El Ría de la raza	-	Columbus Day	La Misa del Gallo	-	Midnight Mass (New Year's Eve Night)
El Día de los Santos	-	The Day of the Dead	La Navidad	-	Christmas
El Día del Santo	-	Saint's Day	La Nochebuena	-	Christmas Eve
La Fiesta de los Reyes Magos (Spain)	-	celebration of the three wise men; (the day Christmas presents are exchanged in Spain)	Jai-alai or pelota La Siesta	-	Ball games (Spanish and Cuban) Spanish custom of resting in the afternoon
Festejar	-	to celebrate	El nombre compuesto El Noviazgo	-	compound name Courtship



El Flamenco	-	a typical Spanish dance	El Velorio	-	Wake
La Salsa	-	A Latin American Dance			
Jugar la piñata	-	to play the piñata	El Viernes Santo	-	Good Friday
La Pascua	-	Easter	El villancico	-	Christmas Carol
La quinceañera	-	15 th birthday celebration			
La Semana Santa	-	Holy Week			

A. TECHNOLOGY

1. Communication

La computadora	}	-	Computer	El fax, telegax	-	fax
El ordenador		-		La tarjeta telefónica	-	phone card
La computadora de mesa	}	-	personal computer	El contestador Automático	-	an answering machine
La computadora personal		-		El teléfono portatil	-	portable telephone
La computadora portátil		-	Laptop			
Juego de computadora		-	computer games			
La informática,		-	computer studies			
La computación		-				
El programador		-	computer programmer			

2. Electronics

La cablevision	-	cable television	El reproductor de compact-disc	-	CD player
La television por cable			El walkman	-	walkman
La antenna parabólica	-	satellite dish	El videojuego	-	video game
El magnetoscopio	-	VCR			
El video			la máquina vendedora	-	vending machine
El mando a distancia	}	-	remote control	-	credit card
El control remoto		-		La tarjeta de crédito	-
El disco compacto		CD	El celular		
El compact-disc					

**LIST OF CARIBBEAN WORDS
FRENCH**

A. NATURE

1. General Vocabulary

L'anse (f)	-	Bay	le morne	-	hill
le carême	-	dry season	le piton	-	piton
le cyclone	-	cyclone, hurricane	la ravine	-	gully
l'hivernage (m)	-	the rainy season	la sécheresse	-	drought

2. Fauna

L'agouti (m)	-	agouti	le crabe	-	crab
L'anolis (m)	-	small lizard	la crevette	-	shrimp
le cabri	-	goat	le lambi	-	conch
le caïman	-	alligator	la langouste	-	crayfish, spiny lobster
le cochon marron	-	wild boar	le lézard/le maboïa	-	lizard
le colibri	-	hummingbird	la mangouste	-	mongoose
le coquillage	-	shell	le perroquet	-	parrot

3. Flora (including fruit and vegetable)

l'ananas (m)	-	pineapple	le gombo	-	okra
l'aubergine (f)	-	eggplant	la goyave	-	guava
l'avocat (m)	-	avocado pear	l'hibiscus (m)	-	hibiscus
l'avocatier	-	pear tree	l'igname (f)	-	yam
le bambou	-	bamboo	le maïs	-	corn
la banane	-	banana (ripe)	la mangue	-	mango
la banane verte	-	plantain	le manguier	-	mango tree
la banane mûre	-	banana	le manioc	-	cassava
le bananier	-	banana tree	le maracoudja	-	passion fruit
la bougainvillée	-	bougainvillea	la noix de coco	-	coconut
la Calebasse	-	calabash	l'orange (f)	-	orange
la canne à sucre	-	sugar cane	le palmier	-	palm tree
le chou caraïbe	-	coco yam	le pamplemousse	-	grapefruit
la christophine	-	cho cho	la papaye	-	pawpaw
le citron vert	-	lime	la patate (douce)	-	sweet potato
le cocotier	-	coconut tree	la pomme cannelle	-	sweet sop, sugar apple
le corossol	-	soursop	la pomme cythère	-	june plum, golden apple
la figue	-	banana	le pois d'angole	-	congo (gungo) pea,
le flamboyant	-	poinciana	le pois congo	-	pigeon pea
le fruit à pain	-	breadfruit	la sapotille	-	naseberry, sapodilla

B. COUNTRY AND INHABITANTS

1. Country

2. Inhabitants

Anguilla	-	Anguilla	Anguillais	-	Anguillan
Antigua et Barbuda	-	Antigua and Barbuda	Antiguis/un originaire de Barbuda	-	Antiguan and Barbudan



<u>Country (cont'd)</u>		<u>Inhabitants (cont'd)</u>			
La Barbade	-	Barbados	Barbadien	-	Barbadian
Le Belize	-	Belize	Bélizien	-	Belizean
Cuba	-	Cuba	Cubain	-	Cuban
Les Caraïbes	-	The Caribbean	Caraïbe/Caribéen	-	Caribbean
La Dominique	-	Dominica	Dominiquais	-	Dominican
La Grenade	-	Grenada	Grenadien	-	Grenadian
Le Guyana	-	Guyana	Guyanais	-	Guyanese
La Guyane Française	-	French Guyana	Guyanais	-	French Guyanese
St-Vincent Les Grenadines	-	St Vincent The Grenadines	St-Vincentien	-	From St. Vincent and the Grenadines
La Guadeloupe	-	Guadeloupe	Guadeloupéen	-	Guadeloupean
Haïti	-	Haiti	Haitien	-	Haitian
Les Iles Vierges	-	Virgin Islands	Originaire des Iles Vierges	-	From the Virgin Islands
La Jamaïque	-	Jamaica	Jamaïquain	-	Jamaican
Les Antilles	-	The West Indies	Antillais	-	West Indian
La Martinique	-	Martinique	Martiniquais	-	Martinican
Montserrat	-	Montserrat	Montserrattien	-	Montserratian
Nevis, Nièves	-	Nevis	Névisien	-	Nevisian
La République Dominicaine	-	The Dominican Republic	Dominician	-	Santo Domingan
St-Christophe	-	St. Kitts	Kitticien	-	Kittician
St-Lucie	-	St. Lucia	St-Lucien	-	St. Lucian
Le Surinam	-	Suriname	Surinamais	-	Surinamese
La Trinité et Tobago	-	Trinidad and Tobago	Trinidadien	-	Trinidadian
Les îles Turques et Caïques	-	The Turks and Caicos Islands	une câpresse	-	Black woman with straight hair
			chabin(e)	-	person with fair skin and curly hair
			un mulâtre	-	Mulatto

C. HOME AND FAMILY

1. General

la case	-	hut
le hamac	-	hammock

2. Clothes

le bacoua	-	Martinican straw hat
le foulard	-	scarf
le madras	-	bandana head dress

3. Food/drink and the kitchen (for more details, cf, for example, La Cuisine Créole, publ. Emile Desormeaux)

les acras (m)	-	Fritters	le thym	-	thyme
le boudin	-	black pudding	le blaff	-	fish soup, fish stew
le canari	-	earthenware pot	le calalou	-	vegetable stew with okras, spinach.
la cassave	-	bammy, cassava bread	le cari/le curry	-	curry
le colombo	-	curry (dish)	la ciboulette	-	scallion, chive
le mabi	-	Mauby	le gingembre	-	ginger



la morue	-	codfish	le mortier	-	mortar
le pilon	-	pestle	piler	-	to pound
le punch	-	drink made with rum	le piment	-	hot (country) pepper

D. OCCUPATION

1. Farmer – Fermier			2. Fisherman – pêcheur		
le coutelas	-	Cutlass	la pirogue	-	canoe
la houe	-	Hoe	la seine	-	drawnet
la machette	-	machete			

E. RELIGION

hindou	-	Hindu	la magie	-	witchcraft
musulman	-	Moslem	le quimbois	-	obeah, charm, spell
Le quimboiseur	-	obeahman	le vaudou	-	voodoo
le zombi	-	Zombi(e), evil spirit			

F. SOCIETY AND POLITICS

département d'outre-mer (D.O.M)	-	overseas department (of France) for example, Martinique, Guadeloupe	métropolitain	-	persons from the metropolitan countries (for example, France)
la banque caraïbe du développement	-	Caribbean Development Bank	le tiers-monde	-	Third World

G. CULTURE

célébrer	-	to celebrate	la messe de minuit	-	Midnight mass
une fête	-	a saint's day, name day	le réveillon de Noël / du Nouvel An	-	Christmas Eve / New Year's Eve dinner / party
Noël	-	Christmas	la veille de Noël	-	Christmas Eve
l'arbre de Noël / le sapin de Noël	-	Christmas tree	le jour de l'An	-	New Year's Day
la bûche de Noël	-	Yule log (a cake shaped and decorated to look like a log)	l'Épiphanie, le 6 janvier	-	Epiphany

un chant de Noël	-	a Christmas carol	la fête des rois / le jour des rois	-	Twelfth night, Epiphany
la galette des rois	-	a cake filled with almond paste with a small figurine or charm (<i>une fève</i>) hidden in it. Whoever finds the charm is crowned king or queen	Mardi Gras	-	Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday and the last day of carnival celebrations.
le Carnaval	-	carnival	le mercredi des cendres	-	Ash Wednesday
un char	-	carnival float	vendredi saint	-	Good Friday
un défilé	-	procession	Pâques	-	Easter
un déguisement	-	a disguise	le lundi de Pâques	-	Easter Monday
la semaine sainte	-	Holy week	la fête du travail, le premier mai	-	Labour Day
la chasse aux crabes	-	crab hunting (crab is eaten during the Easter season in the French West Indies)	le 22 mai	-	the day marking the abolition of slavery (<i>l'abolition de l'esclavage</i>) in Martinique.
le 14 juillet, la fête nationale	-	Bastille Day, the French national day	un feu d'artifice	-	fireworks
la Marseillaise	-	the name of the French national anthem (<i>l'hymne national</i>).	la Toussaint, le premier novembre	-	All Saints' day. (A public holiday. People visit cemeteries and lay wreaths and flowers (often chrysanthemums – <i>des chrysanthèmes</i>) and candles on the graves of relatives and friends)
la fête des morts, le deux novembre	-	All Souls' Day	le combat de coqs	-	cock fighting
le zouk	-	contemporary French West Indian dance and music	la biguine, la mazurka, la polka, la merengue	-	French West Indian dances

H. TECHNOLOGY

1. Communication

un ordinateur	-	a computer	une télécarte (à mémoire)	-	a phone card
un micro-ordinateur	-	personal computer	un répondeur-enregistreur	-	an answering machine
l'informatique (f)	-	computer science	un téléphone portable	-	a portable telephone
un programmeur	-	a computer programmer	un téléphone cellulaire	-	a cellular phone

un fax, une }
télécopie }
un télécopieur }

- fax

2. Electronics

la télévision câblée
une antenne parabolique

- cable TV
- a satellite dish

un jeu vidéo
un baladeur

- a video game
- a personal stereo,
walkman

un magnétoscope
une télécommande

- a VCR
- a remote control

un four à micro-ondes
un distributeur
automatique

- a microwave oven
- a vending machine,
an automatic teller
machine

un disque compact }
une platine laser }

- a compact disc
- a CD player

une carte de crédit

- a credit card

Western Zone Office
2005/05/09

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

**SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATION**

FRENCH

PAPER 01 - General Proficiency

SPECIMEN

PART A – LISTENING COMPREHENSION

PART B – READING COMPREHENSION

READ THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS CAREFULLY

Each item in this test has four suggested answers lettered (A), (B), (C), (D). Read each item you are about to answer and decide which choice is best.

Sample Item

La Martinique est une

- (A) ville
- (B) colonie
- (C) île
- (D) cité

Sample Answer



The best answer to this item is “île”, so answer space (C) has been shaded.

DO NOT TURN THIS PAGE UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO

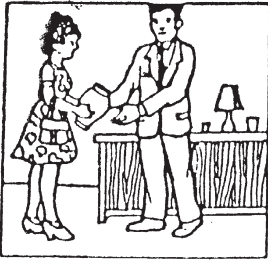
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PART A – ITEMS 1 – 30
LISTENING COMPREHENSION
GENERAL PROFICIENCY
 45 minutes

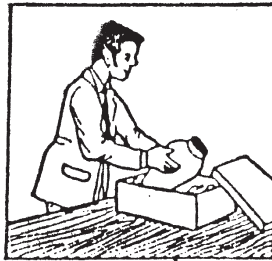
SECTION I

Directions: For each question in this section you will hear a single sentence. Choose from the four pictures in your test booklet the ONE picture which shows what the sentence says. Then, blacken the corresponding space on the answer sheet. For example, you hear:

You see:



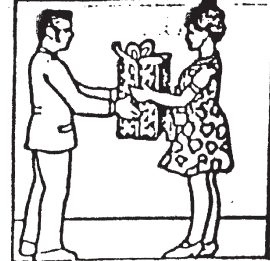
A



B



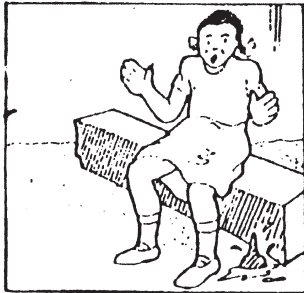
C



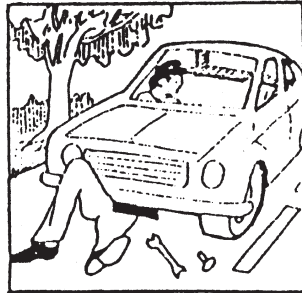
D

The correct answer is picture D, so you would blacken the space with the letter D on the answer sheet.

1.



A



B



C



D

2.



A



B

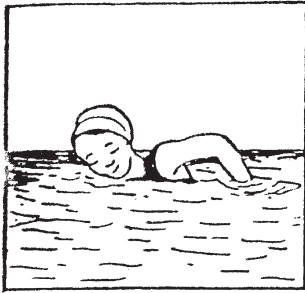


C

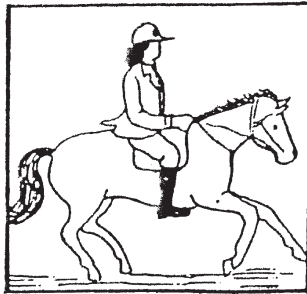


D

3.



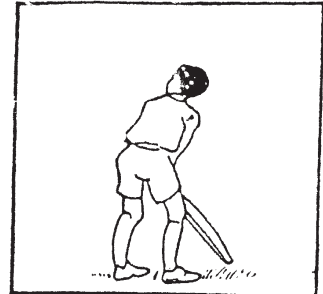
A



B

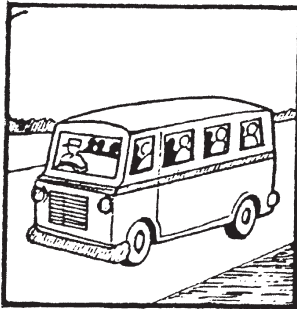


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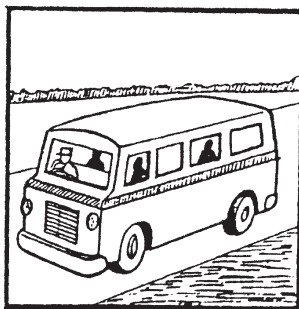


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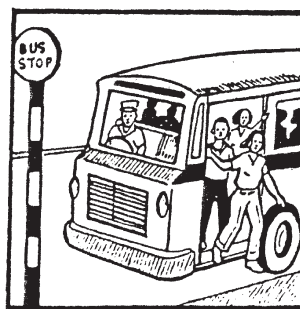
4.



A



B



C



D

5.



A



B



C



D

6.



A



B



C



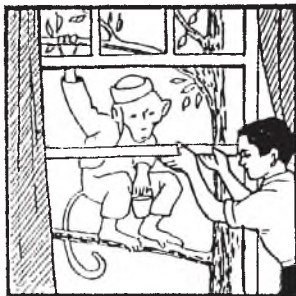
D

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

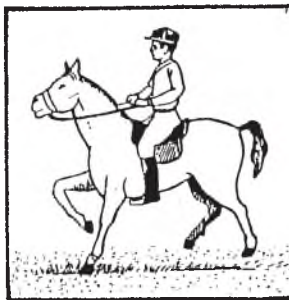
7.



A



B

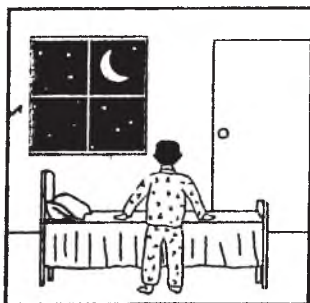


C

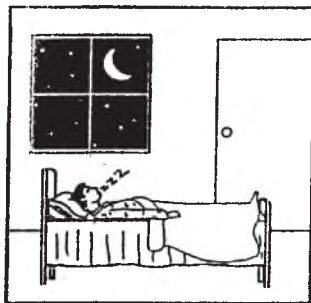


D

8.



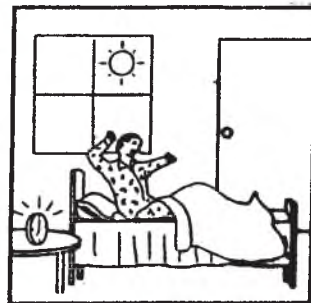
A



B



C



D

SECTION II

Directions: In this section you will hear a number of sentences. Each sentence will be read twice and will be followed by one question or incomplete statement. Four suggested answers for each question are printed in your test booklet. For each question choose the answer which BEST completes the question or statement. For example, you will hear:

Jean est allé chercher des vêtements neufs pour aller à la boum. (Twice)

Qu'est-ce qu'il a acheté?

After examining the suggested answers, you should select the BEST one and blacken the corresponding space on your answer sheet.

- (A) Un journal et un livre
 (B) Une chemise et un pantalon
 (C) Une cassette et un disque
 (D) Une jupe et une robe

Sample Answer

The correct answer is B, so you would blacken the space with the letter B on the answer sheet.

Now listen carefully to the first question in this section.

- | | | | |
|-----|--|-----|--|
| 9. | (A) faire les devoirs
(B) jouer un peu
(C) étudier bien
(D) travailler dur | 13. | (A) Voir le directeur
(B) Sortir
(C) Redoubler
(D) Porter des lunettes |
| 10. | (A) Un malade
(B) Un marin
(C) Un contrôleur
(D) Un conducteur | 14. | (A) Il lance le ballon.
(B) Il s'entraîne le samedi.
(C) Il lit les journaux.
(D) Il prend des vitamines. |
| 11. | (A) Au restaurant
(B) A l'hôtel
(C) Chez le médecin
(D) Chez la concierge | 15. | (A) à la femme de ménage
(B) au patron d'un restaurant
(C) à la réceptionniste
(D) au vendeur |
| 12. | (A) A la ferme
(B) Chez le coiffeur
(C) Chez le dentiste
(D) A l'agence de voyage | 16. | (A) A la pâtisserie
(B) A la parfumerie
(C) Dans la cave
(D) Dans la chambre |

SECTION III

Directions: In this section you will hear a series of public announcements or news items followed by a number of questions. Each announcement or news item will be read twice. For each question there is a choice of four responses or completions. Select the **BEST** response and blacken the corresponding space on your answer sheet. There is no sample question in this section.

- | A. | First selection | B. | Second selection |
|------------|--|------------|--|
| 17. | (A) Au téléphone
(B) A la télévision
(C) Au magnétophone
(D) A la radio | 20. | (A) Des écoliers
(B) Des nageurs
(C) Des passagers
(D) Des employés |
| 18. | (A) Huit heures du soir
(B) Midi
(C) Minuit
(D) Huit heures du matin | 21. | (A) En avion
(B) En voiture
(C) Dans un train
(D) Au bureau |
| 19. | (A) Les invités
(B) Les sportifs
(C) Les informations
(D) Les auditeurs | 22. | (A) En Angleterre
(B) Au Canada
(C) Au théâtre
(D) A l'opéra |

SECTION IV

Directions: A passage in French has just been read to you. You may now study the questions and make notes.

You must select the BEST answer and blacken the corresponding letter on the answer sheet provided.

An Embarrassing Encounter**PART A****PART B**

23. Where should Durand have been that Friday morning?
- (A) At the cinema
(B) In the principal's office
(C) In his maths class
(D) At home
24. How did he escape his teachers' attention?
- (A) By hiding in the toilet
(B) By sitting behind his classmate
(C) By slipping out of school
(D) By going into an abandoned building
25. Why did Durand decide to smoke?
- (A) He felt nervous.
(B) He felt secure.
(C) He felt overconfident.
(D) He felt hungry.
26. Why did he need someone's help?
- (A) To pay for his ticket
(B) To light his cigarette
(C) To explain the film
(D) To show him the exit
27. Who was the person who helped Durand?
- (A) A fellow student
(B) A former teacher
(C) An usher
(D) An old man
28. In what way did he help Durand?
- (A) By helping him to stay calm
(B) By offering a light
(C) By giving him advice
(D) By helping him to find his money
29. What setback did Durand suffer?
- (A) He had to run an errand.
(B) He was ordered to return to school.
(C) The film was cut short.
(D) The weather forced him to seek shelter.
30. Where did Durand's adventure take him in the end?
- (A) To a new school
(B) To a friend's home
(C) To the principal's office
(D) To the new shopping centre

STOP. THIS IS THE END OF THE LISTENING COMPREHENSION. NOW GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE AND WORK THROUGH THE READING COMPREHENSION AS QUICKLY AND AS CAREFULLY AS YOU CAN. IF YOU CANNOT ANSWER A QUESTION, OMIT IT AND GO ON TO THE NEXT ONE. YOU CAN COME BACK TO THE HARDER QUESTION(S) LATER.

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

PART B – ITEMS 31 – 60
READING COMPREHENSION
GENERAL PROFICIENCY

30 minutes

SECTION I

Directions: Each of the following sentences contains a blank space. Below each one are four choices. Select the one which BEST completes the sentence. Then, blacken the corresponding space on the answer sheet.

Example

Quand j'ai je bois de l'eau.

- (A) soif
 (B) faim
 (C) soin
 (D) froid

Sample Answer

● B C D

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>31. Une de calme régnait dans la ville.</p> <p>(A) région
 (B) altitude
 (C) atmosphère
 (D) zone</p> | <p>35. Il va pleuvoir. Le ciel est maintenant de nuages.</p> <p>(A) rempli
 (B) entouré
 (C) plein
 (D) couvert</p> |
| <p>32. Pendant son à l'hôtel il n'y avait pas d'eau.</p> <p>(A) séjour
 (B) voyage
 (C) passage
 (D) secours</p> | <p>36. Quand les enfants parlaient en vacances maman leur a dit:</p> <p>(A) "Bon courage!"
 (B) "Bonne chance!"
 (C) "Bon séjour!"
 (D) "Bonne fête!"</p> |
| <p>33. Jacques s'est couché très tôt ce soir parce qu'il avait</p> <p>(A) soif
 (B) sommeil
 (C) faim
 (D) de la chance</p> | <p>37. Mme Lorraine court vite, mais trop tard! Elle a l'autobus.</p> <p>(A) manqué
 (B) réussi
 (C) pris
 (D) dépassé</p> |
| <p>34. Les enfants n'aiment pas jouer dans la maison, ils préfèrent jouer</p> <p>(A) en bas
 (B) en face
 (C) dedans
 (D) dehors</p> | <p>38. Que dire ce mot-ci?</p> <p>(A) sait
 (B) veut
 (C) fait
 (D) rend</p> |

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

SECTION II

Directions: The situations below contain blank spaces indicating that words are left out. For each blank there are four choices. Select the choice for each blank that is BEST in the context. Then, blacken the corresponding space on the answer sheet.

Example

Dépêchez-vous! Jacques d'arriver de Paris en avion.

1

Il nous attend à

2

1. (A) va
(B) vient
(C) peut
(D) doit

2. (A) l'aéroport
(B) la gare
(C) la station
(D) l'entrepôt

Sample Answer

1. A C D

2. B C D

Première place

L'été _____, je suis _____ à Grand Anse _____ Grenade

39

40

41

avec mes parents _____ super. Nous sommes restés _____

42

43

la mer. Tous les matins, j' _____ à la plage faire de la planche à voile. Le

44

dernier jour de nos vacances, il y a eu une _____ de planche à voile et j'ai

45

gagné. Mes parents m'ont _____.

46

A bientôt,
Marianne

39. (A) dermei
(B) dermiènte
(C) prochain
(D) prochaine

40. (A) ollé
(B) allée
(C) venu
(D) venue

41. (A) à
(B) à la
(C) en
(D) au

42. (A) il est
(B) il était
(C) c'est
(D) c'était

43. (A) au milieu de
(B) au bord de
(C) au lieu de
(D) au bout de

44. (A) allé
(B) irai
(C) irais
(D) allais

45. (A) cour
(B) cours
(C) course
(D) court

46. (A) félicité
(B) félicitée
(C) félicités
(D) félicitées

SECTION III

Directions: The situations below contain blank spaces indicating that words are left out. For each blank there are four choices. Select the choice for each blank that is BEST in the context. Then, blacken the corresponding space on the answer sheet.

Example

Dépêchez-vous! Jacques d'arriver de Paris en avion.

1

Il nous attend à

2

1. (A) va
(B) vient
(C) peut
(D) doit

2. (A) l'aéroport
(B) la gare
(C) la station
(D) l'entrepôt

Sample Answer

1. A C D

2. B C D

Entretien avec une chanteuse

Viva: Que faites-vous _____ vos _____?

47

48

MH: J'aime rester chez moi. J'aime m'occuper _____ mon intérieur. Je vais parfois au

49

cinéma et j'adore le théâtre. Mais je n'aime pas du tout _____ des discothèques. Je n'y

50

vais _____ pour la promotion de mes CD.

51

Viva: Parlez-nous de votre famille.

MH: J'ai deux filles. Je les adore. Vous savez ma famille est plus importante que ma _____

52

comme chanteuse.

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

47. (A) en
(B) avec
(E) pendant
(F) avant
48. (A) loisirs
(B) travail
(C) courses
(D) spectacles
49. (A) avec
(B) a
(C) de
(D) en
50. (A) l'envie
(B) le quartier
(C) le prix
(D) l'ambiance
51. (A) ne.....que
(B) nejamais
(C) ne....plus
(D) nepas
52. (A) succès
(B) carrière
(C) séjour
(D) jour

SECTION IV

Directions: Read the following selections carefully for comprehension. Each selection is followed by a number of incomplete statements or questions. Select the completion, or answer that is **BEST** according to the information given in the selection. Then, blacken the corresponding space on the answer sheet. There is no sample question for this section.

- (a) Items 53 – 56 refer to the following.

**RESTAURANT
MARESOL**

**OUVERT TOUS LES JOURS
De 7h à 23 h**

Ambiance chaleureuse
Pour ceux qui savent apprécier le luxe
On vous propose
Une cuisine et un service raffinés
Selon les désirs d'une clientèle sophistiquée
Tél: 97.56.11

SITUE AU BORD DE LA MER

- 53.** Où se trouve le Restaurant Marésol?
- (A) Près de l'aéroport
(B) Sur la côte
(C) En plein centre ville
(D) A la campagne
- 54.** On peut y dîner
- (A) cinq jours par semaine
(B) six jours par semaine
(C) n'importe quel jour
(D) seulement la nuit
- 55.** Le restaurant se ferme à
- (A) midi
(B) 11 h du matin
(C) 11 h du soir
(D) à minuit
- 56.** Ce restaurant attire des clients qui... .
- (A) apprécient la simplicité
(B) aiment être en pleine ville
(C) préfèrent un repas à prix bas
(D) aiment le luxe

(b) Item 57 – 60 refer to the following.

Après une longue journée au bureau, Pierre rentrait chez lui à pied. En arrivant au coin de la rue où était située une petite maison, il est devenu très inquiet quand il a entendu la voix d'un homme qui disait: "Donne-moi tout l'argent ou je te tuerai."

Pierre a eu peur et a décidé de contacter tout de suite la police, utilisant la cabine téléphonique tout près.

Dix minutes plus tard, une demi-douzaine de policiers, armés de fusils, sont arrivés en deux voitures. Imaginez-vous leur étonnement et leur colère quand ils ont trouvé un homme qui regardait un téléfilm!

57. Qu'est-ce Pierre a cru entendre?

- (A) Une pièce de théâtre
- (B) Un vol à main armée
- (C) Des enfants qui jouaient
- (D) des jeunes gens qui se disputaient

58. Comment a-t-il réagi?

- (A) Il est rentré à la maison.
- (B) Il n'a pas fait attention.
- (C) Il a appelé la police.
- (D) Il a commencé à faire du bruit.

59. Combien de policiers sont arrivés?

- (A) Deux
- (B) Six
- (C) Dix
- (D) Douze

60. Les policiers avaient l'air ... d'apprendre la vérité.

- (A) triste et fâché
- (B) surpris et furieux
- (C) heureux et gai
- (D) inquiet et méchant

IF YOU FINISH BEFORE TIME IS CALLED, CHECK YOUR WORK ON THIS TEST.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATION

FRENCH

SPECIMEN PAPER 2008

Item No.	Key	Item No.	Key
1	C	31	C
2	A	32	A
3	C	33	B
4	A	34	D
5	B	35	D
6	D	36	C
7	C	37	A
8	A	38	B
9	B	39	A
10	A	40	B
11	C	41	B
12	B	42	D
13	D	43	B
14	B	44	D
15	C	45	C
16	A	46	B
17	D	47	C
18	A	48	A
19	C	49	C
20	C	50	D
21	A	51	A
22	A	52	B
23	C	53	B
24	C	54	C
25	A	55	C
26	B	56	D
27	B	57	B
28	B	58	C
29	B	59	B
30	C	60	B

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

JUNE 2004

FRENCH

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St. Michael, Barbados
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FRENCH

GENERAL AND BASIC PROFICIENCY EXAMINATIONS MAY / JUNE 2004

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

This paper, comprising two sections, tested candidates' ability to listen to and understand a number of aural items in the target language as well as to read and understand a number of written items. Both sections require candidates to have sufficient mastery of essential grammar and vocabulary. This year, the performance at the General Proficiency level was good, whereas at the Basic Proficiency level it was satisfactory.

DETAILED COMMENTS

GENERAL PROFICIENCY

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section I – Directed Situations

This section tested candidates' ability to respond in French to a series of situations described in English requiring written responses.

This section was well done, with the majority of candidates scoring between 13 marks and the maximum 25 marks.

All the situations drew on functions/notions, settings and topics that could be reasonably expected to fall within the experience of a 16-year-old candidate. Five of these situations were common to the Basic and General Proficiencies, while five were addressed solely to the General Proficiency candidate.

Points to watch

- Although this practice was not as prevalent as in previous years, some candidates still treat this item as a mini-letter requiring opening and closing greetings. This should be discouraged.
- Candidates should not try to produce literal translations. Instead, they should read each situation carefully to identify the essential elements to which they should respond.
- Candidates who do not respect the rubric in terms of length often go on to make additional errors. These errors would have been avoided if they had produced a single sentence for each situation as was required.
- Candidates are reminded to number the situations as on the question paper, even if they answer the questions in a random order.
- CANDIDATES MUST NOT WRITE EACH SITUATION ON A SEPARATE PAGE.

All situations should be written, as far as possible on a single page, since this is a single question with several elements. Scripts from one centre suggest that candidates were advised to the contrary in the examination room.

* An asterisk (*) indicates wrong form, spelling or structure.

The following table represents a graphic description of the functions/notions as they relate to the settings and topics for each situation.

SITUATION	FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS	SETTINGS/TOPICS
1.	giving information; reason	note/school
2.	interdiction	school
3.	giving reasons	application form
4.	expressing command; urgency	note/home
5.	accepting invitation; specifying drink	restaurant
6.	expressing intention	note
7.	expressing change of plan; reason	home
8.	expressing success; desire	family
9.	giving information	store
10.	giving information; excuse	home/school

Situation 1

Candidates were expected to supply two elements in their answers; one giving information, and the other giving a reason. This situation was generally well managed, for example:

Je ne viendrai pas à l'école aujourd'hui parce que je suis malade.

Some candidates however experienced some difficulty with the 'future' tense and/or the negation.

Situation 2

A significant number of candidates did not handle the interdiction well and the verb **boire** was often misspelt or in some cases rejected in favour of the noun.

***Non mange et boisson dans ici.**

Situation 3

This situation was generally well done. Several candidates however could not find two appropriate adjectives to fulfil the requirements, resulting in answers such as:

Il est facile et *bien

* An asterisk (*) indicates wrong form, spelling or structure.

Situation 4

This situation was generally well done. Some candidates however focused on the mother's anger as an essential element: ***je ne suis pas satisfait avec toi; *pas laisse-moi revenir ...** Others did not assess the sense of immediacy, thus gaining only a partial mark.

Situation 5

In this situation, a significant number of candidates seemed to substitute their 'real life' values for the detail given and asked for food rather than drink. It was however quite well done.

Situation 6

Most problems in this situation concerned the use of **visiter** instead of **rendre visite à**, and the rendering of the future tense in stating the intention to visit again. Many candidates lost marks, too, in stating the non-essential element that they were visiting in the aunt's absence.

Situation 7

The rendering of the negative of **pouvoir** as well as the two-verb pattern presented some difficulty here. There was also a problem with the rendering of 'the following day': ***le prochain jour; *l'après jour**. The situation was however usually well managed.

Situation 8

Many candidates used the verb **passer** to render pass an exam, and too many had difficulty with the word **examen**. There were however a pleasing number using expressions such as: **recevoir de bonnes notes; être reçu à; réussir à**. Some candidates experienced some difficulty with the second part of this situation as they seemed to try a literal translation of the English for example ***je veux venir chez vous pour Noël**.

Situation 9

This situation presented candidates with the greatest challenge of all, since many of them did not know the word **soldes (en solde)**. Many resorted to paraphrases with varying degrees of success: ***Tous les choses doivent aller! *Grand sale!** etc. There were however some good responses, for example:

**Moins 50% sur tous les vêtements dans le magasin!
Tous les vêtements en solde!**

Situation 10

The main difficulty encountered here involved the rendering of the negative of the 'passé composé', for example ***Elle ne peut fini pas**, and the verb **déménager** which many candidates did not seem to know. There were however some good answers. For example:

Monsieur Nicolas, je regrette mais nous avons déménagé pendant le week-end et alors, Rachel n'a pas pu faire tous ses devoirs.

* An asterisk (*) indicates wrong form, spelling or structure.

Section II – Letter/Dialogue/Composition

This section tested candidates' ability to produce in French about 130 – 150 words based on an outline given in English.

This year there was a relatively even distribution of the choice between the letter, dialogue and composition. There was a marked improvement in the quality of the answers to this section although a great number of candidates wrote the complete answer in English or offered a response so garbled that it could only be deemed incomprehensible.

Letter

Many candidates seemed unaware of the correct format for letter-writing, that is, name of town and date, appropriate salutation and ending. The better candidates kept their answers within the word limit. However, there were some vocabulary difficulties which resulted in the use of English expressions or the coining of new 'French' words, such as ***un fund-raiseur**, ***un fund levé activité**, ***un voiture-laver**, ***une vaisselle de voitures**, ***un gâteau-sale**. There were however several instances of good French usage: For example ... **une sorte de séjour linguistique; je compte visiter les sites historiques; ... pour perfectionner ma connaissance de le langue française**.

Dialogue

The weaker candidates who attempted the dialogue generally managed better than those who attempted the letter or composition. On the other hand, the more able candidates who chose the dialogue failed to achieve the same standard as others of similar ability who preferred the other options. Some candidates are still of the impression that the dialogue requires very simple French. Consequently, the answers tend to be very banal with few redeeming features. Several candidates also used the questions and answers practised for the oral exam to the exclusion of a large portion of the rubric.

Essay

Most candidates addressed all aspects of the rubric, although some were confronted with other challenges. The area of greatest concern was vocabulary. Among the various translations for 'an old man' were: ***un vieille homme; un grand homme**. Similarly, a 'pocket' was rendered as: ***pôche; *pouche; *poshe; *poké** and a policeman: ***argent de police; *le gendarmerie; le pompier; le facteur**. There were also grammatical errors such as:

J'ai vu un garçon *mis la main dans le ...
***Il regarde méchant**

Among the excellent expressions observed were:

Quant aux personnes dans le poste, ils se sont regardés complètement étonnées, and
J'étais le dernière en ligne et ce m'enbêtait beaucoup.

Points to watch

- Candidates need to be reminded to address all points adequately in order to achieve the required balance in their effort. To achieve this, they should be given adequate practice in the three types of answers.

* An asterisk (*) indicates wrong form, spelling or structure.

- Candidates must be reminded of the need to respect the suggested 130 – 150 words to avoid being penalised for the length of their answers. It is important, therefore, that they plan their answers, paying attention to the outline given. Whereas answers which are too short almost automatically incur a penalty because the candidates have omitted some essential information, a far more frequent problem is the case of candidates who write too much and do not cover all the points within the word limit.
- Candidates must be advised to address the rubric as set out on the question paper. This year, some candidates wrote responses using topics of their personal choice rather than those given on the exam paper.
- The items in this section usually require candidates to use a range of tenses; present, past and future. The candidate who writes entirely in the present tense may unwittingly convey to the examiner that he/she is unfamiliar or uncomfortable with the use of the past and the future in French.

Areas requiring attention

- (1) Formation and use of the past tenses, especially the imperfect and 'passé composé'
- (2) Formation and use of the future and conditional tenses
- (3) Correct placement of the negative particles with compound tenses
- (4) Use and position of the object pronouns.

Among the excellent essays was:

le vingt mai

Chère Charlotte,

Ça va? Ce matin j'ai eu l'agréable surprise de trouver ta carte dans ma boîte aux lettres.

Mes amies et moi, nous devons faire les préparatifs pour acheter des billets pour notre sortie scolaire à Paris. Ainsi, nous avons décidé de vendre beaucoup de gateaux à notre collègue. Aussi, je me suis acheté un roman humoristique pour lire pendant le vol à Paris. Aussi, j'ai acheté des vêtements en vogue et aux couleurs vives.

Je compte visiter les plus beaux monuments de Paris. Plus particulièrement, La Grande Arche, parce que je voudrais rencontrer les gens du monde entier. Aussi, je voudrais goûter de la belle cuisine française.

J'attends mon voyage avec impatience! Je compte perfectionner ma connaissance de la langue française parce que je me passionne pour le français.

Je vais maintenant te quitter - je dois faire le ménage. Donne le bonjour de ma part à toute la famille.

Au revoir Nikita.

Section III – Reading Comprehension

This section tested candidates' ability to read and comprehend a short passage in the target language. The questions on the passage and the candidates' answers were in English.

The passage Healthy Habits provided a theme to which candidates could relate. The performance was generally good with the majority of candidates scoring between 9 and 14, and a significant number among them scoring the maximum 15 marks.

* An asterisk (*) indicates wrong form, spelling or structure.

Points to watch

- Candidates must be encouraged to read the passage carefully before attempting to answer questions.
- Candidates must pay attention to the numbering of their answers, especially when they do not answer the questions in the order given on the question paper.
- Candidates must be reminded to read each question carefully before attempting to write an answer.
- Answers must be given in simple clear **ENGLISH**.

Vocabulary difficulties

Croissance; goût; affaire (sometimes translate as ‘business’)

An example of a good script:

1. Dairy products are recommended for young children because they are rich in calcium and are essential for building strong bones and for the brain.
2. The factors that influence a person’s dietary habits are tradition and taste.
3. Some persons are forced to change these habits because of certain pathological conditions.
4. This compulsory change can be avoided by increasing the consumption of fruits and vegetables.
5. The inherent qualities of fruit that are mentioned are they are particularly rich in fibre and minerals, protect one from certain conditions and provide a source of Vitamin C.
6. Vitamin C offers effective protection from cardiovascular arrest (heart attack).
7. In order to develop and maintain a healthy body, one needs to consume dairy products, fruits and vegetables and also exercise regularly.

Section IV – Expanded Paragraph

This section tested candidates’ ability to use written cues to produce a continuous and coherent paragraph of 80 – 100 words.

This question presented a challenge to a greater proportion of candidates than last year. This was evidenced by the number of scripts where there was no response and a significant number with minimal responses only. There were however a good number of scripts which fell in the very good to excellent range, many of which received 19/20. On the whole, most candidates who scored above the 3 - 5 mark were in the range 9 - 14.

A clear understanding of the cues is essential in order to produce a reasonably good response. Many candidates did not understand a number of cues and were therefore unable to develop them in a logical and meaningful way. “**Fauteuil**” presented numerous problems. It was even used as a verb, or an adjective, and often inappropriately as a noun: for example:

***Pierre est un fauteuil**

***Pierre fauteuil dans sa chambre**

***Pierre est très fauteuil a regardé la télévision**

Other vocabulary problems surrounded the expressions

tirage loto; gagner gros lot; régler dettes; déception; réveil sonner.

* An asterisk (*) indicates wrong form, spelling or structure.

Points to watch

- Candidates must not write an introduction to the expanded paragraph since in so doing, they use up their quota of words before finishing the paragraph.
- Skilful candidates sometimes manage to use the cues in a different order. However, all but the very best run into difficulties when they do this. Since the cues are given in a logical order, changing the order sometimes requires the use of the pluperfect, a tense which few candidates handle effectively.
- Candidates must copy the cues carefully and not introduce unnecessary errors into their work. This year **fauteuil** was frequently misspelt.
- Teachers and students alike must understand that this item tests different skills from the composition. Teachers must therefore allow the students enough practice in this exercise and every effort must be made to improve their general mastery of grammatical structures, idioms and vocabulary.

The following is an example of a coherent and cohesive expanded paragraph where the cues are used in a logical manner.

Un soir, Pierre était à la maison toute seule. Il avait sommeil mais il n'a pas voulu s'endormir. Alors, il s'est assis sur le fauteuil pour regarder la télévision. Il regardait le tirage loto quand il a rendu compte qu'il a gagné le gros lot! Quelle chance! Pierre ne pouvait pas le croire. Il était très content parce qu'il pouvait se payer tous les choses dont il avait besoin. Il réglait ses dettes quand soudain un réveil a sonné et il s'est réveillé. Ce n'était qu'un rêve ... Une grande déception!

PAPER 03 - Oral Examination

Basic and General Proficiencies

At the General Proficiency level, the overall performance of candidates was good as most candidates seemed to have been adequately prepared. At the Basic Proficiency level, the performance fell below its usual standard.

Section I

This section tested candidates' ability to read a passage aloud.

Comments by oral examiners suggest that there was again some disparity in this year's performance. Whereas some candidates made a serious effort to read with expression, even if there were at times flaws in pronunciation, there were others particularly at the Basic Proficiency level who seemed unprepared for this exercise. This paper was however generally well done by both proficiencies.

Section II

This section tested candidates' ability to respond orally to situations and/or instructions given in English.

The situations emphasize the functional use of language. Candidates who performed well are those whose preparation covered the functions, notions, settings, topics, grammar and lexis outlined in the syllabus.

This year's performance at the General Proficiency level was commendable, but there was a drop in the performance at the Basic Proficiency level when compared with the year 2003. Some candidates however made no attempt at giving the responses.

* An asterisk (*) indicates wrong form, spelling or structure.

Section III

This section tested candidates' ability to participate in a conversation by responding to four questions on four topics (out of six identified in the syllabus).

Students who are comfortable with survival level French should approach the oral examination in a confident manner. Even if a bit nervous, they should not be unduly traumatized when interviewed by an external examiner. In the oral, as in the written paper, a range of performance is expected. But all candidates who have been learning French for four to five years should acquit themselves adequately in this ten to fifteen minute examination. Students must be helped to understand as candidates in the oral examination, that this is a natural progression from the kind of oral activity in which they have been engaged since their first lessons in French.

The topics discussed are all within their areas of experience. Questions of identity, preferences, descriptions of themselves, relatives, and their surroundings are well within the competence of a 16+ candidate.

Candidates must be prepared to expand on their answers, as happens in normal conversation, even when the question posed is a closed question. The candidate who in reply to **Tu as combien de soeurs?** answers **deux**, is losing the opportunity to show his/her proficiency by stating their names, for example, as would easily be the case in normal conversation.

BASIC PROFICIENCY

Paper 2 – Free Response

Section I – Directed Situations

This section tested candidates' ability to respond in French to a series of situations described in English and requiring written responses.

The performance on this section was average.

The five (5) situations addressed only to this proficiency were straight forward, and several candidates performed creditably not only on these situations but also on those situations that were common to both proficiencies. As is usually the case, a significant number of candidates was awarded partial marks because of the omission of required elements. The better scripts ranged from 9 marks to 13 marks out of the maximum 15.

Points to watch

- Candidates must **not** write each situation on a separate page.
- Candidates should not try to produce literal translations. Instead, they should read each situation carefully to identify the essential elements to which they should respond.
- Candidates who do not respect the rubric in terms of length often go on to make additional errors. These errors would have been avoided if they had produced a single sentence for each situation as was required.
- Candidates are reminded to number the situations as on the question paper even if they answer the situations in a random order.

* An asterisk (*) indicates wrong form, spelling or structure.

The following table represents a graphic description of the functions/notions as they relate to the settings and topics for each situation.

SITUATION	FUNCTION/NOTION	SETTING & TOPIC
1.	apology; reason	class
2.	expressing good wishes	home
3.	accepting invitation; refusing invitation	note
4.	making reservations	home
5.	expressing opinion	school
6.	expressing intention	note
7.	expressing change of plan; reason	home
8.	expressing success; desire	family
9.	giving information	store
10.	giving information; excuse	home/school

Situation 1

Candidates were expected to supply two (2) elements and this was generally attempted. Errors were however made especially in the tenses that would indicate ‘what was done’ or ‘what was being done’. In some cases, candidates tried to write too much and therefore made several errors.

Situation 2

Candidates generally knew how to express good wishes. Many correctly wrote **Bonne Chance**, but in some instances, only **Bon** was offered. Some candidates omitted ... **dans tes études**. **Etudes** was usually incorrectly written.

Situation 3

Some candidates attempted structures beyond their grasp, instead of using the simple forms. The words **piscine** and **déjeuner** were not widely known and were often misspelt. Some substitutes noted were: **swimming pool; la natation; *le nege; la plage; and petit déjeuner; dîner, repas, *le mange** respectively. The more capable candidates used expressions such as **Merci pour l’invitation** or **Merci de m’inviter**.

Situation 4

This situation was usually well done. Problems noted here were in the plural agreement of **chambre** — For instance, **Je voudrais deux *chambre**, the word **semaine** was unfamiliar or misspelt, sometimes rendered by ***le week** or **le week-end**.

* An asterisk (*) indicates wrong form, spelling or structure.

Situation 5

It was generally well managed by candidates who mentioned either physical attributes or personality traits of friends. Some noteworthy examples of vocabulary used are:

travailleur; généreuse; drôle; fiable; sympathique.

A small number of candidates used synonyms in their description and therefore could not be fully compensated for their efforts: For example, **Mon amie est belle et jolie.**

Situations 6

This situation created some difficulty as both the present and the future tenses used to respond to ‘you will be absent today’ seemed problematic. A number of candidates, too, wrote **demain** for ‘today’. The reason for the absence was much better managed.

Situation 7

Candidates generally overcame the interdiction, **Il est interdit de ...; Défense de ...; Ne mangez pas ...**, but several grammatical and spelling errors were noted in the second element: ...***de mange**, ***de boit** / ***boîte** / ***boisson** / ***soif dans le** ***lab** / ***labotoir**.

Situation 8

This was also well managed. A small number of candidates misspelt **français**, and some difficulty was also observed with the appropriate form of the present tense of **choisir**.

Situation 9

Candidates experienced some difficulty with the imperative forms using **Fait** or **Faire** instead of **Fais**, and **nettoyer** / **nettoye** instead of **nettoie** in several instances. There were some attempts to paraphrase the imperative forms and the element of immediacy was often omitted.

Situation 10

Many candidates responded appropriately, including both elements. Generally errors were made in the spelling of words such as **jus; coca; boisson** often rendered as ***juis; coco; buisson** respectively.

Section II – Completion of Form or Questionnaire

This section tested candidates’ ability to respond as directed to a questionnaire.

When compared to previous years, the performance on this section was generally only average. Marks ranged from one (1) to ten (10) out of ten (10), but it must be noted that a significant number of candidates scored 3/10.

It is disappointing that after four or five years of French, some candidates still misinterpret **NOM** and **PRENOM**. It seems, too, as if some candidates either disregarded or failed to read the rubric, using names that were not recommended.

Items 3 and 4 were generally correctly answered, but 6 to 9 proved difficult since many candidates were unfamiliar with vocabulary such as **Espèces; Collégiens; Linguistique**. Also reason for concern is the inability of so many candidates to correctly produce a date in French. Among the incorrect expressions observed were: ***la une de octobre**; ***Octobre un/une**; ***octobre de premier**; ***1st le octobre**; ***le un octobre**.

* An asterisk (*) indicates wrong form, spelling or structure.

Section III – Gapped Passage

This section tested candidates' ability to respond to a short completion item.

Candidates were required to show knowledge of simple vocabulary items in some cases, and a combination of vocabulary and grammar in others. The overall performance in this section was fairly good, with the majority of candidates scoring above 5/10. Several grammatical weaknesses were however evident, such as the form of the 'emphatic pronoun'; agreement of adjectives and nouns; the present tense of the verbs **devoir** and **obliger**; the use of the form **ton** before **amie**.

Section IV – Reading Comprehension

This section tested candidates' ability to answer questions on a Reading Comprehension selection based on graphic or written material.

Candidates did not fare very well in this section since many of them seemed unfamiliar with some key words such as **modéliste**, **couturiers** and **bourse**. A substantial number was however able to score between ten (10) and thirteen (13) out of fifteen (15).

Questions 1 + 2

Very few candidates answered the questions correctly.

Question 3

The minority of candidates scored full marks on this question.

Question 4

Only a small number of candidates produced satisfactory answers. The word **couturiers** was generally incorrectly interpreted.

Question 5

A large number of candidates answered this question correctly.

Question 6

This question was fairly well done. Some candidates received only a partial mark because they omitted '**Alliance Française**' from their answer.

Question 7

Answers were generally correct.

Question 8

There were very few correct answers. The misinterpretation of **bourse** was widespread.

Questions 9 + 10

There were not many accurate answers. Many candidates gave information needed for question 9 as question 10 and vice versa.

To improve performance in this section, candidates must be exposed from early to a wide variety of reading passages. Candidates must also be familiarized with comprehension skills and techniques. Teachers practising this skill with candidates should emphasize that precision and clarity of expression are fundamental requirements.

* An asterisk (*) indicates wrong form, spelling or structure.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2005

FRENCH

FRENCH
GENERAL AND BASIC PROFICIENCY EXAMINATIONS
MAY/JUNE 2005

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

This paper, comprising two sections, tested candidates' ability to listen to and understand a number of aural items in the target language and to read and understand a number of written items. Both sections require candidates to have sufficient mastery of essential grammar and vocabulary. The good performance at both the General and Basic Proficiencies levels was comparable to the performance in previous years.

DETAILED COMMENTS

General Proficiency

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section I – Directed Situations

This section tested candidates' ability to respond in French to a series of situations described in English and requiring written responses.

The majority of candidates attempted to answer most of the questions. Even the weaker candidates were therefore able to gain between 5 and 9 marks, as a result. Many candidates scored between 13 and 16 marks. The top-scoring candidates gained between 21 and 25 marks.

All the situations drew on functions/notions and settings and topics (see the syllabus) that could be within the experience of a 16-year-old candidate. Five of the directed situations were common to the Basic and General Proficiencies, while five were addressed solely to the General Proficiency candidate.

Points to watch:

- Candidates must read each situation carefully paying close attention to what is required by the situation.
- Candidates are reminded to number the situations as on the question paper, even if they answer the situations in random order.
- Candidates are **STRONGLY ADVISED** to desist from writing each situation on a new page.

The following table represents a graphic description of the functions/notions as they relate to the settings and topics for each situation.

SITUATION	FUNCTION/NOTION	SETTING & TOPIC
1	Polite request	Home
2	Expressing regret at declining an invitation and giving an explanation for the refusal	School/home
3	Making a request; expressing hobbies	Letter/email to a French magazine
4	Forbidding something	Notice in a public place
5	Telling someone to do something	Text message
6	Expressing a price reduction	Advertisement in a store
7	Expressing absence and illness	School
8	Asking which + future	Letter/email to a pen pal
9	Asking how many + past	Survey in a music store
10	Explaining the reason behind an unfinished	Home

Situation 1

Candidates were expected to supply two elements in their answer: one expressing the request, the second stating the item to be bought. Many candidates were able to express a request appropriately, even using the subjunctive in some cases, for example, “*Je veux que tu m’achètes....*”. There were still far too many instances of candidates misspelling *maman*. Another fairly common error was the use of *vous* with a family member. This problem also surfaced in item 5. On the whole, most candidates earned some marks for a fully or partially correct answer.

Situation 2

Candidates were expected to supply two elements – the refusal and the explanation. While most candidates had no difficulty in expressing regret, choosing *désolé; je regrette*, for example, some students used *pardon*, which was inappropriate in this context. Candidates also need to be reminded that *visiter* and *rendre visite à* are not interchangeable. Despite these errors, this item was well handled by the majority of candidates. Answers such as “*J’aimerais aller au cinéma avec toi, mais malheureusement je dois faire mes devoirs*” were produced by very proficient candidates.

Situation 3

In this item, candidates were expected to write seeking a pen pal with a certain (named) hobby. Some candidates performed poorly on this item because they a) wrongly interpreted ‘for’ to mean ‘on behalf of’ or b) wrote stating **their** hobby instead of the hobby they wished the pen pal to engage in. Surprisingly, some candidates had difficulty expressing hobbies although this is a notion which is very commonly treated in language at this level. Candidates who had no difficulty in understanding what was required in this item managed to request a pen pal and the hobby practised by the potential pen pal in many creative ways. The use of the telegraphic style as in the following answer was quite appropriate: *Jeune garçon de seize ans veut correspondre avec jeune fille qui aime aller au cinéma.*

Situation 4

Many candidates were very comfortable expressing interdiction or prohibition. The more proficient candidates produced statements beginning “*Défense de/Interdit de/Il est défendu/interdit de*”, i.e. statements that were more appropriate in the context of a sign than a simple negative command. Students must be given a fair amount of practice in producing the grammar required, so that answers like, “*Défense de manger dans le magasin!*” would be effortlessly produced by the majority of candidates. *Magasin* was misspelt by quite a number of candidates.

Situation 5

Candidates produced many interesting answers in response to this stimulus. Although some candidates did not include a word meaning urgently or immediately, their answers contained an element suggesting why urgent action was required e.g. that they needed an item for a project or a test the following day; or before a shop/ the bank/the post-office closed; or because someone was ill and so on. A number of candidates overgeneralized the spelling of *maman* and modelled the spelling of *papa* on the spelling of *maman*. The following answer which received full marks was indicative of the creative answers given, “*Papa, maman a dit que tu dois faire les achats pour ce soir pour le dîner.*”

Situation 6

In this situation some candidates lost marks because they did not read the item carefully or did not know the difference between ‘on sale’ and ‘for sale’. But it was pleasing to note the large number of candidates who produced *solde* and *en promotion*, or other expressions conveying that a price reduction was in effect. These candidates demonstrated their familiarity with the language commonly found in shopping contexts. “*Solde sur les jupes*” was concise and appropriate and received full marks.

Situation 7

This situation was nonproblematic for most candidates who managed to produce a wide range of reasons to explain their teacher’s absence on grounds of illness. However, it was somewhat unsettling to see the number of candidates who were unable to spell *professeur*. Students must be taught the right abbreviations for *monsieur* (M.), *madame* (Mme) and *mademoiselle* (Mlle) and be reminded that unlike the English rule of placing a full-stop or period after abbreviations, this is not always the case in French. Neither the abbreviated form of *madame* or *mademoiselle*, for example, is followed by a full-stop. The following answer produced by a more proficient candidate attracted a small penalty because of the lack of noun/adjective agreement, “*Madame Dupont sera *absent aujourd’hui parce qu’elle a attrapé un rhume.*” But most candidates obtained full marks with fairly straightforward answers like the following, “*Madame Rousseau n’est pas ici parce qu’elle est malade.*”

Situation 8

Situations 8 and 9 underscored a point made by the oral examiners who noted that far too many candidates were unable to respond appropriately to question words. Candidates are unable to distinguish *combien* from *comment*, *quand* from *quel* . . . Teachers can help students to internalise the use of *quel*, by drilling the more familiar *Quelle heure/quel temps/quel âge*. But students must understand their responsibility to learn common vocabulary items like *matière*. Upon completion of the 16+ syllabus, every candidate should be able to speak confidently about the subjects they do, those they like or do not like. While many candidates were able to pose the required question to their penfriends, too many were hampered by a lack of appropriate vocabulary and their inability to use the future tense with confidence. A trend was also noted in the use of the conditional in contexts requiring the future. An accurate answer was, “*Quelles matières vas-tu faire l’année prochaine?*”

Situation 9

As in situation 8, the question form was problematic for some candidates. Many, however, produced the two elements required a) How many + item? b) notions of past (tense plus expression of time). The two most common errors were the use of the full partitive after combien – *Combien *des CD...* instead of *Combien de CD...* and the lack of agreement with the preceding direct object “*..as-tu *acheté l’année dernière?*” instead of *as-tu achetés l’année dernière?*”

Situation 10

Performance on this item was good except in those cases where candidates did not include an element to express that a chore was incomplete. A good response was the following, “*Je n’ai pas fini le ménage parce que je devais donner un coup de main à Verena.*” The candidate who said, “*Maman, je suis parti aider mon ami et je finirai *travail ce soir*” fully conveyed the idea of an incomplete task and thus was only penalised for the missing article before *travail*.

Section II – Letter/Dialogue/Composition

This section tested candidates’ ability to produce a piece of French of about 130-150 words based on an outline given in English.

The answers in Section II ranged from excellent to very poor. On a positive note there seemed to be fewer ‘no responses’ in this year’s scripts. Nonetheless, there continues to be a number of candidates who are unable to produce more than a few inaccurate sentences, demonstrating that they are clearly not up to the demands of this item.

This year’s candidates chose to do the letter, dialogue and composition in approximately equal numbers. Quite a number of the more proficient candidates selected the dialogue, contrary to the usual trend of the more proficient candidates choosing the letter or composition and the less proficient candidates choosing the dialogue.

Each selection required candidates to produce vocabulary appropriate to the situation described. It was evident that some candidates tried to use chunks of language that they had committed to memory. This was a good strategy when used by more proficient candidates, but in the case of less proficient candidates this strategy sometimes backfired since the words and expressions had little relevance to the topic selected. Similarly it has been noted that candidates produce a string of names of places to insert in their writing – a good strategy when used appropriately, but a poor one when afflicted by incorrect spelling or inappropriate context, such as the candidate who was delighted by the churches he or she visited in China!

While there was the usual overreliance on translation for unknown vocabulary items or expressions, resulting in corruptions like **le cadeau trip* and **l’école travaille*, the following examples demonstrate the level of language produced by some candidates:

- Ce qui a fait éclater de rire les autres...
- Pourquoi est-il tellement important?
- A mi-chemin, quelque chose d’horrible s’est passé...
- Il m’est arrivé quelque chose de magnifique...
- Je me suis amusé tant que je pense mettre de l’argent à côté afin de visiter la France l’année prochaine.

Candidates also needed to have good control of essential grammar, for example, sufficient mastery of the present, past tenses, and the future. As has been noted in the past, structures that are considered to be well within the competence of the 16+ candidate were not always well handled. Weak areas included agreements

(subject-verb, noun-adjective), the position of object pronouns, the negative, word orders and the frequent omission of the auxiliary in the *passé composé*. The very best candidates excelled not only in the range of vocabulary and idiomatic expressions they produced, but also impressed with their sophisticated handling of tense, voice and syntax in general.

Points to watch:

- **Candidates must be reminded to obey the limit of 130-150 words.** This warning needs to be addressed to all candidates, more and less proficient, since the practice of going beyond the word limit is very widespread. It is important that candidates plan their answers, making sure to pay attention to the outline given, and above all, making sure not to exceed the stipulated number of words. When candidates do not obey the word limit, they often have little time or space to develop the last element of their selection, within the 130-150 word limit. The candidate who only develops three out of the four elements given is therefore penalized.
- Candidates need to develop the habit of proofreading their written work. Frequent spelling errors and omissions may be avoided with just a little more care.
- Candidates must bear in mind the most common mistakes found at this level and try very hard to eliminate them from their writing.

Comments on each option

Letter

The letter was handled fairly well by most of the candidates who chose this option. Many candidates tried to include all four elements of the rubric producing adequately developed, balanced letters. Most candidates produced the correct date and address including all six elements required, e.g. Kingstown, le 2 septembre 2005. There was also a good attempt by many candidates to produce appropriate beginnings and endings. Many candidates are to be commended for their use of a wider range of appropriate vocabulary and idiomatic expressions.

Dialogue

As stated earlier there were quite a number of good dialogues this year. There is still a tendency among the less proficient candidates to spend too much time, i.e. use too many words, on greetings between the two speakers. Another trend noted this year was the use of an introduction to the dialogue. Teachers should advise students against this since any introduction is included in the word count. Some candidates presented the dialogue in the form of a composition and thereby attracted a penalty.

Composition

Although all three options were fairly evenly distributed among the candidates, the composition proved to be the most popular option this year. Many candidates were able to produce a fairly wide range of vocabulary and structures in their compositions.

The following is an example of an excellent letter:

Ste. Anne, le 5 septembre

*Chèr Jean-Paul,

Quoi de neuf? J'espère que tu as passé *des bonnes vacances d'été. Moi, je me suis beaucoup amusée. Je viens de retourner d'un voyage super à la *Republique Dominicaine que j'ai gagné. Un samedi après-midi je cherchais une jupe dans un magasin quand un homme m'a dit << *Felicitations! Vous êtes la quinzième cliente et vous avez gagné un voyage à la *Republique Dominicaine!>>

Le vol était assez long, mais très confortable. Je suis restée cinq jours dans un hôtel de luxe et pendant mon séjour j'ai fait du tourisme dans la capitale, j'ai joué au beach-volley et je *suis montée Pico Duarte, la plus grande montagne *dans la Caraïbe. A Pico Duarte, j'ai essayé de parler en espagnol avec un homme aux beaux yeux marron, mais je ne *savait aucun mot d'espagnol!

*Dans le *futur, je voudrais y retourner pour faire des études universitaires, mais d'abord je dois faire quelques cours d'espagnol!

Amitiés,
Sophie

Section III - Reading Comprehension

This section tested candidates' ability to read and comprehend a short passage in the target language. The questions on the passage and the candidates' answers were in English.

The passage "A Hero's Tale" was handled quite well by most candidates. Generally, candidates understood the passage, although a number of candidates seemed unable to convey their ideas clearly in English when answering the questions. Quite a number of candidates scored full marks in this item.

Question 1

Most candidates answered this question very easily, providing answers indicating the 'who' and 'where' elements of the story. Candidates correctly said that two tourists found themselves in difficulty in the sea/in the water in Ste. Anne.

Question 2

Although most candidates understood the passage well enough to answer correctly that the tourists were very afraid/traumatised/panic-stricken - according to the text they experienced the greatest fear of their lives - some supplied as their answer that the tourists were thankful or grateful, although the notion of gratitude does not occur until much later in the unfolding of the story.

Question 3

The correct answer here was that he heard a child's desperate shouts. Many candidates, either deliberately or accidentally translated the French *enfant* by infant.

Question 4

Some candidates paid no attention to the word *sans* before *hésiter* and in so doing conveyed the exact opposite of what was stated in the passage that is that Philippe responded immediately, with no hesitation, diving into

the water to reach the tourists. Candidates need to read the comprehension text very carefully, paying attention to vocabulary and grammar.

Question 5

Most candidates understood that the effort to reach the tourists cost Philippe and he was unable to complete the rescue because he was too tired. This question was well done by most candidates.

Question 6

The majority of candidates answered the first part of the question correctly stating that Philippe called the dog. The less proficient candidates had difficulty supplying the second reason – that Fido sensed that there was something serious amiss. There were some very creative answers which saw Fido going to play with Philippe or with a ball or with the tourists in the water.

Question 7

In the final questions, candidates were required to justify their reason for selecting the hero of the story. Most candidates chose Fido as the hero, since he was the one who actually rescued the tourists and Philippe. Some candidates selected Philippe as the hero, reasoning that it was his swift response to the tourists' plight and his subsequent appeal to his dog that saved the day. Both answers received full marks. It was pleasing to see how candidates marshalled their most persuasive English language skills to convey their supporting arguments on why Fido or Philippe was the more appropriate hero.

Section IV – Expanded paragraph

This section tested candidates' ability to use written cues to produce a continuous and coherent paragraph of 80-100 words.

This year, again, the performance of candidates in this section varied from excellent to poor. Some candidates produced paragraphs written in a logical manner. They used all the cues given and marked transitions with suitable link words. They also used appropriate vocabulary and idioms and showed mastery in the use of the structures they chose.

However, a number of candidates still seem unclear about what is expected in this question. One candidate produced a "paragraph" that was of equal length to his or her essay. Although candidates are expected to conjugate infinitives, include articles, and obey all the conventions of normal writing, given the number of words at their disposal, candidates must be very concise in reporting the information given as cues. Candidates need to be reminded that the inclusion of irrelevant details such as hobbies, favourite food or address more often than not leads to exceeding the word limit.

Many of the problems noted for the longer free response item in Section II re-appeared here, for example, poor construction of the passé composé, poor command of tenses, even difficulty with some fundamental grammatical elements like subject pronouns and the French possessive. The Pluperfect and the passive voice were very clearly foreign concepts to many General Proficiency candidates. This lack of mastery is in sharp contrast to the work produced by more proficient candidates who used appropriate tense markers; a good range of idiomatic expressions and wrote sentences such as, "...il est retourné au magasin pour l'acheter. Malgré son effort en y arrivant ...la chemise a été déjà vendue."

Points to watch:

- Candidates must be careful to keep within the length stipulated (80-100 words) for the expanded paragraph. Candidates must not write an introduction to their paragraph, before beginning to use the cues, as they squander in this way, some of the words at their disposal. Candidates who do this find themselves unable to include all the cues, because of their long preamble, and are penalized for failing to complete their paragraph or include all the clues within the stipulated length.
- Candidates must try not to introduce unnecessary errors into their work by copying carelessly words that have been supplied to them in the cues.

The following is an example of a very good extended paragraph:

La semaine dernière *était l'anniversaire de Patrick et il *avait 15 ans. Il a voulu acheter une chemise pour sa boum. Il est allé en ville et il a vu une chemise bleue layette dans *une magasin. Donc il est rentré chercher l'argent chez lui. En retournant dans la magasin, quelle surprise, la chemise bleue layette a *vendu! Lui, il était très triste et il *n'avait pas avoir une chemise à porter à sa boum. Ce soir, son père est arrivé à la maison avec la même chemise. Patrick était très content de *le voir.

Basic Proficiency

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section I – Directed Situations

This section tested candidates' ability to respond in French to a series of situations described in English and requiring written responses.

The majority of candidates attempted to answer most of the questions. The more proficient candidates earned between 8 and 14 marks. There were, however, a few scripts where candidates scored between 0 and 1 mark.

All the situations drew on functions/notions and settings and topics that could be within the experience of a 16 year old candidate. Five of the directed situations were common to both proficiencies; while five were addressed solely to the Basic Proficiency candidate.

Points to watch:

- Candidates must read each situation carefully paying close attention to what is required by the situation.
- Candidates are reminded to number the situations as on the question paper, even if they answer the situations in random order.
- Candidates are STRONGLY ADVISED to desist from writing each situation on a new page.

SITUATION	FUNCTION/NOTION	SETTING & TOPIC
1	Expressing a favourable comment and encouragement	At school
2	Expressing date and time	Email
3	Requesting permission	At school
4	Expressing good wishes	Birthday card
5	Describing someone	Written statement
6	Polite request	Home
7	Expressing regret at declining an invitation and giving an explanation for the refusal	School/home
8	Making a request; expressing hobbies	Letter/email to a French magazine
9	Forbidding something	Notice in a public place
10	Telling someone to do something	Text message

Situation 1

Candidates generally had no difficulty in expressing a favourable comment, although many were unable to express words of encouragement.

A suitable answer would have been, “*Très bien, continue à travailler.*”

Situation 2

Most candidates managed to produce a date and time in an acceptable format. A surprising number used combinations of English and Spanish. Candidates could have adopted a telegraphic style in their answer. Some candidates struggled unsuccessfully to use a future form. An appropriate answer was, “*Il sera à Fort-de-France le 5 janvier à 8h.*”

Situation 3

Many candidates were unable to produce the element of permission. Vocabulary posed a problem to many who did not know the word for appointment and could not think of other ways to convey the information. A good response was, “*Est-ce que je peux partir pour aller chez le médecin?*”

Situation 4

Candidates were required to express two wishes in a birthday card. Some candidates managed to produce ‘*Bon anniversaire*’ spelled correctly. There were far fewer examples of a correctly written second wish of the type, “*Ne travaille pas trop.*”

Situation 5

Candidates were expected to produce two elements to describe a thief involved in a robbery they had witnessed. Many descriptions centred on the physical features of the culprit, for example, “*Il est petit et il est chauve.*”

Situation 6

Candidates were expected to supply two elements in their answer: one expressing the request, the second stating the item to be bought. A common error was the inclusion of both *tu* and *vous* forms in addressing the parent. This error also occurred in item 10.

Situation 7

Candidates were expected to supply two elements – the refusal and the explanation. Answers produced by the candidates included: “*Je suis désolée Magali, mais je ne suis pas libre*” ; “*Je ne peux pas aller au cinéma parce qu’il faut que je reste à la maison avec ma petite sœur.*”; and “*Je suis désolé, ma chère, je ne peux pas sortir avec toi ce soir.*”

Situation 8

Vocabulary posed a problem to many candidates who did not know the word for pen pal and were unable to supply another appropriate answer. A good answer was, “*Je voudrais avoir un correspondant qui aime le football.*”

Situation 9

A number of candidates at the Basic Proficiency were also able to produce suitable answers in the item which was common to both proficiencies, for example, “*Interdit de manger ici.*”

Situation 10

Many candidates managed to produce an answer telling their parent to do something. As at the General Proficiency level, there was sometimes no word or expression to convey the urgency of the demand.

Section II – Completion of Form or Questionnaire

This section tested candidates’ ability to complete a short questionnaire in the target language.

This question was generally well done. No candidate scored less than 5 marks. Several candidates scored full marks. A large majority gained 8 to 9 marks.

A frequent error made by many candidates was using *nom* for *prénom* and vice versa. Far too many candidates make this mistake every year, losing two easily gained marks. Questions 6 and 9 were the items that gave most candidates difficulty.

Section III – Gapped passage

This section tested candidates’ ability to supply 10 lexical or grammatical items to complete a short passage in the target language.

Many candidates produced correct answers to items 8 and 9. But the overall performance is somewhat disappointing for what is a very manageable exercise. About a dozen candidates gained full marks. A number of candidates do not perform as well as possible because their vocabulary is minimal or because they make errors with very basic grammatical structures either through carelessness or ignorance. The following answer was produced by a candidate who understood the passage very well but lost quite a few marks through carelessness:

Chère Catherine

Je suis vraiment très *content de pouvoir correspondre avec toi. Mon amie Suzette m'a donné *vous adresse et elle m'a dit que tu es très sympa. J'ai *un sœur, mais je n'ai pas de frères. Et toi, tu as *en frères et sœurs? Alors *ecrive-moi bientôt.

Chantal

* Indicates an error

Section IV – Reading Comprehension

The performance in this question was good on the whole. A few candidates scored full marks. Many others scored between 8 and 14. The following answers would have gained the candidate full marks.

Question 1

The name of the restaurant is “La Carambole”.

Question 2

The occasion which is being celebrated on May 29th is Mother’s Day.

Question 3

They are celebrating the occasion with lunch and a dance.

Question 4

An adult ticket costs 45 euros.

Question 5

That person would have to pay 45 euros.

Question 6

All mothers receive a glass of champagne and a rose.

Question 7

The first course is tomatoes and shrimp.

Question 8

Desert is ice cream, cake and fruit salad.

Question 9

The name of the group is Necktar.

Question 10

You can call that number for information and for reservations.

Paper 03 – Oral Examination

Basic and General Proficiencies

This paper tested candidates' ability a) to read aloud a short passage in the target language; b) to produce appropriate responses in the target language in a number of simulations; and c) to respond in the target language to general questions based on 4 out of 6 topics indicated in the syllabus.

Performance in the oral examination ranged from excellent to poor, with a number of candidates scoring full marks in this paper. On the other hand, there were candidates who scored no marks. This range of performance is also reflected in the very mixed feedback submitted by different examiners depending on the centres where they conducted the examination.

Given the communicative focus of the syllabus, it is expected that candidates at both proficiencies would make a reasonable showing in this paper. While this is so for the more proficient candidates at both proficiencies, oral examiners expressed their disappointment that some candidates seemed able to answer only minimally or not at all to even the most basic questions in Section III. A number of examiners also expressed their concern about the level of difficulty of some of the questions and attributed the poor performance by some candidates to this fact. Generally though, the comments made by oral examiners indicated that candidates' performance was a reflection of their level of readiness for the examination.

Reading

At both proficiency levels, candidates' performance in reading demonstrated their level of comfort and familiarity with the target language. The oral examiners found that while some candidates read fluently, with mostly correct pronunciation, good expression and suitable intonation, many seemed not to understand what they were reading. Additionally, examiners commented on a) the pronunciation of the ending of verb forms in the third person plural; b) the lack of liaisons in places where these were necessary; and c) anglicization of certain French words.

Situations

Examiners expressed their surprise at candidates' inability to ask the price of an item, talk about the weather and many of the common topics of oral interaction. It was felt that candidates should have been able to produce answers to those topics far more spontaneously. All the candidates are expected to be able to respond appropriately in familiar contexts for the 16+ language learner, while the more proficient candidates are expected to be able to handle the more challenging situations. In this part of the oral paper, examiners rated candidates' performance as excellent to unsatisfactory. Oral examiners felt that there were too many instances of candidates simply responding "*Je ne sais pas*" or "*Je ne comprends pas*" without making any attempt to

provide an answer.

Conversation

As in sections I and II, performance ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory in the conversation. The graded nature of the items in this section - as in all three papers of the examination - from pre-CSEC level questions requiring candidates to produce their name, their age, their favourite sport or hobby, to CSEC level questions about their school/home/ and wider environment should allow all candidates to perform comfortably in some areas of the examination and the better candidates to perform very well in all areas of the examination.

Oral examiners' expressed concern about the challenge posed by some questions in the current examination as well as the level of preparation of the candidates. Both sets of concerns have been noted. As an example of the latter issue, one examiner stated, "Candidates could not understand questions beginning with words such as *combien, qui, comment, qu'est-ce que, quand, pourquoi* and *où*." This difficulty with question forms was also seen in the written examinations.

General Comments

Students must be helped to understand that their participation as candidates in the oral examination is a natural progression from the kind of oral activities in which they had been engaged since Form 1. Candidates could be trained to expand on their answers, as happens in normal conversation, even when the question posed is a closed question. The candidate who in reply to the question, "*Combien de frères ou de sœurs as-tu?*" answers "*Deux frères. Mon grand frère s'appelle John et mon petit frère s'appelle Richard.*" obviously shows more ease and familiarity in the language than the candidate who stops his/her answer at "Deux".

Examiners too are asked to demonstrate a level of flexibility in their examination techniques. It is understandable that a candidate living in a country that has been severely affected by volcanic activity, hurricane, or floods, may be constrained to talk about public buildings in his/her area. But a candidate should not feel at a disadvantage, because there is no public building in his/her immediate environs. There is nothing to prevent such a candidate from talking about places of worship; fire stations/post-offices/police stations real or imagined in the nearest village/town/district/city or even the capital of his/her country.

Teachers can encourage their students to appreciate that the oral examination is not a test of content information – it is immaterial whether they live in a city or village or have no or multiple public buildings in their environment – but a test of skill and their opportunity to show off their ability to communicate on a restricted number of topics (four per year) in the target language. Students who are comfortable speaking French bring a level of confidence to the oral examination and acquit themselves quite well. The reports coming from the various examiners in the various territories suggest that well-prepared candidates are in no way traumatized by having to participate in a 10-15 minute oral interview with an unknown examiner. Thus while the examination caters to a range of mastery from less proficient to more proficient candidates, there is a strong feeling expressed by oral examiners as by their counterparts in the written examinations, that even the weaker candidates could perform better with more practice.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

JUNE 2006

FRENCH

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FRENCH

GENERAL AND BASIC PROFICIENCY EXAMINATIONS

MAY/JUNE 2006

GENERAL COMMENTS

There were improved levels of performance in both proficiencies in which this subject was offered. Many candidates displayed acceptable to good levels of linguistic competence, spontaneity, and grammatical accuracy. Teachers are encouraged to continue exposing students to real-life situations, finding ways to be innovative in making the learning of the difficult aspects of the language enjoyable.

DETAILED COMMENTS

General and Basic Proficiencies

Paper 1 – Multiple Choice

This paper, comprising two sections, tested candidates' ability to listen to and understand a number of aural items in the target language and to read and understand a number of written items. Both sections of the paper require candidates to have sufficient mastery of essential grammar and vocabulary. The good performance at both the General and Basic Proficiencies mirrored the performance in previous years.

General Proficiency

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section I – Directed Situations

This section tested candidates' ability to respond in French to a series of situations described in English and requiring written responses.

The majority of candidates attempted to answer most of the questions. Even the weaker candidates were therefore able to gain between 5 and 9 marks, as a result. Many candidates scored between 13 and 16 marks. The top-scoring candidates gained between 21 and 25 marks.

All the situations drew on functions/notions and settings and topics (see the syllabus) that could be within the experience of a 16-year-old candidate. Five of the directed situations were common to the Basic and General Proficiencies, while five were addressed solely to the General Proficiency candidate.

Points to watch

- Candidates must read each situation carefully paying close attention to what is required by the situation.
- Candidates are reminded to number the situations as on the question paper, even if they answer the situations in random order.
- Candidates are STRONGLY ADVISED not to write each situation on a new page.

* An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

The following table represents a graphic description of the functions/notions as they relate to the settings and topics for each situation.

SITUATION	FUNCTION/NOTION	SETTING & TOPICS
1	Friendly request; time and place	Public place
2	Friendly request; urgency	Home
3	Asking questions: identifying someone	Email to a friend
4	Not working (mechanical object)	Notice in a public place
5	Offering congratulations; expressing a wish	Letter/note
6	Expressing lateness; supplying a cause for being late	School
7	Expressing prohibition + person/group	Notice in a public place
8	Expressing location in a past context: future + time	Home
9	Expressing a reminder; chore	Home
10	Expressing change of mind: proposing an alternative activity	Home

Situation 1

Candidates were expected to supply two elements in their answer: one expressing the friendly request, the second stating place and time. Many candidates were able to produce expressions such as “*rencontre-moi; retrouve-moi; cherche-moi; viens me chercher* etc.” The vocabulary item “*aéroport*” was misspelt by many candidates. There is still inconsistent use of “*tu*” and “*vous*”. Even those candidates who correctly used “*tu*” to address their pen-friend, sometimes concluded their request with the polite form “*s’il vous plaît*” instead of the familiar “*s’il te plaît*”.

Situation 2

Many candidates used “*téléphoner*” and “*appeler*” appropriately to convey “get in touch with”. However, a number of candidates omitted the preposition “*à*” after “*téléphoner*”. “*Aussitôt que possible*” and “*le plus tôt possible*” were supplied by many candidates. Surprisingly a number of candidates who opted to use “*maintenant*” to express immediacy and urgency were unable to produce the correct spelling of this high frequency word.

Situation 3

This item revealed that the formation of questions continues to pose problems to many candidates. A very common mistake was the rendering of who by “*Où?*” instead of “*Qui?*” A suitable answer would have been, “*Qui est le garçon aux lunettes?/Qui est la fille à côté de toi?*”

Situation 4

A fair number of candidates produced correct expressions to indicate that a mechanical object was not working. They tended however to stumble when it came to saying “take the stairs”.

* An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Situation 5

Candidates produced many interesting answers in response to this stimulus. Many candidates supplied an appropriate expression for congratulations—although in some instances “*félicitations*” was incorrectly spelt. Although the more obvious answer was congratulations + wish relating to the cousin’s endeavours, for example, “*Félicitations d’avoir gagné le prix et bon séjour.*” those candidates who supplied a wish relating to themselves e.g. *Achète-moi _____ à Paris* were not penalized for inappropriacy. A simple but correct and fully appropriate “*Je suis contente pour toi, bonnes vacances et bonne chance*” earned full marks.

Situation 6

In situation 6, proficient candidates produced answers such as the following “*Ma fille va être en retard parce qu’elle aura un rendez-vous demain chez la dentiste.*” Less proficient candidates had difficulty with **retard* vs. *être en retard*; the formation of the future tense; the vocabulary item “appointment” and so on.

Situation 7

Recently, candidates have demonstrated a very good command of the structure *interdit/défense de + infinitive*. Unfortunately, too few candidates seemed able to indicate interdiction/prohibition with a person – “*interdit à + person*”.

Situation 8

Situation 8 required candidates to demonstrate a mastery of tenses and time, expressing where they had gone and when they would be back. Candidates had difficulty both in producing an appropriate past tense (formation, conjugation and so on) and the future tense.

Situation 9

Many candidates did not include the element of reminder, e.g. *n’oublie pas de +* The most common chore was do the dishes “*faire la vaisselle*” (often incorrectly rendered by *faire la *vaisselle*).

Situation 10

A change of mind/plans, a frequently tested item often rendered by the use of *ne...plus* was one element in situation 10. Candidates who expressed the content in many creative ways were not penalized for the non-use of *ne...plus*.

Section II—Letter/Dialogue/Composition

This section tested candidates’ ability to produce a piece of French of about 130-150 words based on an outline given in English.

The answers in Section II ranged from excellent to poor. There were fewer ‘no responses’ recorded in this year’s scripts.

The letter was the most popular item. A number of very proficient candidates did the composition, while the dialogue continued to be the item of choice of some less proficient candidates. Each selection required candidates to produce vocabulary appropriate to the situation described.

The recurring difficulty in the correct and sustained use of the appropriate second person pronoun requires teachers' urgent attention. Far too many candidates are using "tu" and "vous" to refer to the same person. Sometimes even very proficient candidates are inconsistent and use the correct address form e.g. *tu* in writing to a pen-friend, but then *err* in their choice of possessive adjectives, i.e. using "*votre/vos*" when "*ton/ta/tes*" are required; using "*s'il vous plaît*" instead of "*s'il te plaît*" and so on.

The following points must again be emphasized

- Candidates must be reminded to obey the limit of 130-150 Words. This warning needs to be addressed to all candidates, more and less proficient, since the practice of going beyond the word limit is very widespread. It is important that candidates plan their answers, making sure to pay attention to the outline given, and above all, making sure **not to exceed the stipulated number of words**. When candidates do not obey the word limit, they often have little time or space to develop the last element of their selection, within the 130-150 word limit. The candidate who only develops three out of the four elements given is therefore penalized.
- Candidates need to develop the habit of proofreading their written work. Frequent spelling errors and omissions could be avoided with just a little more care.
- Candidates must bear in mind the most common mistakes found at this level and try very hard to eliminate them from their writing.

Comments On Each Option

Letter

Evidently, many of those who chose the letter felt very comfortable talking about themselves and their likes and dislikes. While many candidates exhibited a high degree of proficiency, the occasional *"*mon nom s'appelle est*" was unfortunately still present in the scripts of the weaker candidates.

Once beyond the core personal information, candidates had varying degrees of success in forming questions; expressing anticipation and meeting the other structural and lexical demands of the item. Thus, while the opening paragraph was fair to excellent in most cases, candidates' deficiencies became very apparent in paragraphs two to four.

The formatting of the letter, specifically in the use of appropriate endings and beginnings, is still poorly handled by many candidates. While some candidates produced the correct date and address including all six elements required, for example, St. John's, *le 2 juin 2006*, too many still produced addresses that ran for five or six lines in imitation of the English formatting.

Dialogue

Some good dialogues, showing appropriate and correct usage were in marked contrast to the many that tended to flounder around with an exchange of greetings and very low level simple questions. Candidates must be reminded that the content of the dialogue is as important as the content of either of the two other free response items. Choosing the dialogue is not an excuse to say very little in a colloquial way.

Composition

The composition was the least popular selection this year. Yet, in a number of cases it was very well done and many proficient candidates produced rich, idiomatic writing.

The following is an example of an excellent composition:

* An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

C'était les vacances de Noël et, comme il faisait beau, mes voisins ont décidé de passer quelques jours au bord de la mer. Malheureusement, ils ne pouvaient pas emmener leurs chiens, Bonnie et Clyde. J'ai donc proposé de les garder, puisque j'adore les chiens, et mes voisins ont accepté de bon coeur.

Tout s'est bien passé les deux premiers jours. Par contre, le troisième jour, je n'arrivais pas à trouver Clyde. Quelle horreur! J'étais folle d'inquiétude et j'ai commencé à pleurer.

Sans perdre de temps, j'ai enfourché ma bicyclette et je suis sortie pour essayer de retrouver le chien. Mais, aucune chance. Je ne l'ai trouvé nulle part. Je suis rentrée chez moi accablée.

Et là, quelle surprise! Clyde était là, assis devant la porte. Quel bonheur! Quand les voisins sont rentrés de vacances, je ne leur ai rien dit, et ils m'ont félicitée d'avoir si bien gardé leurs chiens.

Section III - Reading Comprehension

This section tested candidates' ability to read and comprehend a short passage in the target language. The questions on the passage and the candidates' answers were in English.

The passage "The Family Computer" centred on a very familiar topic and encouraged candidates to draw on their "world" knowledge. Candidates need to be sensitized to the fact that although it is an excellent strategy to draw on one's world knowledge in a comprehension exercise, they must **confirm** their understanding by carefully deciphering the target language text.

Teachers should train their students to use a mixture of top-down strategies (using their general or world knowledge) and bottom-up strategies (paying close attention to the vocabulary and structure of the target language), since this combination of strategies is thought to be the best route to understanding texts. The reading skill is one that will be of great value to the "Internet generation" and so all opportunities must be taken to practise successful reading across the curriculum, including in the foreign language classroom.

Sometimes it appeared that candidates who may have understood the texts were hampered either in their English language proficiency or in their inability to respond clearly to the information sought by the questions. The passages used for testing comprehension are very concise texts that are generally between 100 and 150 words. There is therefore little room for redundancy with this restricted content. It would perhaps be helpful to give students practise in identifying the key words or elements in the questions, even before attempting to look for the correct answers. Candidates who are trained in this manner will perhaps be less inclined to "chunk" the information in the wrong way when answering the questions, introducing surplus and irrelevant information in one answer to the detriment of a subsequent answer, which in fact requires that information.

The following answers taken from candidates' scripts all gained full marks:

1. Many computers are sold at Christmas time because it is the preferred gift in many families.
2. Parents choose this gift for their children as they believe it would help them with their schoolwork.
3. Computers are so widespread in the working world because everyone, from bosses and office workers to farmers, needs them.
4. They use them as sophisticated typewriters.
5. Children like to use educational software because it is fun.
6. Reading on the computer is more interesting as it is more interactive due to the pictures, videos and music by which it is accompanied.
7. It is hard for the average family to afford a computer due to all the additional hardware that is needed, such as a printer, CD and DVD drives and CD burners.

* An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Section IV—Expanded Paragraph

This section tested candidates' ability to use written cues to produce a continuous and coherent paragraph of 80-100 words.

The performance of candidates in this section varied from fair to excellent. Some candidates produced paragraphs written in a logical manner. They used all the cues given and marked transitions with suitable link words. They also used appropriate vocabulary and idioms and showed mastery in the use of the structures they chose.

Many of the problems noted for the longer free response item in Section II re-appeared here, e.g. poor construction of the passé composé, poor command of tenses, even difficulty with some fundamental grammatical elements like subject pronouns and the French possessive. This lack of mastery is in sharp contrast to the work produced by more proficient candidates who used appropriate tense markers and a good range of idiomatic expressions.

Points to watch:

- Candidates must be careful to keep within the length stipulated (80-100 words) for the expanded paragraph. Candidates must not write an introduction to their paragraph, before beginning to use the cues, as they squander in this way, some of the words at their disposal. Candidates who do this find themselves unable to include all the cues, because of their long preamble, and are penalized for failing to complete their paragraph or include all the clues within the stipulated length.
- Candidates must try not to introduce unnecessary errors into their work by copying carelessly words that have been supplied to them in the cues.

The following is an example of a good extended paragraph:

*Vendredi dernier, c'était l'anniversaire de Pierre. Il avait 16 ans. Pour son anniversaire il a choisi d'aller au cinéma avec son copain Guillaume pour regarder un film d'action: Astérix. Quand il est rentré à la maison après * bien s'amuser, il a vu plusieurs voitures devant sa maison et il n'a rien entendu. Ensuite, Pierre est entré dans le salon et a eu la surprise de sa vie. Ses parents et ses amis étaient là en train d'écouter de la musique. Quand ils ont vu que Pierre *avait entré * la chambre, ils ont crié "Bon anniversaire, Pierre!"*

Basic Proficiency

Paper 02 - Free Response

Section I - Directed Situations

This section tested candidates' ability to respond in French to a series of situations described in English and requiring written responses.

The majority of candidates attempted to answer most of the questions. The more proficient candidates earned between 8 and 14 marks. There were, however, a few scripts where candidates scored between 0 and 1 mark.

* An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

All the situations drew on functions/notions and settings and topics that could be within the experience of a 16-year-old candidate. Five of the directed situations were common to both proficiencies; while five were addressed solely to the Basic Proficiency candidate.

The majority of candidates attempted to respond to nearly all the situations, although with varying degrees of success.

Points to watch

- Candidates must read each situation carefully paying close attention to what is required by the situation.
- Candidates are reminded to number the situations as on the question paper, even if they answer the situations in random order.
- Candidates are STRONGLY ADVISED not to write each situation on a new page.

The following table represents a graphic description of the functions/notions as they relate to the settings and topics for each situation.

SITUATION	FUNCTION/NOTION	SETTING & TOPICS
1	Ordering food and drink	In a café
2	Expressing closure	Notice in a public place
3	Inviting someone	Letter to pen pal
4	Expressing thanks and supplying a reason for liking a gift	Letter/note
5	Describing hobby	At school
6	Friendly request; time and place	Public place
7	Friendly request; urgency	Home
8	Asking questions: identifying someone	Email to a friend
9	Not working (mechanical object)	Notice in a public place
10	Offering congratulations; expressing a wish	Letter/note

Situation 1

This situation required two elements: something to eat and drink. A suitable answer was, “*Un omelette au fromage et un jus d’orange s’il vous plaît.*”

Situation 2

The candidate who wrote “**La musée fermera demain après-midi samedi le 14 janvier*” only attracted a penalty for the gender of *musée*.

* An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Situation 3

The candidate who wrote “*Je t’invite *passer * ton vacance avec moi*” was penalized for the omission of the preposition after inviter and the rendering of vacation by a masculine singular instead of a feminine plural.”

Situation 4

Most candidates were able to produce sentences of the type, “*Merci beaucoup pour le cadeaux, il est très beau.*”

Situation 5

This situation was fairly well done by many candidates. A good response was, “*La lecture est très *interessante*”. A number of candidates lost marks because they merely stated what their hobbies were.

Situations 6

“*Ramasse-moi à l’aéroport à trois heures, s’il te plaît*” was a commendable answer.

Situation 7

This situation was quite well done. Most candidates who lost marks did so because the element of urgency was omitted or inadequately expressed.

Situation 8

A good response here and well within the reach of the Basic candidate would have been, “*Quel âge a la fille dans la photo?*”

Situation 9

This question was not well done. Vocabulary seemed the biggest obstacle for many candidates who routinely used ‘*travailler*’ instead of expressions such as, “*ne marche pas*”/”*ne fonctionne pas*”/”*hors service*”.

Situation 10

Many candidates produced appropriate responses to this situation. The major difficulty lay in the correct spelling of the vocabulary items.

Section II - Completion of Form or Questionnaire

This section tested candidates’ ability to complete a short questionnaire in the target language.

This question was generally well done. Many candidates scored full marks. A large majority gained 7 to 9 marks.

It was pleasing to note the number of candidates who produced the correct responses to *nom* and *prénom* this year. However, some candidates did not seem to know that Grenada is located in the Caribbean and so lost marks in items 5 and 6.

* An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Section III – Gapped Passage

This section tested candidates' ability to supply 10 lexical or grammatical items to complete a short passage in the target language.

A small number of candidates earned full marks and many scored between 5 and 8 marks. A number of candidates struggled with items 2, 6, 7, 8 and 10 and thus only averaged about 3 marks.

Bonjour Claudette

Comment vas-tu? Moi, je suis de bonne santé, ainsi que ma famille. Alors, les grandes vacances s'approchent. Je voudrais passer une semaine en Martinique. Que veux-tu faire? Ecris-moi bientôt. Grosses bises à toute la famille.

Simone

Section IV - Reading Comprehension

The performance in this question was good on the whole. A few candidates scored full marks. Many others scored between 8 and 14. The following answers would have gained the candidate full marks.

Question 1

She is not at school because of the one week mid-term break.

Question 2

She normally goes to her grandparents' home in the country.

Question 3

She finds it noisy.

Question 4

Her parents are at home.

Question 5

Her older brother will be there as well.

Question 6

He is funny.

Question 7

They often play cards together.

Question 8

She is going to miss her grandmother's stories.

* An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Question 9

She likes to talk about the good old days.

Question 10

Granddad likes to go walking with her in the little wood near their home.

Paper 03 – Oral Examination

Basic and General Proficiencies

This paper tested candidates' ability a) to read aloud a short passage in the target language; b) to produce appropriate responses in the target language in a number of simulations; and c) to respond in the target language to general questions based on 4 out of 6 topics indicated in the syllabus.

Performance in the oral examination ranged from excellent to poor, with a number of candidates scoring full marks in this paper.

Reading

At both proficiency levels, candidates' performance in reading demonstrated their level of comfort and familiarity with the target language. The oral examiners found that while some candidates read fluently, with mostly correct pronunciation, good expression and suitable intonation, many seemed not to understand what they were reading. Additionally, examiners commented on a) the pronunciation of the ending of verb forms in the third person plural b) the lack of liaisons in places where these were necessary and c) anglicization of certain French words.

Situations

In this part of the oral paper, examiners rated candidates' performance as excellent to unsatisfactory. Oral examiners felt that there were too many instances of candidates simply responding '*Je ne sais pas*' or '*Je ne comprends pas*' without making any attempt to provide an answer.

Conversation

Here again, performance ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory. A number of examiners commented on the spontaneity of candidates and said that the exam felt like a "real conversation". This statement often indicated that candidates spoke with confidence, used good vocabulary and found ways to elaborate on their answers even with closed questions.

General Comments

Teachers must remind their students that the oral examination is not a test of content information but a test of skill and their opportunity to show off their ability to communicate on a restricted number of topics in the target language.

Students who are comfortable speaking French bring a level of confidence to the oral examination and acquit themselves quite well. The oral examiners often report that the candidates' performance seems a reflection of the extent of their preparation. Thus while the examination caters to a range of mastery from less proficient to more proficient candidates, there is a strong feeling expressed by oral examiners as by their counterparts in the written examinations, that even the weaker candidates could perform better with more practice.

* An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

JUNE 2008

FRENCH

FRENCH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION
MAY/JUNE 2008

GENERAL COMMENTS

Performance in the 2008 examination was not as good as in 2007, although there were many candidates displaying fair to excellent levels of logistic competence, spontaneity and grammatical accuracy.

Teachers are encouraged to continue exposing students to authentic samples of language from electronic and paper-based sources and to simulate real-life situations in which students may practise the target language. Teachers must continue their good work in engaging students in language learning by making it relevant, personal and meaningful for the students.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

This paper, which is composed of two sections, tested candidates' ability to listen to and understand a number of aural items in the target language and to read and understand a number of written items. Both sections require candidates to have sufficient mastery of essential grammar and vocabulary. The performance was comparable to that of previous years.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section I- Directed Situations

This section tested candidates' ability to respond in French to a series of situations described in English and requiring written responses. All the situations drew on functions/notions and settings and topics that could be within the experience of a 16-year-old candidate. Furthermore, the situations allowed for performance over the six grade bands, with some items within the reach of all candidates, while some discriminated in favour of the stronger candidates.

Points to watch

- Candidates must read each situation carefully, paying close attention to what is required. They must focus on the key words in order to respond to the function or notion tested. They must choose the correct time frame/tenses and the appropriate register (formal/informal) for each situation.
- Candidates must try to be concise in their answers. Far too often, candidates' tendency to write long, convoluted sentences results in the loss of marks.
- Candidates are reminded to number the situations as on the question paper, even if they answer the situations in random order.
- Candidates should NOT write each situation on a new page.

SITUATION	FUNCTION/NOTION	SETTING & TOPICS
1	Expressing the wish to receive a particular item	Email to aunt
2	Naming an event and announcing the date/day when it will take place	Poster at school
3	Making a suggestion for a birthday outing	Email to a friend
4	Date/time & Weather + future tense	Newspaper item
5	Indicating a change of plans	Note to parents
6	Expressing apology for absence	Note to teacher
7	Expressing past action and the reasons for that action	Note to a relative
8	Expressing wishes for better health/speedy recovery	Card to teacher
9	Expressing a positive reaction/comment about something	Visitors' book in a public place
10	Expressing prohibition for certain persons	Notice in a public place

Situation 1

The situation of the email to an aunt required candidates to make a request for a named item. Answers ranged from the highly idiomatic: *“Une voiture, ça ferait l’affaire.”* To the more prosaic *“Je voudrais une nouvelle robe.”*

Situation 2

Some candidates produced appropriate and grammatically correct poster type information such as the following:

- 1) *Activité: Fête de Noël*
Heure: 7 heures du soir.
- 2) *Grande boum –la semaine prochaine*

An answer such as *“Il y aura une fête de Noël samedi prochain à partir de sept heures”* was also acceptable.

Situation 3

This item required candidates to offer a suggestion for an outing in celebration of a friend’s birthday. The expected answer should have included the suggestion and the reason for the outing, for example, *“Si on allait au cinéma pour ton anniversaire?”*

Situation 4

As was the case in situation 2, an answer in note form was as appropriate as an answer written as a complete sentence. The essential elements were 1) time reference, i.e. indication of day/date etc/ 2) the weather (future form). The following candidate was awarded full marks:

*** An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

Demain **TIME REFERENCE**

il fera du soleil **EXPRESSION OF WEATHER (future form)**

donc porter vos lunettes de soleil. **ADDITIONAL ELEMENT**

That candidate would have received the same mark for “*Demain il fera du soleil.*” The additional element “*donc porter vos lunettes de soleil*” was in this case **appropriate** and **correct** but **unnecessary**. A less proficient candidate could easily have lost marks if any one of these elements was incorrect, for example, an incorrect possessive article, the spelling of *lunettes*, or the spelling of *soleil*.

Situation 5

Some candidates had difficulty as they attempted to produce a literal translation of the kind, “There has been a change in X’s flight...” therefore, they produced inappropriate and incorrect sentences, unsure of how to express change and not knowing the word for “flight.” The candidate who simply said “Jean-Paul arrive maintenant à 19h” appropriately and correctly conveyed the change of plans with reference to the arrival time.

Situation 6

A number of candidates seemed to forget that since the writer of the note was the mother, a feminine adjective (*désolée* ≠ *désolé*) was needed. Some candidates nevertheless managed to produce very solid responses, for example, “*Je regrette l’absence de ma fille, mais elle était malade.*” Another good response was, “*Excusez ma fille, elle a eu une éruption cutanée.*” Both these answers contained an element of regret/apology and an indication of the absence/illness leading to the absence.

Situation 7

This situation was generally well done by most candidates, except those who confused “*emprunter*” and “*prêter*.” A variety of creative responses explained what was borrowed and why.

Situation 8

A surprisingly large number of candidates did not know how to express wishes for a (speedy) recovery or improved health. The candidate who wrote “*J’espère que vous serez en pleine forme bientôt*” received full marks, having appropriately and correctly rendered the necessary elements of the situation.

Situation 9

This situation demonstrated the importance of having students practise supplying answers that are appropriate and grammatically correct. Candidates who gain full marks only do so if their answer is first of all appropriate, then grammatically correct. A correct but inappropriate answer cannot be rewarded. More often, it is the case that the response is appropriate but incorrect in some way—subject/verb agreement; noun/ adjective agreement; tense; mood and so on. The candidate who wrote “*J’adore les photos de la maison de Fidel Castro, *ce sont vraiment *magnifique*” was rewarded for appropriateness, but the use of ‘ce’ instead of ‘elles’ and the singular “*magnifique*” instead of “*magnifiques*” was penalized.

Situation 10

Over the past few years, candidates seemed to be developing considerable skill in expressing interdiction. This year, although a number of clumsy expressions re-appeared, a fair number of candidates managed successfully.

* An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

The following is an example of the script of a candidate who scored almost total marks in this question:

1. *Je voudrais un ordinateur pour mon anniversaire s'il te plaît.*
2. *Il y aura un tournoi de football le mois prochain.*
3. *Nous povons avoir une boum à la plage*^.*
4. *Demain il fera beau.*
5. *Le vol de Marc va arriver à sept heures et demie ce soir au lieu d'à cinq heures.*
6. *Je suis desolée, mais Trent n'a pas pu aller à l'école parce qu'il était malade.*
7. *J'ai emprunté ton manteau pour aller au cinéma.*
8. *Nous espérons que vous *soyez mieux bientôt.*
9. *La peinture de Dunstan St. Omer était magnifique.*
10. *Nous ne permettons pas *les personnes *moins de 18 ans d'entrer.*

• INCORRECT RESPONSES

CANDIDATE ANSWER	CORRECTIONS	CORRECT RESPONSE
3. <i>Nous pouvons avoir une boum à la plage* ^.</i>	The question asked candidates to suggest what he or she and the friend might do to celebrate the occasion. This email omitted birthday, which was an essential element.	<i>Nous pouvons avoir une boum à la plage pour fêter ton anniversaire.</i>
8. <i>Nous espérons que vous *soyez mieux bientôt.</i>	The candidate made two errors in the verb following espérer. First of all, the wrong verb was selected – “être” instead of “aller.” Secondly, the wrong mood was used. “Espérer” is NOT FOLLOWED BY THE SUBJUNCTIVE . It is followed by the indicative, either the present or as here the future.	<i>Nous espérons que vous irez mieux bientôt.</i>
10. <i>Nous ne permettons pas *les personnes* moins de 18 ans d'entrer.</i>	The candidate omitted the preposition “à” after “permettre.” The preposition “de” was needed before “moins de.”	<i>Nous ne permettons pas aux personnes de moins de 18 ans d'entrer.</i>

Section II – Letter/Composition

This section tested candidates’ ability to produce a piece of French of about 130-150 words based on an outline given in English.

The answers in Section II ranged from excellent to poor. The letter was the more popular item. A number of very proficient candidates did the composition. This selection required candidates to show greater prowess with past tenses in order to narrate in the past. Each selection required candidates to produce vocabulary appropriate to the situation described.

The recurring difficulty in the correct and sustained use of the appropriate second person problems requires teachers’ urgent attention. Far too many candidates are using “tu” and “vous” to refer to the same person. Sometimes even very proficient candidates are inconsistent and may use the correct address form, for example, “tu” in writing to a relative, but then err in their choice of possessive adjectives, that is using “votre/vos” when “ton/ta/tes” were required; or using “s’il vous plait” instead of “s’il te plait.”

* An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Points to watch

- The practice of going beyond the word limit is very widespread. **CANDIDATES MUST OBEY THE LIMIT OF 130-150 WORDS. THEY ARE PENALIZED FOR EXCEEDING THE WORD LIMIT.**
- Candidates sometimes include learnt chunks of language that are inappropriate and irrelevant, often at the expense of responding appropriately to the situation being tested. This practice must be avoided.
- Candidates must plan their work carefully. The lack of planning was especially evident in the composition.
- Candidates need to develop the habit of proofreading their written work. Frequent spelling errors and omissions may be avoided with just a little more care.
- Candidates must think of the most common mistakes found at this level and try very hard to eliminate them from their writing.
- Candidates should avoid using direct speech unless they have mastered inversion of the verb after direct speech.
- Candidates who do the letter must be reminded to include the **place and date**.

Candidates' use of tenses, even the present tense, was problematic this year. Errors noted ranged from the manipulation of basic grammatical structures to the spelling of common vocabulary items. Too many candidates still resort to translating literally from English. They should be encouraged to think in French as much as it is possible within the well defined areas of vocabulary and settings which they are expected to know. Too many students seem to lack the basic vocabulary to talk about the home and school life, daily routines, hobbies and interests and so on. Far too many candidates are still producing language of the kind:

**J'ai eu non fois rester...*

**Je séjour à la maison*

**Volonté toi aide moi*

Despite this, some candidates do produce rich and idiomatic language such as the following:

J'ai téléchargé beaucoup de musique.

Quel comportement honteux!

Qu'est-ce que tu proposes que je fasse?

Ça me fait plaisir d'avoir de tes nouvelles...

C'est avec plaisir que je t'adresse ces quelques mots pour...

Deux battements de cœur plus tard...

Elle a repris le chemin par pure obligation.

The following candidates' work was assessed as excellent. The first, an example of the letter, the second of the composition, reflect the almost error-free production of the most proficient candidates. These model answers included all the expected content and necessary stylistic elements, for example, the date and place in the letter. They were grammatically very accurate. They were coherent and flowed well. The language was rich and idiomatic in each piece of writing.

*** An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

TWO MODEL ANSWERS

Letter

Cunupia, le 18 juin

^{1*} Chère grand-père,

Merci beaucoup pour ta jolie lettre et pour les bonbons que tu m'as envoyés. Je t'écris cette lettre pour te dire que je viens de finir tous mes examens.

Moi, je suis très fatiguée parce que je me couche à onze heures depuis quatre mois. Aussi, je ne suis pas sortie avec mes amis depuis janvier! Tous les jours je faisais mes devoirs et j'aidais ma mère à faire le ménage.

^{2*}Maintent, je fais la grasse ^{3*}matinee. Je reste au lit ^{4*}jusqu'a midi et, après, je vais au cinéma ou au centre commercial.

L'année prochaine, je voudrais continuer mes études, probablement à la même école. Je veux faire la biologie et la chimie parce que je veux être ^{5*}docteur. Qu'est-ce que tu en penses? C'est une bonne idée?

Aussi, j'aimerais te rendre visite en France parce que tu me manques. Ecris-moi vite, et à la prochaine!

^{6*}Amitiés,
Claudette

***Indicates an Incorrect Form/Word.**

CANDIDATE ANSWER	CORRECTION	CORRECT RESPONSE
1. *Chère grand-père	Adjective is wrong gender	Cher grand-père
2. *Maintent	Incorrect spelling	Maintenant
3. *Matinee	Incorrect spelling, omission of accent	Matinée
4. *Jusqu'a	Incorrect spelling, omission of accent	Jusqu'à
5. *Docteur	Wrong vocabulary item	Médecin
6. *Amitiés	Wrong vocabulary item	Bons baisers/grosses bises

Composition

C'était un bel après-midi de samedi. Un pâle soleil brillait. J'étais au volant très contente, parce que ma journée allait très bien. J'étais en route ^{1*}à l'aéroport parce que ce soir-là, j'ai dû aller aux Etats-Unis pour rendre visite à ma tante et son nouveau ^{2*}né.

Quand je suis arrivée ^{3*}au feu rouge, je me suis rappelée que ^{4*}j'ai laissé mon ordinateur portable sur mon lit à la maison. J'ai commencé à paniquer. J'ai cherché mon portable dans ma poche mais je l'avais oublié aussi. Quel désastre!

J'ai décidé de retourner chez moi. A quoi bon servirait-il d'aller à l'étranger sans ces choses importantes? Malheureusement quand je suis arrivée à l'aéroport l'avion ^{5*}avait déjà décollé. Pauvre de moi!

La prochaine fois, je ferai une liste et je vais essayer de me préparer bien au lieu de faire les préparatifs en hâte.

*** An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

*** Indicates an Incorrect Form/Word.**

CANDIDATE ANSWER	CORRECTION	CORRECT RESPONSE
1. *en route à l'aéroport	Wrong preposition	En route pour l'aéroport
2. *nouveau né	Missing hyphen	nouveau-né
3. *Au feu rouge	Wrong number	Aux feux rouges
4. *J'ai laissé	Wrong tense	J'avais laissé
5. *l'avion avais déjà décollé	Wrong auxiliary verb ending	L'avion avait déjà décollé

Section III – Contextual Announcement/Dialogue

This section has two options. Candidates are required to respond in French either to a set of cues or to complete a dialogue in French based on a set of cues. In both options, the candidate must use between 80-100 words to complete their responses.

In both options the average candidate scored in the satisfactory to moderately good range. Even though the contextual announcement was the less popular option and proved to be more challenging, candidates still attempted to be creative in their responses. In the contextual dialogue candidates were more fluent in their use of the language.

Candidates need to be reminded that if they think about the announcement and the dialogue holistically it would assist them to provide more appropriate and accurate responses.

The following are two examples of very good answers that were submitted by candidates for the contextual announcements and the contextual dialogue.

Contextual Announcement

Le club de français de Bay St. Girls' High invite ¹à toutes les élèves ¹*au réunion. ¹*Il sera vendredi à huit heures au gymnase.

Madame Martin, une traductrice qui travaille à l'université de St. Vincent, viendra ²*à parler des pays francophones dans la Caraïbe, du prix du voyage et des correspondantes françaises. On pourra ³*poser des questions. ¹*Le réunion sera très ¹*intéressant et ¹*amusant.

On ^{*}trouve qu'il est importnat de voyager à l'étranger: on peut apprendre une langue, ¹*se rencontrer des amis et s'amuser.

Après ¹*le réunion, il y aura des boissons pour les élèves. Ce sera super!

*** Indicates an Incorrect Form/Word.**

CANDIDATE ANSWER	CORRECTION	CORRECT RESPONSE
1. *(invite) à	No preposition	Invite toutes les élèves
2. *au réunion	Wrong gender	À la réunion
3. *(viendra) à parler	No preposition	Viendra parler
4. on pourra *poser des questions	Indirect object pronoun omitted	On pourra lui poser des questions
5. *se rencontrer	Not reflexive	Rencontrer des amis

*** An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

Contextual Dialogue

- L'employé: Bonjour jeune homme, est-ce que je peux vous aider?
- Philippe: Oui, demain est ^{1*}le jour ^{2*}de pères et je cherche un cadeau.**
- L'employé: Comment est votre père?
- Philippe: Il est de taille moyenne. Il a les cheveux ^{3*}courtes et ^{3*}noires.**
- L'employé: Est-ce qu'il aime les vêtements à la mode. Nous avons de beaux T-shirts.
- Philippe: Je pense qu'il préfère le look pratique.**
- L'employé: Vous voulez donc lui acheter une chemise à manches longues?
- Philippe: C'est parfait! Mais, je voudrais une chemise en bleu, ^{4*}verte ou rouge.**
- L'employé: Nous en avons des bleues, des vertes, ça dépend de la taille.
- Philippe: ^{5*}Sa taille est trente mais quelque fois il *porte trente deux. Vous ^{6*}avez?**
- L'employé: La voici, c'est très beau et pas cher.
- Philippe: C'est génial parce que je n'ai que vingt euros. Ça suffit?**
- L'employé: Alors jeune homme, avec 20 euros, vous ne trouverez rien ici!
- Philippe: Mais j'ai besoin d'un cadeau en ce moment ou papa sera déçu.**
- L'employé: Désolé, jeune homme, je ne peux pas vous aider. Achetez-lui des chocolats peut-être!
- Philippe: Quel dommage! La chemise est ^{7*} parfait.**

* Indicates an Incorrect Form/Word.

CANDIDATE ANSWER	CORRECTION	CORRECT RESPONSE
1. *le jour	Incorrect vocabulary item	La fête
2. *de pères	Wrong article	Des pères
3. (cheveux) *courtes et noires	Wrong gender	Courts et noirs
4. *verte	Wrong gender	(en) vert
5. *Sa taille est trente	Wrong structure	Il prend du trente...il prend du trente-deux
6. Vous *avez	Omission of pronoun	Vous en avez
7. La chemise est *parfait	Wrong gender	La chemise est parfaite

Section IV – Reading Comprehension

This section tested candidates' ability to read and comprehend a short passage in the target language. The questions on the passage and the candidates' answers were in English.

The passage 'Finding and keeping a pen-friend' centred on a very familiar topic for most candidates. Candidates generally seemed to have understood the text. Those who did not perform well were often hampered by their inability to express themselves fluently in English.

* An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

The passages used for testing comprehension are very concise texts that are generally between 100 and 150 words. There is therefore little room for redundancy with this restricted content. In classroom practice, students should be encouraged to identify the key words or elements in the questions as a preliminary strategy, before attempting to answer the questions. This might help them to read critically and arrive at a sound understanding of the text.

KEY

1. It is fairly easy to do.
2. This is so because English is spoken in many countries.
3. Two topics are themselves/their family/school/hobbies [any two].
4. They might want to find out about their lives and their activities.
5. They can correct their mistakes.
6. The three ways are writing legibly; sending emails; sending digital photographs.
7. They should take time to explain them.
8. They should avoid boring them with long stories about their friends.
9. Two benefits are learning about another way of life and learning a language better.
10. Young French people who want an English-speaking pen-friend.

Paper 03 – Oral Examination

This paper tested candidates' ability a) to produce appropriate responses in the target language in a number of simulations; b) to read aloud a short passage in the target language; and c) to respond in the target language to general questions based on 4 out of 6 topics indicated in the syllabus.

Performance in the oral examination ranged from excellent to poor. This range in performance is also reflected in the very mixed feedback submitted by different examiners depending on the centres where they conducted the examination.

As is the case in Papers 01 and 02, the Oral Examination is intended to elicit performance across the six grade bands. All candidates should be able to perform with a degree of ease and fluency in an oral examination based on a communicative syllabus. In the responses to situations/instructions, questions requiring the same speaker to give two responses should be within the competence of the more proficient candidate, whereas the less proficient candidate might perform best in the two-speakers questions requiring almost stock responses. Similarly, less proficient candidates should have a measure of success in most items in the Conversation, but naturally might perform less well in the more open ended descriptive questions (items 9 and 10) since these attempt to elicit description, narration or supposition. Thus here, as throughout the examinations, candidates' results should represent a range of performance across the six grade bands. It is nonetheless a cause for concern when Oral Examiners state that candidates are unable to perform even the easiest of tasks in the foreign language. A candidate who has been taught using a communicative approach should not be hesitant to say his or her name, give basic personal information, observe common courtesies-- 'thank you,' 'you are welcome', 'sorry' and so on in French. Yet, the feedback from some Oral Examiners suggested that this was the case in many instances.

There is little argument that trying to mimic a communicative situation in a foreign language classroom is a challenging task. But there seems to be a growing tendency to teach the language independent of, divorced even, from the culture. How can it be that a student of French is not made aware of the currency used in France? Indeed, if one were to accept the criticism from the Oral Examiner who objected to the use of 'euros' instead of dollars in the oral examination, students visiting Martinique or Guadeloupe would discover *for the first time* some of the fundamental cultural differences, for example,

* An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

currency, eating habits, greetings and salutations that they need to know or understand to participate in the foreign culture.

If we choose to keep the foreignness out of foreign language learning, the majority of our students who never get an immersion opportunity would leave our classrooms bereft of this rich cultural knowledge. In discussing and comparing schooling and school systems, should students remain with the assumption that French classes go in ascending order as in the English-speaking world? Should a Fifth Form student be kept ignorant of the fact that their peers in France and the French Caribbean are “*en seconde*” and thus are “*lycéens*” in the French system? How can students of French not know “*la boulangerie*” and not understand the central role of bread in the French diet? No one would expect a Fifth Former to know the French legislative system. But a CSEC candidate should have a working knowledge of basic terms relating to school – “*matière; professeur (principal); lycée; seconde*” and their cultural significance. It is a gross disservice to our students, especially in a communicative approach to language learning, to give them such an impoverished introduction to the foreign language culture that words like “*seconde*” are regarded as too challenging. Indeed it is precisely the novel and different, the otherness, which traditionally attract and motivate foreign language learners.

Situations

Examiners expressed their surprise at candidates’ inability to ask the price of an item, talk about the weather and many of the common topics of oral interaction. It was felt that candidates should have been able to produce answers to those topics far more spontaneously. All the candidates are expected to be able to respond appropriately in familiar contexts for the 16+ language learner, while the more proficient candidates are expected to be able to handle the more challenging situations. In this part of the oral paper, examiners rated candidates’ performance as excellent to unsatisfactory. Oral examiners felt that there were too many instances of candidates simply responding ‘*Je ne sais pas*’ or ‘*Je ne comprends pas*’ without making any attempt to provide an answer.

Reading

Candidates’ performance in reading demonstrate their level of comfort and familiarity with the target language. The oral examiners found that while some candidates read fluently, with mostly correct pronunciation, good expression and suitable intonation, many seemed not to understand what they were reading. Additionally, examiners commented on a) the pronunciation of the ending of verb forms in the third person plural b) the lack of liaisons in places where these were necessary and c) anglicization of certain French words.

Conversation

As in sections I and II, performance ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory in the conversation. The graded nature of the items in this section--as in all three papers of the examination--from pre-CSEC level questions requiring candidates to produce their name, their age, their favourite sport or hobby, to CSEC level questions about their school/home/ and wider environment should allow all candidates to perform comfortably in some areas of the examination and the better candidates to perform very well in all areas of the examination.

General comments

Students must be helped to understand that their participation as candidates in the oral examination is a natural progression from the kind of oral activities in which they had been engaged since Form 1. Candidates could be trained to expand on their answers, as happens in normal conversation, even when the question posed is a closed question. The candidate who in reply to the question, “*Combien de frères ou de sœurs as-tu?*” answers “*Deux frères. Mon grand frère s’appelle John et mon petit frère s’appelle Richard.*” obviously shows more ease and familiarity in the language than the candidate who stops his/her answer at “*Deux*”.

* An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Examiners too are asked to demonstrate a level of flexibility in their examination techniques. It is understandable that a candidate living in a country that has been severely affected by volcanic activity, hurricane, or floods, may be constrained to talk about public buildings in his/her area. But a candidate should not feel at a disadvantage, if there is no public building in his/her immediate environs. There is nothing to prevent such a candidate from talking about places of worship; fire stations/post-offices/police stations real or imagined in the nearest village/town/district/city or even the capital of his/her country.

Teachers should guide their students' understanding of the fact that the oral examination is not a test of content information. It is immaterial whether they live in a city or village or have no or multiple public buildings in their environment. The oral examination is a test of skill. The oral gives candidates the opportunity to show off their ability to communicate on a restricted number of topics (four per year) in the target language. Students who are comfortable speaking French bring a level of confidence to the oral examination and acquit themselves quite well. The reports coming from the various examiners in the various territories suggest that well-prepared candidates are in no way traumatized by having to participate in a 10-15 minute oral interview with an unknown examiner. Thus, while the examination caters to a range of mastery from less proficient to more proficient candidates, there is a strong feeling expressed by Oral Examiners, as by their counterparts in the written examinations, that even the weaker candidates could perform better with more practice.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

JUNE 2009

FRENCH

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FRENCH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

MAY/JUNE 2009

GENERAL COMMENTS

The performance in this year's paper is comparable to that of the past few years. Candidates continue to perform at a better than satisfactory level. Nonetheless, there is need for teachers to continue to be vigilant, and to provide the guidance that will help students avoid the careless errors that they continue to make. Every effort must be made to eradicate such errors and thus improve the performance in French in the coming years.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

This paper is composed of two sections which test candidates' ability to listen to and understand a number of aural items in the target language and to read and understand a number of written items. Both sections require candidates to have a mastery of essential grammar as prescribed in the CSEC syllabus and vocabulary appropriate to this level of competence. As usual, the performance here is comparable to that of previous years.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section I – Directed Situations

In this section of the examination, candidates are required to respond in French to a number of situations described in English and requiring written responses.

These situations draw on functions/notions and settings from the CSEC syllabus that are within the experience of candidates of their age.

SITUATION	FUNCTION/NOTION	SETTING & TOPIC
1.	Describing an item of clothing	School event
2.	Farewell/expressing good wishes	Note to teacher
3.	Naming an event and announcing the time and place	Poster at school
4.	Expressing apology for failure to do a task	Note to teacher
5.	Expressing the wish to have a particular item	Note to mother
6.	Expressing congratulations on a sporting success	Note to a friend
7.	Listing and describing	Notice in a restaurant
8.	Expressing prohibition to passengers	Sign in a bus
9.	Questioning	Note to a friend
10.	Day & weather + future tense	Newspaper item

Situation 1

Candidates were expected to describe an outfit using two descriptors. Most candidates handled this situation well. However, marks were frequently lost for lack of agreement between the adjective and the noun and incorrect positioning of the adjective. An example of a full response : *Je mettrai une jupe blanche et une chemise verte.*

Situation 2

This situation, expressing farewell and good wishes, proved to be challenging for many candidates. *Au revoir* was often incorrectly spelt or omitted. Candidates also confused *espérer* and *souhaiter*. In addition, many candidates also used the incorrect form of address, 'tu' instead of 'vous'. A good response was : *Au revoir Madame, et bonne chance.*

Situation 3

Candidates handled this situation rather well. Those who were unable to do so had difficulty with the tense and used *est* instead of *sera* or *a lieu* instead of *aura lieu* . Many candidates also failed to pluralize 'heure'. However, there were some pleasing responses, among them being the following one:* *La boum du club français aura lieu dans la bibliothèque a six heures du soir.*

***An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

Situation 4

The first element in this situation was generally well handled. However, a few candidates used *Pardon* for the apology. The main difficulty with this situation was the incorrect use of the negative infinitive before the auxiliary (*ne pas avoir fini*). *Pour* instead of *de* was often used before this expression. Many candidates used the verb *faire* instead of *finir* or *compléter*. A good response was : * *Je suis désolé de ne pas avoir fini mes devoirs, mais j'étais malade.*

Situation 5

This was generally well answered by candidates. They were able to correctly make a request for an item. The main issue here was the use of the polite form *vous* to address the mother.

Situation 6

Many candidates were unable to respond appropriately to this situation. The first element, congratulations, was fairly well done, although *Félicitations* was frequently misspelt and some offerings featured a mixture of Spanish and French as in **felicitaciones** or **felicidades**. The second element was problematic and in many cases no marks could be awarded as no reference was made to a sporting event. A good response:* *Je te félicite d'avoir gagné le match!*

Situation 7

It was surprising that this item proved to be challenging for many candidates. The expression *plat du jour*, which is an essential element, seemed not to be widely known as many candidates attempted to render it as **le spécial aujourd'hui*. There was obvious unfamiliarity with what constituted a *plat* in a French restaurant as evidenced by offerings such as *pain et poulet* and *un sandwich au fromage* . However, some of the more perceptive candidates were able to use *steak aux pommes* or *poulet au riz* which featured in the Contextual Dialogue. The following is an example of a good response:* *Aujourd'hui, le plat du jour c'est le cassoulet.*

Situation 8

It was heartening that many candidates were able to respond appropriately to the interdiction. However, there was failure to link the interdiction of talking to the bus driver. In ignoring the context of the scenario, inappropriate responses were produced, for example, **Defense de fumer; ne pas manger ici*. Full marks were gained for: * *Defense de parler au conducteur/chauffeur.*

Situation 9

The main difficulty with this situation was the candidates' inability to differentiate between the different interrogatives for 'what' in French. Many used *Qu'est-ce que (c'est) les devoirs?* instead of *Quel*. Candidates need to understand that this is not an exercise in translation. This misunderstanding led to many incorrect attempts at rendering "assignment" as *l'assignment* and *Qu'est-ce que c'est la information?* instead of *Qu'est-ce que nous devons faire maintenant?* An example of a good response was:**Qu'est-ce que le prof a dit? Or Donne –moi les devoirs, je n'écoutais pas le professeur.*

Situation 10

Candidates did not perform as well as expected. While many candidates scored marks for the first element, *Demain*, a large number still experienced difficulty in describing a weather condition in the future tense. A good answer was: * *Demain, il pleuvra a verse*.

Suggestions to Teachers

Teachers need to ensure that the following frequently used French words and expressions are practised and that candidates can write them correctly.

Aujourd'hui

S'il vous plait

Est-ce que

Félicitations

Soleil

Bleu

Heure

Matin (not martin)

Mademoiselle

Future

Maman

Chaussures

Meilleur

Veux/vœux

Boum

Au revoir

Points to note

- Candidates must read each situation carefully and they should endeavor to respond appropriately.
- Candidates should number each situation correctly, even if they answer the situations in random order.
- Candidates are again implored **NOT** to write each situation on a new page.

***An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

Section II – Letter/Composition

This section tests candidates' ability to produce written language (about 130 -150 words) based on given cues. In addition to mastery of relevant vocabulary, idiom and language structure, the ability to express ideas clearly is emphasized.

As is usually the case, the answers here ranged from excellent to poor. The majority of candidates responded to the letter instead of the composition.

For the particular attention of teachers:-

- Students must be taught correct letter headings. (Endings were generally appropriate and varied).
- The formulation of possessives was surprisingly weak. (*ton, ta, tes* for *son, sa, ses*). There was constant use of apostrophe «s» for example, * *'Kish's frère*, even **le tien père* for "his father" and * *Mes voisins maison*, or even **Elle mère* for "her mother".
- Verbs continue to challenge candidates. Teachers need to find ways to teach verbs in communicative mode so that students do not translate from English when formulating their verbs, for example, *Je serais retourner* for "I will be returning"
- Agreement of subject verb and adjectives continues to be a bugbear for candidates. For example, **Les parents est très généreuse et gentil*.
- Essay planning and formulation need to be taught. Very few candidates used paragraphs for their essay. The tendency in the letter was to deal with the description of the family at great length and to dismiss sections iii and iv in two sentences. For example, *J'espere rentrer en Jamaïque la semaine prochaine. Tu peux m'emmener a l'aéroport s'il vous plaît*.
- Common words are too frequently misspelt: *restaurant, beaucoup, amies, parce que, fenêtre, vacances, aussi, interessant, déjeuner, maison*, to mention a few.
- The use of variety in construction is declining. Only a few candidates included structures like *demande a + person + de + infinitive* or *Après avoir + past participle*.
- *Vouloir que + subjunctive* is hardly ever written correctly. It is replaced by the English approach : *Je te veux preparer*
- The use of 'dire' needs attention. Candidates wrote *Je t'écris pour te dire de ma visite...* for "to tell about.."
- Pronouns are poorly used: **dit elle* for "told her" or, **Je voudrais tu attends moi*.
- Culture of, or general knowledge about French-speaking countries was not evident in this examination. Candidates wrote about the Eiffel Tower in Guadeloupe or going to Paris for the day and returning to Guadeloupe by taxi. Only a few candidates were able to impress with vocabulary specific to the Guadeloupe context of the letter.

***An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

- The difference between *en deux semaines* and *dans deux semaines*, was not understood by candidates.
- The use of ‘*les*’ and ‘*des*’ is weak, for example, *J’ai acheté les vêtements

Here are examples of a good letter and composition:

Exemplar 1 [Letter]

Chère sœur,

*Je *t’annonce que je suis bien arrivée hier soir en Guadeloupe où j’ai rencontré la famille de mon correspondant. Ils sont vraiment très gentils et m’ont fait visiter une bonne partie de l’île. Nous avons aussi fait du shopping où je t’ai acheté *pleins de cadeaux. Les paysages sont magnifiques.*

*J’espère être de retour à la maison aux alentours du 28 mai, mais je te *recontacterai pour te confirmer la date exacte de mon retour et pour te dire à quelle heure tu devras venir me chercher à l’aéroport.*

*À mon retour, *j’aimerais que tu *prévoies la chambre d’amis et que tu achètes à manger car je voudrais inviter mon correspondant à venir passer quelques jours chez nous à son tour. Je te remercie d’avance pour tout.*

Je t’embrasse fort.

Thomas

Good points

Use of several idioms

Good coherence

Good use of given cues

Weaknesses

Basic spelling errors

Missing accents

***An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

Exemplar 2 [Composition]

*C'était très tard la nuit *pendant que j'étudiais pour mon examen de français. Puisque j'étais fatigué, j'ai décidé de me reposer pour un moment dehors sur le balcon. Pendant que je me reposais, j'ai vu la fenêtre chez monsieur et madame Marsaud * a été ouvert.*

*Tout d'un coups, je me suis souvenu que mes voisins *ont voyage a l'étranger *des vacances. Sans hésiter, je suis allé chez eux. Quand j'étais près d'ici, j'ai vu quelqu'un qui venait de la maison.*

*« Au voleur !Au voleur !'' j'ai dit *en voix fort. J'ai essaye *attraper la personne mais *j'avais pas de *la chance. "Quelle dommage".*

*Au retour chez moi, j'ai vu les *Marsauds qui retourneront de *son voyage. Rapidement, j'ai explique* s'est passe. Je *les ai dit *que ils doivent obtenir un grand chien.*

Good points

Great use of the various tenses required

Very good use of cues and coherence of passage

Good use of expressions

Weaknesses

Simple spelling and vocabulary errors

Section III - Contextual Announcement/ Contextual Dialogue

Just as in previous years, more candidates opted to do the Contextual Dialogue than the Contextual Announcement. However, this year there was a noted increase in those opting to do the Announcement. It was generally found that candidates performed more creditably on the Announcement than they did on the Dialogue.

Contextual Announcement

Many candidates still did not observe the rubric regarding the word limit, although there were fewer scripts penalized for this infringement than previously. Candidates appeared to be a little more 'test wise' with this option which is an indication that more teachers are preparing students to handle this question. Some candidates appeared to be trained to categorize the various parts of the announcement. In so doing they were able to more easily ensure that all the cues were included. Candidates still need to read the question more carefully since the 2009 question stated that the announcement "appears in the community section of a local newspaper". As a consequence, due consideration must be given to the format of the announcement as well as the form of address required (in this instance the plural and formal 'vous' in favour of the singular and familiar 'tu')

***An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

Use of Cues

Most cues were included and correctly used by candidates. Candidates successfully rendered what was being proposed, the target group, time, date, venue and cost to students. It was heartening to note that some candidates were able to correctly articulate:

a cut-off age	<i>'les jeunes de moins de 18 ans'.</i>
What Mr. Laurel proposed	<i>'M. Laurel offrira les classes pour les gens qui veulent...'</i>
Who could attend	<i>'Tout le monde peut assister...'</i>

The cue that posed the greatest challenge to candidates was the one for which they were required to express the benefits of learning music. Some borrowed directly from the Question 4 (Reading Comprehension), while others had great difficulty in rendering their own opinions, ideas and emotions into good French. There were a few who were able to articulate clearly:

'La musique est bonne pour la santé'
'La culture sera plus riche avec [la] musique'

Vocabulary and Idiom

The spelling of the French words *'guitare'*, *'guitariste'*, *'français'*, *'tout le monde'* posed a challenge to the majority of candidates. Other expressions like *'s'intéresser à'*, *'jouer'* requiring *'de'* with a musical instrument and *'mieux'* used instead of *'meilleur'* (with *'meilleur'* frequently misspelt) also provided challenges for candidates.

Grammar

Some candidates had difficulty when they wanted to use the future tense as well as the command form. Others, however, did manipulate these verb phrases with skill and which enhanced the overall flow of their announcement.

Contextual Dialogue

The restaurant setting for this question was one within the comfort zone for most candidates, so many opted for it. However, the dialogue posed challenges to the candidates' knowledge of French culture as this was crucial to the general fluency of the responses. While some candidates produced dialogues of a very high standard, others struggled and gave responses that (although good French) made no sense in the context of the dialogue. Teachers need to encourage students to read the entire dialogue before attempting this question. The responses of some candidates, although appropriate, were so brief that they fell short of the requisite word limit. Candidates must be reminded to pay attention to this rubric.

Use of Cues

Candidates' general lack of comprehension of some cues detracted from the coherence and fluency of their responses. Most candidates had no idea of what exactly is an 'apéritif' or the 'cassoulet'. On the other hand, most candidates were able to express their greeting, a request for a table as well as that for food and drink. Some correctly conveyed (in French) the diners' dissatisfaction with the meal brought by the waiter, the request to see the boss and the outrage at the service meted out to them. However, only few candidates recognized that the waiter's utterance of "*Comme vous voulez, Madame*" resulted from a negative response or counter offer of the patron, Suzanne, to the offer of seating made by the waiter. Some candidates wrote appropriate requests such as : '*Je préfère le côté non-fumeur*' '*...être sur la terrasse*',... '*Non, je voudrais une table près de la porte*'

Vocabulary and idiom

Candidates used a variety of food and drink including '*steak bien cuit*', '*petits pois*', '*poulet rôti*', '*jambon*' or '*jus de pamplemousse*', '*vin rouge/ blanc/ rosé*', '*champagne*', '*citron pressé*' and '*Chardonnay*'. Others, however, limited the dinner fare to food not traditionally used for dining out in a French restaurant.

Other expressions that proved to be problematic for candidates included:

Quitter used when *partir* was required.

Repas and *nourriture* used for *plat*.

Misspelling of *s'il vous plait*, *voudrais* and *bouteille*

"Table" referred to as '*tableau*',

Order and *ordonner* were used for '*commander*'

However, there were some candidates who produced excellent responses.

Grammar

There are some grammatical points that proved to be problematic generally. They included:

Use of negative in both simple and compound tenses (nouns and adjectives were often made negative);

The appropriate use of '*cela*', '*quel*', '*cette*', '*celui-ci*', '*là*', '*ce*' for "that";

The use of the definite article and the partitive article

The use of *de* with expressions of quantity (**un verre de l'eau*' was commonly used)

Although the formal *s'il vous plaît* was appropriately used in addressing the waiter, candidates reverted to the *tu* forms in the same sentence (*ton patron ...*)

The use of *que* for *ce que* – (eg. * *ce n'est pas que j'ai choisi*)

***An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

The following are examples of good responses:

Exemplar 1[Contextual Announcement]

*Attention! Tous ceux qui aiment la musique, venez au cours de * guitare. On apprendra * jouer de la *guitare. Le groupe cible est les étudiants qui vont au collège. Les cours seront le lundi et le samedi de dix heures du matin à midi. Les cours seront a la maison de Monsieur Laurel, le professeur de *guitare.*

*Il habite dans la rue Sunshine et sa maison est au coin. Les cours sont a 20 euros par jour. C'est bon marcher, n'est -ce pas ? La musique *et divertissement et on peut retrouver beaucoup de jeunes. Téléphonez 667 1134 pour prendre des * resignements.*

Good points

Weaknesses

Use of given cues

Basic spelling errors

Coherence

Use of expressions

Exemplar 2 [Contextual Dialogue]

Garçon : Bonsoir Monsieur, Madame.

Suzanne : Bonsoir jeune-homme. Oh ! C'est un très modeste restaurant. Pouvons-nous avoir une table ?

Garçon : Je vous mets près de la fenêtre là-bas ?

Suzanne : Cette vue du panorama me tente très fort mais je préfère ce coin là. C'est plus calme.

Garçon : Comme vous voulez, Madame. Vous prenez un apéritif ?

Suzanne: Laissez-moi voir. Du cassoulet et ça ira.

Garçon : Oui Madame, c'est le cassoulet. (*Plus tard*) Vous avez choisi votre menu?

Suzanne : Bien sûr. Je prendrai du riz au poulet et un steak aux pommes.

Garçon : Et comme boisson ?

Suzanne : Vous pouvez nous apporter une bouteille de vin. Votre **meilleure** et deux verres d'eau par la suite.

Garçon : D'accord, Madame.

(*Une demi-heure plus tard*)

Garçon : Voilà votre steak au pommes et poulet au riz. Bon appétit.

Suzanne : Merci. Mais, qu'est-ce-que je vois là ? Nous ne mangeons pas du poulet rôti.

***An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

Garçon : C'est vrai mais il n'y plus de menu à 25€. Vous pouvez le manger quand même. C'est très bon.

Suzanne : Vous n'avez pas à me dire ce qui est bon ou pas. Où est le patron?

Garçon : Madame, c'est moi le patron.

Suzanne : Oh ! De toute façon, je suis déçu de votre poulet.

Garçon : Calmez-vous madame. Asseyez-vous. Commandez votre repas et ce sera gratuit.

Good points

Weaknesses

Very good dialogue flow

Basic errors of grammar and vocabulary

Good use of given cues

Section IV – Reading Comprehension

This section tests candidates' ability to read and comprehend a short passage in the target language. The questions on the passage and the candidates' answers are to be in English.

This passage proved to be quite challenging although it was appropriate for the level of the examination and the topic was one with which the candidates were familiar. The latter, however, was one of the problems with the comprehension because in several cases the candidates used their prior knowledge of beauty pageants and gave responses based on that instead of relying on what was actually stated in the passage.

There were other weaknesses of candidates that were discerned in this section:

- A general lack of analytical skills.
- A weakness in vocabulary, both in French and in English.
- The inability to communicate effectively in English as is required in this question.

Many candidates did not know the meaning of "entail" in question 5 and '...the realization...' in question 10. Surprisingly, there were some candidates who did not know the word 'pageant' and who wrote 'the girls became a pageant'.

It is evident that students need a great deal of practice with this type of question. They should be given passages for Reading Comprehension from the 1st form and should be trained to read the passages carefully. Questions should be given out of sequence with the passage. This would encourage students to read to understand and not just to look for responses in a chronological order. Students would then learn to think critically and improve their analytical skills.

Students should be encouraged to read over their work. There were several instances where, if candidates had read over their work carefully, they would have discerned careless errors that were made. A deficiency in English affected candidates' performance in this question. Students need to be encouraged to express themselves clearly. In many cases it was difficult to decipher what candidates were trying to say. Being fluent in English would have a positive effect on candidates' performance in French.

***An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

Questions 1, 2, 4

These questions were well answered by most candidates. Little difficulty was experienced.

Question 3

This was not a difficult question but many candidates only gave part of the answer causing the loss of marks.

Question 5

Many candidates answered this incorrectly because they did not understand the meaning of the word 'entail'.

Question 6

Many candidates lost marks because they did not use the specific information provided in the passage but answered according to their knowledge of pageants in general. Many were also affected by their weakness in vocabulary.

Question 7

Many candidates missed out on an important element of the answer here.

Question 8

Many candidates misinterpreted *milliers* to mean "millions" rather than "thousands".

Question 9

Many candidates attempted to summarize the passage instead of giving the author's opinion in few words. Hence, many candidates did not score full marks on this question.

Question 10

As was the case for question 6, this question was misunderstood and candidates relied on their knowledge of pageants instead of the information provided in the passage.

The following response was selected from amongst those done by the candidates who demonstrated a full or almost complete understanding of this passage:

1. People believe that participating in a beauty pageant is easy.
2. The writer views pageants as dreams coming true for people who work hard.
3. The writer justifies this by saying that the pageant is the realization of a dream that started after a lot of hard work and time was put in to make it real.
4. Each girl's dream is to participate in a beauty pageant, especially Miss World.
5. To fulfill their dream, girls must do a lot of hard work.
6. In preparing for pageants one must take care of their body, stay informed (in touch with current events) and do some charity work.
7. They must be able to speak well in front of thousands of people.
8. It is popular because many people come out or tune in to see the pageant.
9. The author's opinion is summarized by the phrase, "Nothing ventured, nothing gained".
10. The writer says that girls are admired for an entire year and doors to opportunity are opened for them.

Paper 03 – Oral Examination

This paper tests candidates' ability (a) to produce appropriate responses in the target language in a number of simulations, (b) to read aloud a short passage in the target language, (c) to respond in the target language to general questions based on 4 out of 6 topics indicated in the syllabus. The theme of each reading passage is linked to one of the set of general questions in order to create a more natural flow from one task to another.

Performance ranged from excellent to poor, with a number of candidates scoring full marks on this paper.

Responses to Situations

The candidates' performance ranged from moderate to very good. Many candidates used a wide range of vocabulary and generally correct grammar. The main areas of difficulty were the following:

- Omission of the auxiliary verbs when using the passé composé.
- Incorrect auxiliary used.
- Inaccurate use of idioms.
- Lack of appropriate vocabulary.
- Misinterpretation of situations.
- Occasional use of infinitives instead of present tense.

***An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

Reading Passages

Most candidates displayed good to very good knowledge of the sound system. There was evidence of fluency, correct intonation and pronunciation and passages read were readily understood by examiners. As is expected, a few candidates had difficulty in doing the above. Others had difficulty with words such as: *jambon, collègues, interroge, juillet, lieux, Allemagne* and *secret*, to name a few.

The main areas of difficulty involved

- Pronunciation of final consonants
- Omission of liaison
- Pronunciation of cognates as their English counterparts
- Pronunciation of 'r' at the end of a verb.

Guided Conversation

Most candidates understood the questions asked and were able to use a wide range of vocabulary. However, pronunciation and intonation continue to be a problem and need to be rectified. The main grammatical errors involved the adjectival agreements, subject verb agreements and omission of the reflexive pronouns.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2010

**FRENCH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY**

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St Michael, Barbados
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GENERAL COMMENTS

Candidates' performance in the 2010 examination was comparable to that of 2009. Many candidates displayed fair to excellent levels of linguistic competence, spontaneity and grammatical accuracy. None the less, there is still much room for improvement.

Teachers are again encouraged to continue exposing their students to authentic samples of language from electronic and paper-based sources to stimulate real-life situations in which students may practise the target language. Teachers are advised to continue their good work in engaging students in language learning by making it relevant, personal and meaningful.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprised two sections, tested candidates' ability to (i) listen to and understand a number of items in the target language and (ii) read and understand a number of written items. Both sections required candidates to have a mastery of essential grammar as prescribed in the CSEC syllabus and vocabulary appropriate to this level of competence. The good performance here was comparable to that of previous years.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section I – Directed Situations

This section tested candidates' ability to respond in French to ten situations described in English and requiring written responses.

All situations drew on functions/notions and settings and topics (see syllabus) that could be within the experience of a 16-year-old candidate.

Points to note

- Candidates must read each situation carefully, paying close attention to what is required by the situation.
- Candidates must try to be concise in their answers as long, convoluted sentences may result in the loss of marks.
- Candidates are reminded to number the situations as on the question paper, even if they answer the situations in random order.
- Candidates should NOT write each situation on a separate page.

SITUATION	FUNCTION/NOTION	SETTING/TOPIC
1	Describing an item	Lost and found counter
2	Expressing good wishes	Email friend going on vacation
3	Apologising/ Expressing regret	Inability to accept invitation
4	Expressing a request	Reminder to do a task
5	Explaining/Informing	Reason for getting home late
6	Interdiction	Notice in a public place
7	Informing/ Providing news about something	Note on examination results
8	Expressing opinion	Comment on poem
9	Proposing a course of action	Poster at school
10	Giving advice	Doctor's office prescription

Situation 1

This item required candidates to give two descriptive features of a lost bag. Most candidates responded well and were able to provide adequate information. Nonetheless, there was often the problem of the agreement of noun and adjective, the feminine being given instead of the masculine and vice versa.

Situation 2

Expressing two wishes was the key to answering this item. Some responses were too garbled and candidates lost marks for not simply writing "*Bon Voyage*" or "*Bonnes Vacances*" to express their wish for the person's holiday. Candidates also experienced problems in agreement between gender and number, for example, "*Bon *Vacances*" or "**Bonne voyage*". Candidates frequently misused "*espérer*" for "*souhaiter*" with the direct object pronoun. The verb "*s'amuser*" was also not employed correctly and it was obvious that there was a problem with the conjugation when using the reflexive pronoun, for example, "*s'amuses-toi*".

Situation 3

For this item, most candidates knew how to give an apology and give a reason for their absence. However, some candidates misused the phrase "*parce que*" instead of "*mais*" or joined the two words as "**parceque*". Overall, candidates responded well to this question.

An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Situation 4

Candidates needed to remind someone about a task which they had to do. However, oftentimes the idea of the reminder was not expressed, only the task. Many candidates lost marks here for not using “*n’oublie pas de*” or “*tu dois...*” to indicate that the person should not forget to do the task.

Situation 5

This item required candidates to give an explanation for their lateness and to inform of a specific arrival time. Many candidates did not use the future tense or, in other cases, the future of only one verb was known. For example “*j’irai*” or “*j’aurai*” was employed instead of “*je serai en retard*”. Nevertheless, most candidates successfully gave a reason for being late, but did not indicate a specific time for their return.

Situation 6

The interdiction was very important in this item and most times it was used correctly. However, the verb “*se promener*” or “*faire une promenade*” was used instead of “*marcher*” and many candidates did not know the word for “lawn” or misspelt it. This question often scored a partial mark because one of the requirements was not met. For example, “*ne marcher pas ici*” received a zero score because there was no interdiction and no specific place or area mentioned.

Situation 7

For this item, the present tense was often used instead of the *passé composé* and the position of the adverb “*bien*” or “*très bien*” was misplaced. Many candidates also did not know the word for “term” and simply added an “e” to make it “*le terme*” instead of using “*trimestre*” or “*semestre*”. In addition, there was often no indication of the future tense when speaking about their plans.

Situation 8

Candidates performed well on this item. They provided the two elements that were requested and expressed their opinion of the poem. There was the occasional use by candidates of “*à mon avis*” or “*je pense que*”. However, most candidates did not know that “*poème*” was masculine and used “*la*” or “*elle*” or “*belle*” in their descriptions.

Situation 9

For this item candidates needed to propose a course of action. The word for “alcohol” was misspelt and the inability of candidates to use the interdiction “*défense de*” or “*il est interdit de*” caused them to lose marks. It was also obvious that many candidates did not know the difference between the adjective “*bon*” and the adverb “*bien*” and these were often misused, for example, “**bien pour la santé*”.

Situation 10

This item required candidates to provide advice and they responded well to it. The indicative or the infinitive was often used to tell the patient to do two things. The main problem encountered was with the word for “medication”. Most times, “*prends le medecin*” or “*medication*” were used, which indicated that the vocabulary was not well known.

The following are examples of responses in a good script.

1. *Mon sac est marron et aussi grand que moi*
2. *Bon voyage et amuse-toi bien.*
3. *Je suis désolé mais je ne peu pas y aller avec toi, je dois garder mon frère.*
4. *N'oublie pas de m'acheter un kilo de pommes.*
5. *J'arriverai *peu après vingt-deux heures car je n'ai plus d'argent, donc je dois venir a *pie.*
6. *Il est interdit de marcher sur le gazon.*
7. *J'ai eu *réussite aux examens, je vais continuer mes études au niveau avance.*
8. *J'aime beaucoup mais c'est trop triste.*
9. *La drogue, ce n'est bon pour la sante.*
10. *Tu dois te reposer et boire beaucoup d'eau.*

INCORRECT RESPONSES

CANDIDATE ANSWER	CORRECTIONS	CORRECT RESPONSE
5. J'arriverai *peu après vingt –deux heures car je n'ai plus d'argent, donc je dois venir a *pie.	Omission of indefinite article <i>un.</i> - Spelling of <i>pie</i> .	J'arriverai un peu après vingt –deux heures car je n'ai plus d'argent, donc je dois venir a pied.
7. J'ai eu *reussite aux examens, je vais continuer mes etudes au niveau avance.	Omission of definite article <i>la.</i>	J'ai eu la reussite aux examens, je vais continuer mes etudes au niveau avance

Section II – Letter/ Composition

This section tested candidates' ability to produce a piece of French of about 130–150 words based on an outline given in English. Candidates had the choice of producing either a letter or a composition.

The answers in this section ranged from excellent to poor. It must be noted that this year, unlike other years, an almost equal number of candidates attempted each option.

In general, the problem of inaccuracy remains a source of concern. The impression is given that few candidates write a rough copy of their essay, revise, correct and improve on it before submission, although the question paper provides blank space for such. Teachers need to encourage their students to practise these and other techniques such as

- Balancing the length of paragraphs. Most candidates write at length in Parts (i) and (ii) and very little in Parts (iii) and (iv).
- Using connectives to improve the flow of the essay and its coherence (*alors, mais cependant...*).

An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

- Refraining from writing their answers in ‘stream of consciousness’ mode, with long lists of nouns, and many sentences which consist only of subject, verb and object.
- Using structures which are rewarded by markers: *inviter* + person + *a* (infinitive), *après avoir visité*, *passer* (time) *a* (infinitive) etc.

There was an improvement in the use of correct format for letter headings and greetings, salutations and closure. There was also evidence that teachers had prepared their students well for opening and closing remarks in the letter, for example, «*Je profite d’un instant de repos pour t’adresser ces quelques mot...*» and «*je dois terminer ma lettre, ma mère m’appelle pour faire la vaisselle*».

The problem of candidates writing too much remains in evidence. Candidates must understand that markers do not score the essay beyond the 150 (170) word limit. Quantity does not replace quality!

Common errors made by candidates in Section II included:

- Incorrect formulation of date
- *Tout le monde* + plural verb
- Position of *prochain-Samedi prochain* and *le prochain concert*
- Use of *dire* and *parler* (*J’écris pour te dire...*)
- Use of *quitter* and *partir*
- Incorrect usage of “to take” (**Nous avons pris mon correspondante a la plage.*)
- Incorrect usage of *d’accord* (*Elle était d’accord* for “She was all right”)
- *Avoir un bien temps* for “to have a good time”

Use of the subjunctive after *espérer* : **J’espère que tu ailles.*

- Omission of the auxiliary verb in the *passé composé* and incorrect agreements for verbs conjugated with *être*.
- Adjectival agreement (very poor as it usually is)
- Omission of letters in certain words (**vaster*, **anniversaire*, **malheureusement*)
- Word by word translation from the English structure..for example, * «*Une album qui faire les journées tourne la vie pour le bon* » ; «* *C’était nén pouvoir plus.* » The latter structure indicates that candidates remember expressions they have found in a dictionary. Teachers need to teach candidates to write an essay using vocabulary and structures known to them.

An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Many candidates also have difficulty with respect to the use of

- Logical future : *Quand j'irai a Paris, je visiterai...*
- The pronoun “y” to complete the structure (“You must go”, rendered as *Tu dois aller*)
- Subjunctive after ‘*Vouloir que...*’ and after verbs of emotion for example, *Je suis content que ...* .

Here is an example of a letter submitted this year by a candidate.

Lyons, le treize mai deux mil dix

Chère Sophie,

Comment vas-tu ? J'espère que tout va bien chez toi. Quant a moi, tout va bien. A propos, je te remercie du cadeau que tu m'as envoyé le mois dernier. J'étais très occupée mais, maintenant, j'écris pour te parler au sujet d'un concert. Un concert de Taylor Swift dans la Guyane ! Incroyable. N'est –ce pas ?

*Tu sais bien que j'adore Taylor Swift. Alors, quand J'ai entendu *au sujet du concert, j'ai dit, « il me faut aller a ce concert ! » Il a eu lieu au Stade *dans le ville qui* s'apelle Providence, il y une semaine. Taylor a chanté toutes mes chansons préférées telles que « I'd lie », « The other side of the door”, ”Breathe”et ainsi de suite. Il n'y a pas eu *des places dans le Stade *de s'asseoir. Mais, *hereusement, j'avais acheté le *billete le plus tôt que possible. Comme moi. Les autres jeunes gens ont adore Taylor. En effet, les jeunes *homme ont crie, « Nous *t'adore Taylor ! » Très amusant !*

*Sophie, mon amie, ne t'inquiète pas, Taylor va venir a la Martinique le mois prochain. C'est génial, n'est-ce pas ? *Elle viendra mercredi, le trois juin. Tu dois aller au concert ! Je te promets qu'il sera incroyable ! Taylor Swift, je l'adore !*

*De toute façon, je dois te quitter maintenant car j'ai vraiment sommeil. J'attends *de ta prochaine lettre avec impatience.*

Amitiés,

Sasha

INCORRECT RESPONSES

CANDIDATE ANSWER	CORRECTIONS	CORRECT RESPONSE
* au sujet du...	Wrong vocabulary item	Parler du
* dans le ville	Wrong definite article	Dans la ville
..*qui s'apelle	Incorrect spelling	Qui s'appelle
..*des places	Use of “de” after the negative	De places
*de s'asseoir	Wrong preposition	Pour s'asseoir
*hereusement	Incorrect spelling	heureusement

An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

*billete	Incorrect spelling	billet
*homme	Wrong number	hommes
*Nous t'adore	Verb and subject agreement	Nous t'adorons
*Elle viendra	Wrong subject pronoun	Il viendra
*de ta prochaine	Need to omit 'de'	Ta prochaine

Here is an example of a good composition submitted by a candidate.

*Pendant mes vacances de Pâques mon ami, Lui, a *visité ma famille et moi, ici, dans* Trinité et Tobago. Il est arrivé la première semaine de mes vacances dans le* airport. Quand il est arrivé, nous sommes retournés à la maison, pour une boum. C'était super! Après la boum nous nous sommes couchés.*

**Dans le matin, nous sommes allés à la plage, où Lui et moi avons fait la natation. Lundi matin, nous avons vu les monuments historiques. Après nous sommes allés au ciné* pour ver* un film d'épouvante. C'était intéressant! Le prochain jour Lui et moi sommes allés jouer un match du* foot. Lui a joué très bien et il a gagné un * pour l'équipe et il a gagné *des argent de mon *profeseur. C'était amusant parce que* il n'est pas un *miembre de l'équipe.*

*Je voudrais aller en France où Lui habite et quand *j'arrive je voudrais voir la tour *d'Effiel et les monuments. *Je allerai en France pour mes vacances *d'été.*

INCORRECT RESPONSES

CANDIDATE ANSWER	CORRECTIONS	CORRECT RESPONSE
*visite	Wrong verb	rendre visite
*dans	Wrong preposition	à
*le airport	Use of english word	l'aéroport
*dans le matin	No need for "dans"	le matin
*cine	Use of abbreviation	ciné/cinéma
*ver	Use of Spanish word for "see"	voir
*du foot	Wrong use of "du"	De foot
*Il a gagné un	Object pronoun needed	Il l'a gagné
* des argent	Wrong use of partitive pronoun	De l'argent
*profeseur	Incorrect spelling	professeur
*parce que il	Spelling error	Parce qu'il

An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

* un membre	Incorrect spelling	Un membre
*j'arrive	Wrong tense	J'y arriverai
*d'Effiel	No need for "de" and incorrect spelling	Eiffel
*Je alleraï	Wrong verb conjugation	J'irai
* d'ète.	Wrong accent	d'été.

Section III – Contextual Announcement/Contextual Dialogue

This section required candidates to respond in French (in about 80–100 words) to either a contextual announcement or a contextual dialogue. Cues were given in English for both options. On both options the candidates generally scored in the satisfactory to moderately good range.

Candidates' responses to both options of this item indicated their ease in writing within the scope. There were fewer instances of scripts with no responses and generally most candidates attempted to address all of the various demands of either the announcement or the dialogue. This year, more candidates attempted the announcement than previously. There was parity in the level of difficulty in both items. It is evident that candidates preparing for this examination need a great deal more practice in writing in the target language as there seems to be a general lack of ability to manipulate the written language and produce work that is of superior quality. On a positive note though, most candidates were able to produce pieces within the word limit. This year, there was not the usual plethora of candidates being penalized for either exceeding or falling short of the required word length. In general, it is imperative that candidates pay closer attention to orthography and punctuation, since carelessness in either tends to diminish the standard of work presented. Teachers preparing students should instruct them to desist from using pencil to write their answers, and candidates should also be advised that there is no advantage to using art or colours when producing their announcement.

Contextual Announcement

Most candidates were able to respond to all of the cues, although with varying degrees of mastery. Some candidates did not fully understand the meaning of "extra-curricular activities" as some opted to include the visit of a foreign teacher from France as one of these activities. On the other hand, there was a range of activities mentioned including "*faire du jardinage, jouer à la pétanque, le baby-foot.*" There were very few candidates who produced work in which their ideas and language flowed and developed naturally. This stemmed primarily from candidates' inability to adequately manipulate tenses appropriate to what they wanted to express. Candidates also had problems expressing the future, commonly seen in the inability to produce "*il y aura*", for example. Vocabulary and grammar relevant to the cues which posed difficulty include:

- "Courses" – use of *les courses* in error. However, candidates did opt for *cours, classes, leçon* and even *stage*
- Duration – time expressions (*du ... au ...*), date
- Frequency – spelling of the days of the week and months of the year

An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

- Target group – giving an age limit, those expressing an interest
- Deadline for registration – the verb *s'inscrire* was not very widely known or used appropriately; *date limite* was rarely produced although the more able candidates produced a date *avant le ...etc.*

Contextual Dialogue

This continued to be the more popular option for candidates who, this year, showed that they experienced less difficulty in the comprehension of the cues. This dialogue expected the candidate to successfully manipulate the Passé Composé, Imperfect, Present and Future/ Future *Proche* verb forms. By and large, candidates maintained and developed a logical conversation between M. Martin and the officer while managing, fortunately, to keep Monsieur Martin's gender intact, and addressed the officer formally. The cue that most candidates were able to express (albeit with varying degrees of accuracy) was the description of the burglar. Inability to use tenses appropriate for descriptions in the past (Imperfect) as well as agreement and position of adjectives played a major role in the accurate rendering of this cue. Nonetheless, some candidates used such expressions as *trapu, avait un tatouage*. Candidates also listed a wide and varied quantity of missing items, but again basic gender and number issues distinguished the good candidate from the one of limited ability. Some, however, did not comprehend the ensuing question, "*Et quoi d'autres?*" In response to the last question, most candidates opted to buy one or several dogs to deal with preventing future theft.

Here is an example of an excellent announcement.

*Voulez –vous apprendre le français? Voulez –vous un emploi aux pays francophones ? Les mecs, voulez–vous une petite amie française ? Alors, Monsieur Letrac offrira *les cours de français a partir du 09 au 30 aout au bas prix de dix euros. Les cours sont pour les personnes qui veulent apprendre *parler le français. Ils auront lieu *dedans la bibliothèque de 9h a 12h. En plus, avec les cours, les participants iront au cinéma français, au restaurant français et nous voyagerons a la Martinique pour une journée. Toutes les personnes qui intéressent aux cours doivent s'inscrire avant le 30 juin.*

INCORRECT RESPONSES

CANDIDATE ANSWER	CORRECTIONS	CORRECT RESPONSE
*les cours	Use of definite instead of indefinite article	Des cours
*apprendre parler	Need for "à" after apprendre	Apprendre à parler
*dedans	Wrong vocabulary item	A or dans

An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Here is an example of a good dialogue.

L'Agent: Calmez-vous Monsieur! Qu'est-ce qu'il y a?

M. Martin: J'ai vu quelqu'un qui vient de partir* chez moi. C'est un homme.

L'Agent: Et qu'est-ce que vous avez fait?

M. Martin: Après, j'ai vérifié pour mes choses dans ma maison, et *quelque choses ont manqué.

L'Agent: Décrivez cette personne?

M. Martin: Il est grand et gros.

L'Agent: Et qu'est-ce qui manquait chez-vous?

M. Martin: Cet homme a pris ma télévision et mon portable.

L'Agent: Et quoi d'autres?

M. Martin: Aussi, il a pris mon ordinateur portable.

L'Agent: Pensez-vous savoir qui c'est?

M. Martin: Mon amie qui habite près de chez moi. Je pense *qu'il sait. Elle s'appelle Madame Dupont.

L'Agent: Et elle a vu le voleur?

M. Martin: Oui, c'est parce que j'ai vu Madame Dupont quand je suis rentré chez moi.

L'Agent: Alors qu'est-ce que vous allez faire pour éviter une telle chose?

M. Martin: Je vais acheter trois chiens.

An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

INCORRECT RESPONSES

CANDIDATE ANSWER	CORRECTIONS	CORRECT RESPONSE
*partir chez moi	Need for “de” between verb and chez	Partir de chez moi
*quelque choses ont manqué.	Wrong vocabulary and tense	Des choses qui manquaient
*qu’il sait	Wrong subject pronoun	Qu’elle sait

Section IV – Reading Comprehension

This section tested candidates’ ability to read and comprehend a short passage in the target language. The questions on the passage and the candidates’ answers were in English.

The passage, “The Lure of Advertising” centred on a very familiar topic for most candidates. However, they seemed to have attempted to draw on their general knowledge of the topic instead of sticking to the information provided in the text.

Teachers must emphasize to students that they must read the passage thoroughly, more than once, and that they should refer to the material presented in the passage to respond to the questions being asked.

The passages used for testing comprehension are very concise texts that are generally between 100 and 150 words. There is therefore little room for redundancy with this restricted content. In classroom practice, students should be encouraged to identify the key words or elements in the questions as a preliminary strategy, before attempting to answer the questions. This might help them to read critically and arrive at a sound understanding of the text.

Comments on Individual Questions

1. What are we told that young people know?

This was generally well handled. Incorrect responses included Young people know everything; Young people know nothing; Young people know that they are beautiful. The correct response was *Young people know what they want.*

2. State two views that young people have of advertisements.

This was also responded to satisfactorily by candidates. Occasionally, some candidates digressed and indicated that the people presenting the products must be beautiful or that advertisements themselves are good ideas for marketing. A correct response should have indicated that *young people think that advertisements are nice, accurate and give a good idea of the products.*

An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

3. What effect does advertising have on young people?

While many responses were on target, quite a number of candidates left out the key “to buy” the product. Many candidates suggested that young persons may be influenced to steal.

4. What are merchants hoping to achieve by spending a lot on advertising?

This question was partially answered by many candidates. Most had the idea of “satisfying” someone; some suggested the merchants; others, the public in general. Quite a number were able to include the element of “dreams and desires of young people”.

5. What statement is made about the importance of being alert?

This question was not well handled. Candidates went into writing the response in French straight from the text. However, many were able to formulate correct responses having read the passage carefully. A correct response would have asserted that *one may think that all is well in the world but this is not the case*.

6. What is described as ‘extravagant’ in the passage?

This question stirred up a variety of ideas and responses including “fashion”, “spending”, “drinking”, “greed” and “prices”. Although many candidates were able to state “young people’s taste”, a great number failed to add that it was for advertisements.

7. State two other sources of influence over young people.

For this question, many candidates were able to identify the key elements of friends and fashion, but far too many went beyond the text to include “music”, “singers” and “movies”.

8. How can these sources actually influence young people?

This question was among the most challenging for candidates. Many answered based on their own experiences by indicating peer pressure but failed to indicate exactly what was stated in the passage, that is, these sources cause them to change (drinks/clothes/accessories) as quickly as they had accepted them.

9. Why would designers of commercials spend a lot of time devising advertisements?

Many candidates were able to get only the first part of the answer. A few did not zero in on “young people” and the majority missed the latter part of the answer, “those who are not easily fooled”. While quite a number of candidates seemed to have the general idea, “*trompees*” was rarely correctly interpreted. Some suggested “attracted”, “caught” or “influenced”.

10. In what way is the title of the passage appropriate?

This question was generally not well handled. Most candidates left out the last part of the response, “to buy things that they do not want or need”.

An excellent script should have included the following:

1. We are told that young people know what they want.

2. Two views that young people have of advertisements are that they are beautiful and give good ideas about the products.
3. Advertisements give young people the urge to buy the products.
4. The merchants are hoping to satisfy the dreams and desires of young people.
5. The statement made about being alert is that if we are not careful we could think that everything is all right in the world but it is not so.
6. In the passage, young peoples' taste for advertisements is described as extravagant.
7. Fashion and friends are two sources of influence over young people.
8. These sources influence young people by having them give up drinks, clothes and accessories as fast as they had picked them up.
9. Designers of commercials spend a lot of time devising advertisements because they want to find messages that would better seduce the young ones who are not easily fooled.
10. The title of the passage is appropriate because it shows how young people are influenced into buying things they do not need.

Paper 03 – Oral Examination

This paper tested candidates' ability to (i) produce appropriate responses in the target language in a number of situations; (ii) read aloud a short passage in the target language; and (iii) respond in the target language to general questions based on four out of six topics indicated in the syllabus. An attempt was made to link the theme of the reading passage with the general questions in order to create a more natural flow from one task to another.

Performance in the oral examination ranged from excellent to poor, with a number of candidates scoring full marks on this paper. Again, the comments made by oral examiners suggested that candidates' performance was a reflection of their ease and familiarity with the target language and an indication of their level of readiness for the examination. Nonetheless, there is cause for concern when oral examiners state that there are many candidates who are unable to perform even the simplest of tasks in the foreign language. Any candidate, who has been taught using the communicative approach, should not be hesitant to say his/her name, give basic personal information and observe common courtesies in French.

Responses to Situations

Although candidates performed extremely well on this part of the paper, candidates must pay attention to the use of the formal and informal situations since they seem to mix up the two. There were the common mistakes of "*librairie*" for "*bibliothèque*", misinterpretation as to when to use "*avoir*" and "*être*" in the *passé composé*, and confusion with the interrogative words "*qui, que, où*". There was also evidence of difficulty in constructing situations grammatically and the appropriate placement of verbs in questions.

Reading Passage

Many candidates demonstrated a high level of comfort and familiarity with the target language. However, oral examiners found that while some candidates read fluently, with mostly correct pronunciation, good expression and suitable intonation, there were many of them who did not seem to understand what they were reading. Additionally, examiners commented on (a) the mispronunciation of the ending of verb forms in the third person plural, (b) the lack of liaisons in places where necessary and (c) the anglicization of certain French words.

Teachers must make a concerted effort to familiarize students with the French alphabet, supply them with the basic pronunciation rules and teach them to use their dictionaries as a resource for pronunciation.

Conversation

As in previous years, the performance of candidates ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory. Some candidates were able to answer questions with a great degree of spontaneity and correctness of expression, while for others repetition was required in order for them to grasp some form of understanding of the questions. One was able to identify weaknesses in grammar and vocabulary. Some candidates experienced difficulty in understanding certain questions, for example, «*Où se trouve...; Parle-moi...; Décris...; Combien coûte...* ». These are basic forms of questions and should not have posed problems at this level. There is therefore need for much training of students on the part of teachers.

GENERAL COMMENTS ON ORAL EXAMINATION

Students must understand that their participation in the oral examination is a natural progression from the kind of oral activities in which they had engaged since Form 1. Candidates could be trained to expand on their responses to make the conversation as normal or natural as possible. The candidate who answers: “*Ma mère s’appelle Marie mais nous l’appelons Josephine à la maison. C’est un nom qui lui était donné par ma petite sœur*” in response to the question “*Comment s’appelle ta mère?*” obviously shows more ease and familiarity in the language than the one who simply responds «*Marie* ».

Examiners are also asked to demonstrate a level of flexibility in their examination techniques to ensure that the question[s] asked take into consideration any unique or special situation that is being faced by the candidate.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2011

FRENCH

GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

GENERAL COMMENTS

Performance in the 2011 examination was comparable to that of 2010. Many candidates displayed fair to excellent levels of linguistic competence, spontaneity and grammatical accuracy. Nonetheless, there is still much room for improvement.

Teachers are again encouraged to continue exposing students to authentic samples of language from electronic and paper-based sources to stimulate real-life situations in which students may practise the target language. Teachers must continue their good work in engaging students in language learning by making it relevant, personal and meaningful.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprised two sections, assessed candidates' ability to (i) listen to and understand a number of items in the target language and (ii) read and understand a number of written items. Both sections required candidates to have a mastery of essential grammar as prescribed in the CSEC syllabus and vocabulary appropriate to this level of competence. The good performance here was comparable to that of previous years.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section I – Directed Situations

This section assessed candidates' ability to respond in French to ten situations described in English and requiring written responses. All situations drew on functions/notions and settings and topics (see syllabus) that could be within the experience of a 16-year-old candidate.

The performance of candidates this year in this section of the examination was generally quite strong. The continued close relationship among the functions/notions of the syllabus, the settings, and the wording/requirements of each item, helped to facilitate this.

This year, several of the items were open-ended so as to afford all candidates ample opportunity to showcase their best work. Items 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 for example, should have allowed candidates at this level to choose from amongst a wide body of work, their best-prepared, appropriate responses (synthesis and application of knowledge). However, too often candidates seemed to be stymied by the very wide choice, falling back on a translation of what they would have wanted to say in English, rather than using what they already knew how to say in French.

SITUATION	FUNCTION/NOTION	SETTING/TOPIC
1	Introducing oneself	Online contact
2	Informing about something	Concert/Email to a friend
3	Expressing a request	Visit to France
4	Explaining	Principal's office/School
5	Interdiction	School library/Signs
6	Expressing disappointment	Visit to aunt/ Message left
7	Expressing request	Home/Note to relative
8	Apologizing/Expressing regret	Classroom/Note to teacher
9	Giving advice	Newspaper/Exams
10	Informing/Giving information	Airport/Arrival plans

Situation 1

This item was generally very well handled. Candidates were required to give two bits of personal information. They lost marks on this item for using the verb *être* instead of *avoir* to give their age. A surprising number of candidates misspelt *Je m'appelle*. However, the open-endedness of the item lent itself to a very wide range of correct responses. For example, *Je suis timide et j'aime jouer à l'ordinateur* gained full marks.

Situation 2

This item was also fairly well handled by candidates. They were asked to mention two aspects of a concert which their friend had not attended. Again, the range of possible answers was very wide. Difficulties here ranged from those related to tense, **Le concert est bien...* to those, as in the example, where the adverb *bien* was often substituted for the adjective *bon*. As a second element, candidates often mentioned an artiste — *Celine Dion a chanté très bien!* Some candidates, in trying to include the fact of the absence of their friend, (a non-essential) lost valuable marks — **Je manqué tu*. Although there were several instances of words being misspelt, for example, ** superb*, ** beacoup de monde*, most candidates managed to give two pieces of information for full marks: *Le concert était fantastique et j'ai gagné un T-shirt!*

Situation 3

Two elements were required in the response to this item — two activities with the Conditional Tense, for example, *Je voudrais* + Infinitive/Future Tense/with Logical Future after the word *Quand*. Most candidates had no difficulty expressing two activities which they would have liked to take part in. Superior candidates exhibited reasonable cultural knowledge of France — *Je voudrais visiter Le Louvre et faire une promenade en bateau sur La Seine*. Difficulties encountered by candidates included misspellings — ** le tour Eiffel L'Ouvre*, omission of the infinitive after the auxiliary verb, incorrect preposition used with the geographical names *France* and *Paris* and no logical Future Tense after *quand*: **Quand je vais a France, je veux visité le muséum*. (cf. #6 use of the Future Tense).

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure. Two asterisks (**) indicate an omission.*

Situation 4

This item required candidates to provide two details of a specific task which they were required to do. Candidates who had mastered the subjunctive gave exemplary responses such as *Le principal veut que j'aille au concert samedi et que je chante et danse*. Many other candidates used other idioms/expressions to good effect; for example, *Je dois rester après les classes, aider les étudiants de seconde avec la physique./Il me demande de finir mes devoirs et de dire aux jeunes de ma classe d'aller à la bibliothèque*.

However, for many candidates this item presented the most difficulty. Many of them seemed not to have read the item carefully enough. Some candidates stated two completely different tasks, not two details of one task. Nevertheless, the examining committee awarded marks to such responses particularly if the tasks were related.

Training in reading the English cue and determining exactly what is required would be of benefit here.

Situation 5

Candidates were required to state two things users of the library should not do. This item was not well handled by candidates. A significant number of candidates were unable to render the interdiction **Non parlé et non mangé dans ici!* Noteworthy is the fact that the wording of the item was somewhat of a departure from other items of its type that were asked in the past, where the candidate would be asked to state what the sign(s) said. Therefore, candidates who wrote: *Silence!* could not attract marks since this did not constitute what users were not to do. Examples of full responses included the following: *Il est interdit/défendu de manger ou de boire dans la bibliothèque. On ne doit pas parler fort, ni laisser les livres partout/ Ils ne doivent pas/Il ne faut pas bavarder ou voler les livres!* If a second appropriate action was not mentioned, it was considered a partial response.

Situation 6

The two elements that candidates needed to consider were expressing disappointment and indicating how the visitor could contact his/her aunt again. Again, some candidates sought to include in their response, the non-essential of the aunt's absence, with poor results vis-à-vis their mark: **Je suis désolé tu ne maison pas...*

Candidates found several effective ways of expressing their disappointment including *Je regrette/je suis désolé/décue*. Many candidates then avoided the subjunctive by not mentioning the aunt's absence and simply moved on to how they would contact her again. Good mastery of the future tense was shown in many scripts: *Je reviendrai demain/je t'appellerai/voici mon numéro de portable*.

However, there were still many instances where poor mastery of the tense was evident, for example, **je serai appeller tu demain*, and where candidates did not seem to have the required vocabulary: ** je composerai tu!* The position of the object pronoun also provided evidence of lack of practice or mastery of this grammatical point.

Situation 7

The required elements of this item were a request and two tasks. Many candidates effectively used the familiar imperative in responding to this item and were well armed with the appropriate idioms for household chores — *Fais ton lit et range ta chambre!*

Difficulties were experienced with such as the spelling of ** vaiselle/vaisels*, and the gender of words as ** le lessive*. Since it was a Sunday, many candidates admonished ** Va à l'église!* The infinitive was accepted here as in a list of chores to be done.

Situation 8

The two required elements of this item were an apology and an explanation of behaviour. It should be noted that candidates did not have to describe the behaviour to gain full marks, they only had to give a reason for the behaviour. Some candidates did not recognize this and so lost marks on a partial response. A response such as *Je suis désolé madame, j'étais malade* earned full marks. *Je suis désolé d'avoir parlé en classe* earned partial marks.

Situation 9

Candidates were required to provide two pieces of advice that a newspaper column would offer to students in preparing for exams. Many candidates ignored the fact that they were speaking to a larger audience and needed therefore to use *vous* in their response. The polite/plural imperative in the positive/negative was accepted here, as well as other generally inclusive idioms and expressions such as, *On ne doit pas/Il ne faut pas/Ne pas* + infinitive. A response such as *Travaillez fort et étudiez au moins quatre heures par jour*, earned full marks.

Situation 10

Candidates were required to provide two details about their planned arrival in Guadeloupe. Once again, a more careful reading of the item would have afforded candidates full marks. Many spoke in the past tense about their arrival in Guadeloupe, and their impressions of its climate and/or its people. Such responses attracted no mark as they were inappropriate. The details that candidates needed to mention included flight number, day and date of arrival, accompanying persons, even what the person would be wearing for identification purposes. The Future Tense verb was not necessary to gain full marks but candidates who inadvertently used the Passé Composé in the mistaken belief that they were using the present Continuous Tense were awarded a partial mark if the further response was appropriate: **Je suis arrivé lundi à huit heures du soir*.

Further Comments and Recommendations

- Candidates must read each situation carefully, paying close attention to what is required by the situation. (What, for example, is the function being tested? What vocabulary/idiom does the setting require?) It was obvious that those candidates who had been trained to accurately analyse and respond to the identified functions gained superior marks.
- Candidates must try to be concise in their answers as long, convoluted sentences result in the loss of marks.
- Candidates are reminded to number the situations as on the question paper, even if they answer the situations in random order.
- Candidates should not write each situation on a separate page.

The following are examples of responses contained in a good script.

1. *J'ai dix-sept ans et j'adore les sports.*
2. *Il y avait beaucoup de gens et *des chansons étaient sympathiques.*
3. *Je veux goûter la nourriture française et je veut aller au musée.*
4. *Je dois écrire un conte *d'honnête et je dois aller au laboratoire pour la retenue.*

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure. Two asterisks (**) indicate an omission.*

5. *Il est interdit de manger et **dans la bibliothèque.*
6. *Quel dommage! Je vais t'appeler bientôt.*
7. *N'oublie pas**préparer le déjeuner et **faire ton lit.*
8. *Je regrette, je ne pensais pas.*
9. *N'allez pas au lit trop tard et faites tous **devoirs.*
10. *Je vais arriver bientôt, je mets une robe rose et j'ai une valise noire.*

Section II – Letter/ Composition

This section assessed candidates' ability to produce a piece of French of about 130–150 words based on an outline given in English. Candidates had the choice of producing either a letter or a composition.

The responses in Section II ranged from excellent to poor. It must be noted that this year more candidates attempted the composition. Candidates' familiarity with the game of cricket might have been the reason for this fact.

In general, the problem of inaccuracy continued to be a source of concern. Few candidates seemed to have done a rough copy of their essay, and then revised, corrected and improved on it before submission. Teachers need to practise such techniques with their students.

Essay writing skills need also to be taught to students of Form 4 and Form 5 so that they are more aware of the features of a good essay such as:

- A balance in the length of the paragraphs. Most candidates write at length in Parts (i) and (ii) and very little in Parts (iii) and (iv).
- Use of connectives to improve the flow of the essay and its coherence (*alors, mais cependant...*). Most candidates write their answers in a 'stream of consciousness' mode, with long lists of nouns, and many sentences which consist only of subject, verb and object.
- Use of structures which are rewarded by markers: *inviter + person + à (infinitive), après avoir visité, passer (time) à (infinitive)* etc.

However, there was an improvement in the use of the correct format for letter headings and greetings, salutations and closure. There was also evidence that teachers had prepared their students well for opening and closing remarks in the letter, for example, *Je profite d'un instant de repos pour t'adresser ces quelques mots....* and *je dois terminer ma lettre, ma mère m'appelle pour faire la vaisselle.*

The problem of candidates writing too much was evident. Students and teachers must understand that markers do not score the essay beyond the 150 (170) word limit. Quantity does not replace quality.

Further Comments and Recommendations (Letter)

Candidates were generally unfamiliar with some of the essential vocabulary, notably *une bourse, une interview, poser sa candidature*. Therefore, some candidates sensibly substituted French words close in meaning to those required, *entretien, rendez-vous, réunion, offre, cadeau, un grand prix* (for scholarship). Less competent candidates supplied less successful renditions *l'homme de l'école, appliquer, attendre l'université, subscription* and *le bec* (for scholarship). Weak candidates resorted to English or Spanish *entrevista* or invented words *scholaire universitaire*.

It is noteworthy that the challenge of writing about a scholarship and interview without knowledge of the relevant vocabulary did not deter candidates from choosing this question. In many instances, candidates bypassed the problem in different ways, for example, *recevoir un coup de téléphone, bonnes nouvelles, recevoir éducation gratuite, rendez-vous avec le directeur*.

Candidates must be encouraged to practise the art of paraphrase and alternative renditions in their classroom exercises.

Part (iii) required the construction, *poser une question*, usually with an indirect object pronoun *me*. This was not well handled. In cases where direct speech was used, the formulation of questions was also poor and understandably, candidates had generally little knowledge of inversion after direct speech (*a-t-il dit*). Tense sequence was challenging.

In Part (iv), candidates often ignored the request to use the future tense "... preparations you will make for your trip...", and instead wrote in the past tense, losing the opportunity to introduce constructions relevant to writing about future time and intention.

Candidates generally made better attempts in this examination than in past examinations to use the correct letter format. There were very good opening remarks in the letters. However, some candidates wrote too much in the first paragraph with pre-learnt pleasantries. Pre-learnt sentences are not fully understood if used out of the correct context. Teachers must direct students on their use.

Further Comments and Recommendations (Composition)

As for the composition, the essential vocabulary for the game of cricket was often not known (*la batte, la balle, frapper la fenêtre, le carreau, casser*). Substitutions were *heurter, *tossier, *giflet la pelote, *batter, *concer, *dresser, *blesser, *abimer, *breker*....

However, candidates dealt quite well with the reaction of the victim of the incident and ways in which the victim could be reimbursed. This gave them the opportunity to use vocabulary well within their grasp (*laver le chien, nettoyer la maison, balayer, passer l'aspirateur, faire le ménage*).

Notwithstanding, there were still some direct translations from English which betrayed candidates' lack of understanding of parts of speech (*donner elle chien un lave, marcher le chien, il allait folle, elle est fou l'environ*).

As was the case for the letter, there were good attempts to introduce the story of the incident: *tout a commencé quand ...; mes amis et moi jouions au cricket quand ...* There were also well-chosen exclamations and some well-formulated commentaries on the role of friends in causing trouble. In the better scripts, Part (iv) was well developed — *Cette expérience m'a appris beaucoup de choses. J'ai appris que bien qu'on a le droit de s'amuser, on a aussi la responsabilité de prendre soin*.

However, candidates expended most of their effort on recounting the cricket match with less development of the last two parts. Again, it was clear that candidates did not always understand how to use the idioms they had been taught, for example, *j'ai pris gout à ma voisine, au bout du monde* or used them without considering the tense required, *j'ai le fou rire* in past tense narrative.

Below is an example of a very good letter submitted by a candidate.

Basse Terre, le trois mai

Cher Jean Marc,

*Ca va ? *J'espère que tu vas bien. Je regrette de ne pas avoir écrit* *tôt. Je t'écris pour *dire –toi de* ma opportunité d'étudier en France.*

*Ma professeur me *donné un dépliant d'un* cou **Français pour deux années. J'étais excitée parce que j'ai eu la *plus bonne note* dans le français et aussi, j'ai l'intention de* pour suivre des études* superie à l'université dans le domaine des langues modernes.*

*Au rendez-vous avec des professeurs du département **français, nous avons parle de mes projets d'avenir et mes bonnes notes. Donc, j'étais heureuse parce que j'ai*recu la opportunité d'étudier en France et je ne dois **payer.*

*Alors j'ai la opportunite de perfectionner ma connaissance des langues et **apprendre la culture française. **Aura l'occasion de passer du temps avec les jeunes guadeloupéens et enfin je peux enseigner l'anglais pour gagner l'argent de poche.*

Avant je vais a la France, je dois organiser un appartement, la visa et ma valise. Je dois acheter beaucoup *des vêtements et **livres.*

Ecris moi vite.

Lesha.

CANDIDATES' RESPONSE	CORRECTIONS REQUIRED	CORRECT RESPONSE
<i>*èspere</i>	Incorrect position	Espère
<i>écrit** tôt</i>	Word missing	Plus
<i>*dire –toi</i>	Wrong verb and pronoun	Te parler
<i>*ma oppurtunité</i>	Pronoun and spelling	Mon opportunité
<i>me **donné</i>	Omission of auxillary verb.	M'a donné
<i>*cour **Français</i>	Spelling of cour, omission of “de” and capitalization of Français	cours de français
<i>*plus bonne</i>	Wrong term	meilleure
<i>*dans le</i>	Anglicism	en
<i>*pour suivre</i>	Should be one word	poursuivre
<i>*superiere</i>	Spelling error	supérieure
<i>** français</i>	Omissions	de la langue française
<i>*Recu</i>	Wrong verb/past participle	eu
<i>**payer</i>	Omission	rien
<i>**apprendre</i>	Omission	d'apprendre
<i>**aura</i>	Omission of subject	j'aura
<i>*je vais a la France</i>	Erroneous structure	d'aller en France
<i>*des</i>	No plural after beaucoup	de
<i>**livres.</i>	omission	de

Below is an example of a very good composition submitted by a candidate.

*Le dimanche dernier le soleil brillait dans le ciel même si c'était la saison pluvieuse. *Don mon frère et moi, nous avons décidé de jouer au cricket dehors. C'était un bon match car nous sommes doués pour * *cricket mais soudain *le ballon a frappé la fenêtre de notre voisin, Monsieur Lafayette.*

*Nous avons *écouté un *crier et l'homme, qui était en colère, nous **approche légèrement. Après avoir* nous grondé, il m'a dit que je* dois lui payer, même si je l'ai *cassé par hasard.*

J'ai dit à maman, « Puis-j'emprunter de ton argent pour lui payer ? » et à ma grande surprise elle n'est pas mise d'accord.*

*Donc, je dois laver la voiture de Monsieur Lafayette tous les jeudis. *J'ai la lavé deux fois déjà et c'est vraiment dur ! La prochaine fois, je jouerai au cricket au centre de loisirs !*

CANDIDATES' RESPONSE	CORRECTIONS REQUIRED	CORRECT RESPONSE
*Don	Spelling error	Donc
pour * *cricket	Omission of article	Le
*le ballon	Wrong noun	La balle
*écouté	Wrong past participle	Entendu
*crier	Noun and not verb to be used	Cri
approche légèrement	Omission of auxiliary verb and wrong adverb	A approché lentement
*avoir nous grondé	Wrong position of nous	nous avoir grondés
*que je dois	Wrong verb tense	que je devais
*cassé	Subject/verb agreement	cassée
*n'est pas mise	Wrong tense; wrong verb	n'était pas
*J'ai la lavé	Wrong tense	je la lave

An asterisk (*) indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure. Two asterisks (**) indicate an omission.

Section III – Contextual Announcement/Contextual Dialogue

This section required candidates to respond in French (in about 80–100 words) to a set of cues in order to create a contextual announcement or to complete a contextual dialogue.

Candidates' responses to both options of this item indicated that they were better prepared this year to write either option. However, there was still evidence that candidates needed more practice in writing. It is recommended that teachers encourage students to apply, analyse and synthesize knowledge rather than recall and regurgitate set constructions which candidates believe must be included whether relevant to the question or not. This year there were more frequent instances of candidates scoring marks in the 'Very Good' and 'Excellent' categories. Nevertheless, candidates continued to be challenged by orthography and simple grammatical issues of the target language.

The contextual dialogue was the more popular choice of candidates. However, candidates must be made aware that the contextual dialogue demands comprehension of the words uttered by the interlocutor and a matching coherent production of French to create a fluent conversation and therefore demands a more skilful manipulation of the language by the candidate. The contextual announcement, on the other hand, required specific elements (time, date and place), and even weaker candidates tended to score points once these structures were mentioned in their attempt at the announcement. This does not mean, however, that candidates can simply reuse announcements that they had practised previously in class. Though they would have scored points for employing the aforementioned set structures, they could not score in the higher categories due to their failure to apply the relevant cues.

Recommendations for Teachers

- Instruct and train students to read the entire paper carefully and thoroughly before making the choice of Dialogue or Announcement.
- Instruct and train students to note all the details given in the question. They are relevant to the item and their inclusion improves the overall quality of the response.
- Train students to decide which form of address is relevant to the question.
- Develop exercises which would ensure that students become more careful with the spelling of necessary, frequently used and important phrases such as *s'il vous plait*, *qu'est-ce que*, *y a-t-il*, and months of the year.
- Expose students to those 'faux amis' like *attendre*.
- Continue to expose students to cultural experiences related to the teaching of the language.
- Use the World Wide Web as a resource to familiarize students with different aspects of the financial, geographical and socio-cultural experiences of Francophone countries.

Contextual Announcement

It was interesting to note that the announcements that were categorized as good to excellent tended to be based on the real-life experiences of the candidates. They drew from cultural experiences to which they were exposed in their five years of studying French. This should serve to encourage teachers to continue to expose students to experiences outside of the classroom that are still very much related to French and should be promoted as they deliver the curriculum. The contextual announcement promised its challenge with the word *postponed* (not a high frequency word at this level) being a key component.

Although there was a fair share of Anglicism, there were instances of the use of *reporter*, *annuler*, *repousser*, while other candidates opted to successfully use *ne...plus*, *n'est pas... mais...* and the date as well as *au lieu de...* Although the Future Tense was generally correctly used, some candidates continued to have problems in accurately matching subject with verb endings. Candidates identified a variety of events that were postponed (sporting, social, cultural, academic, culinary), as well as the reasons (bad weather, another competing event, illness, death, examinations, lack of funds). In attempting to list three things for club members to do before the event, candidates encountered obvious challenges with the use of the Imperative, *devoir*, plus the Infinitive or Subjunctive. In this instance, candidates continued to be plagued by the inaccurate rendering of various French verb phrases. Candidates appeared not to understand what a 'follow-up' activity was, but they did manage to suggest some activity as well as a reason for it.

Contextual Dialogue

While most candidates who attempted the contextual dialogue scored in the satisfactory to good categories, there were many whose work was excellent. Although the cues listed encouraged candidates to attempt this option, certain utterances in French appeared beyond the comprehension of the average candidate at this level, *Je suis sûr qu'elle y arrivera* and to a lesser extent, *Nous n'avons pas d'accord avec eux*. Candidates encountered difficulty expressing a request, although the greeting was simple enough. As with the contextual announcement, the reason for this difficulty varied, but far too many candidates found it challenging to use the Passé Composé in its accurate form. They continued to have problems deciding whether the Passé Composé or the Imperfect Tense should be used. In addition, there was again difficulty with *devoir* followed by the Infinitive, as well as *avoir besoin de*. The rendering of "my sister's 21 birthday party" proved to be challenging for the majority of candidates, with some of them finding it difficult to accurately produce even *vingt et un*. Candidates also had difficulty deciding which object pronoun to use with *demander*, *appeler* or *téléphoner*. These errors detracted from the overall fluency of responses, and the conversation between the traveller and the agent did not, in some cases, develop logically and realistically.

It is recommended that teachers use technology available in schools to make experiences like overseas travel, which is alien to many students, familiar to them.

This dialogue gave candidates the opportunity to use sophisticated French constructions, and those with such skills did manage to do so superbly. *Ma sœur fête son anniversaire ce soir et je dois y être ; Il est possible que j'aïlle au vol sans payer car je vous ai payé la semaine dernière? ; Avez-vous un vol ce soir ? Il faut que j'aïlle à la Jamaïque pour l'anniversaire de ma sœur, and Qu'est-ce que je peux faire pour aller à la fête de ma sœur ce soir? Elle sera très triste*, are some examples of the more sophisticated structures.

The following are recommendations for candidates regarding the actual presentation of their scripts for the contextual announcement and the contextual dialogue.

- Use only the insert to write the responses for the contextual dialogue. Candidates must desist from rewriting the dialogue in their answer booklet.
- If a candidate has not opted to do the contextual dialogue, he/she should not attach the blank insert to his/ her answer booklet.
- Refrain from writing in pencil and super-imposing in pen as this practice reduces legibility of the script.
- Pay closer attention to the length of responses, especially with respect to the contextual dialogue. Some candidates write more than each response requires, thus reaching the word limit before completing half of the dialogue.

Below is an example of an excellent announcement.

*Le club * langue français vous informe que la pique nique ne va plus commencer à huit heures car il y aura un examen a la heure même.*

Tous les membres doivent aller au jardin vers midi le jeudi qui vient. N'oubliez pas de choisir un plat français pour apporter au pique-nique.

Avant du pique-nique on peut aider a mettre la table et arranger les fleurs. Nous savons que des membres manqueront ce pique-nique car elles seront à la Martinique. Peut-être il y aura un autre pique nique quand elles sont retournées.

Venez en grand nombre au pique-nique! Nous vous souhaitons une bonne journée.

CANDIDATES RESPONSE	CORRECTIONS REQUIRED	CORRECT RESPONSE
Le club ** langue	Omission of de	Le club de langue
langue français	Langue is feminine	Langue française
**pique nique	Hypen missing	Pique-nique
<u>a la heure même</u>	Accent on a; wrong position of même	À la même heure
<u>du</u> pique-nique	Wrong article	Le pique-nique
<u>sont</u> retournées	Wrong tense	Seront retournées

Here is an example of an excellent dialogue.

L'Agent: Bonsoir Monsieur/Madame, puis-je vous aider?

Moi: *Bonsoir Monsieur, oui je suis ici pour mon vol 273.*

L'Agent: Mais Monsieur/Madame, cet avion est déjà parti; ca fait dix minutes!

Moi: *Non! Zut alors! Pour quand est-ce que le vol était **

L'Agent: Le vol était pour 14,30 et il est maintenant 14.50 pourquoi êtes-vous en retard?

Moi: *Oh! Il y avait beaucoup de circulation dans les rues.*

L'Agent: Je comprends votre situation Monsieur/Madame mais je ne peux rien faire pour vous!

Moi: *Maintenant, je serai en retard pour l'anniversaire de ma ** sœur! Est-ce qu'il y a un autre vol ce soir?*

L'Agent: Nous n'avons pas de vol ce soir mais l'autre compagnie a cote a un vol ce soir.

Moi: *Oh! Ce serait possible *changer de mon vol?*

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure. Two asterisks (**) indicate an omission.*

L'Agent: Non Madame, ce ne serait pas possible. Nous n'avons pas d'accord avec eux.

Moi: ***Quelle dommage! Et moi, je portais le gâteau pour ma sœur...***

L'Agent: Demandez à votre sœur de repousser la fête à demain soir, nous avons un vol à six heures demain matin.

Moi: ***Demain matin! Oui, je voudrais ce vol s'il vous plait. Je téléphonerai * *ma sœur maintenant.***

L'Agent: Je suis sûr qu'elle y arrivera!

Moi: ***Oui ! Merci beaucoup Monsieur. Bon soir!***

L'Agent: Bon soir. Le vol partira à 6h du matin. Ne le ratez pas cette fois ci!

CANDIDATES' RESPONSE	CORRECTIONS REQUIRED	CORRECT RESPONSE
Pour <u>quand</u> * <i>changer de</i> <u>Quelle</u> <i>dommage</i> ** <i>ma sœur</i>	Wrong structure Wrong position of de Dommage is masculine Omission of a	Pour quelle heure De changer Quel dommage A ma soeur

Section IV – Reading Comprehension

This section assessed candidates' ability to read and comprehend a short passage in the target language. The questions on the passage and candidates' answers were in English.

The reading passage, 'The Maid', was within the capability of the average candidate. It was definitely within the experience of candidates at the CSEC level. Overall, most candidates performed satisfactorily, with a significant number of them scoring in the upper categories. Nonetheless, there were those candidates who misinterpreted the majority of the questions and scored less than half the allotted marks. This year, many more candidates than in recent years obtained perfect scores.

The passages used for testing comprehension are very concise texts that are generally between 130 and 150 words. There is therefore little room for redundancy with this restricted content. In classroom practice, students should be encouraged to identify the key words or elements in the questions as a preliminary strategy, before attempting to answer the questions. This might help them to read critically and arrive at a sound understanding of the text.

Comments on Individual Questions

1. What is the relationship of the narrator to Clarisse?

Although this item seemed simple, many candidates misinterpreted the relationship and gave responses such as 'husband' and 'wife' instead of 'cousin'.

2. What was the event and when did it take place?

Candidates did not pay attention to the fact that the event took place in the past and responded in the present or future. They also expressed ‘last week’ as ‘the last week’, ‘the last week of the month’, ‘weekend’, and ‘last Saturday’. Many candidates only responded to the first part of the question.

3. Where did the event take place?

Candidates were able to identify part of the response correctly but were not specific enough. Responses included ‘at the house’, ‘at home’, ‘at a house’, instead of ‘at the couple’s house’ or ‘at the home/house of the couple who got married’.

4. List the three activities that took place at the weekend.

Many candidates were able to identify the three activities which took place. However, many of them mentioned those areas in an awkward manner; for example, ‘good food for eating; popping champagne for drinking; dancing competition for dancing’.

5. Where did the couple spend the weekend?

While most candidates were able to recognize the response to this question, they were unable to state all three components of the response. *Quatre étoiles* became ‘four seasons’, ‘four storeys’, ‘four miles’, ‘four blocks’, while *sur la côte* became ‘by the side’ or even ‘at their cost’.

6. Who is Mathilde?

Generally, the majority of candidates were able to respond correctly to this question. However, there were other candidates who gave responses such as ‘bridesmaid’, ‘maid of the hotel’ or ‘maid of honour’.

7. Why does Mathilde apologize to the couple?

Candidates captured the disturbance element of the response but many of them failed to include the honeymoon detail.

8. What is Mathilde’s problem?

This question was not generally well handled. The terms *sacs poubelle* and *en train de* posed comprehension problems for candidates and many of them substituted words which suggested luggage or bags in general on a train. Candidates gave responses such as ‘She was training to clean’ or ‘She was on a train with the luggage’. While others captured the term garbage bags, the idea of there not being enough of them was lost.

9. Why is the gentleman puzzled?

This question was generally very well handled.

10. In light of this incident, how do you assess the maid’s judgement? Justify your response.

This item proved to be the most challenging for candidates. Candidates did not know how to assess the maid’s judgement and so gave answers such as ‘the maid was guilty’, ‘anyone can make mistakes’, ‘she was a good maid’ and ‘she was right to inform the couple’. Some candidates lost focus. Instead of concentrating on the maid’s folly in the passage, they spoke about the disturbance of the couple at such a time.

Here is an example of an excellent response submitted by a candidate.

1. Clarisse is the narrator's cousin.
2. The event was a wedding and reception and it occurred last week.
3. The event was at Clarisse's house.
4. They ate, drank champagne and danced.
5. They spent their honeymoon at a four star hotel on the coast.
6. Mathilde is their maid.
7. She apologizes for disturbing them on their honeymoon.
8. She was in the process of cleaning the house when she realized that she needed more bags.
9. He is sure that he had left enough bags at the house.
10. Her judgement was not very good as she could have deflated the balloons and would have extra space in the bags for other things.

Recommendations

- Candidates are encouraged to read the title of the passage so as to get a general idea of what the passage entails.
- Teachers must insist that their students read the passage more than once for the general sense and not just look for responses in the passage.
- Candidates must note the marks allotted to a question which would indicate to them the number of necessary elements required in their response.
- Teachers must constantly remind students to follow the instructions to answer in English and refrain from translating directly from the passage. Responses should be read over to ensure that they make sense in English and does not distort what is written.
- Teachers should continue to emphasize/drill students in analytical skills and expose students to a wide and varied vocabulary.
- Students should be warned to respond more concisely and to the point in order to avoid distorting their responses.
- Candidates should refrain from offering a choice of responses as this will be detrimental to their performance. For example, 'Mathilde is a housemaid/receptionist'.
- Teachers must encourage students to present work that is as neat and legible as possible.

Paper 03 – Oral Examination

This paper assessed candidates' ability to (i) produce appropriate responses in the target language in a number of situations; (ii) read aloud a short passage in the target language; and (iii) respond in the target language to general questions based on four out of six topics indicated in the syllabus. An attempt was made to link the theme of the reading passage with the general questions in order to create a more natural flow from one task to another.

Performance in the oral examination ranged from excellent to poor, with a number of candidates scoring full marks on this paper. Again, the comments made by oral examiners suggested that candidates' performance was a reflection of their ease and familiarity with the target language and an indication of their level of readiness for the examination. Nonetheless, there is cause for concern when oral examiners state that there are many candidates who are unable to perform even the simplest of tasks in the foreign language. Every effort must be made by teachers to ensure that students are adequately prepared to perform the simplest of tasks in the oral component of the language.

Responses to Situations

Generally, candidates performed creditably in this section of the examination. Where there were concerns they were quite specific as they pertained to specific vocabulary — *poisson d'avril*, *être au régime*, *to borrow* and functions such as giving the date and time. All the same, there is concern with the level of grammar of candidates who did not perform well.

Some common errors encountered were the use of *il est beau* (with respect to the weather); *Le vingt de avril* and *Je visite mes grand parents...*

There was also evidence of difficulty in constructing situations properly and the appropriate placement of verbs in questions.

Reading Passage

Many candidates demonstrated a high level of comfort and familiarity with the target language. However, oral examiners found that while some candidates read fluently, with mostly correct pronunciation, good expression and suitable intonation, there were many candidates who did not seem to understand what they were reading. Additionally, examiners commented on (a) the mispronunciation of the ending of verb forms in the third person plural, (b) the lack of liaisons in places where necessary and (c) the anglicization of certain French words.

Teachers must make a concerted effort to familiarize students with the French alphabet, supply them with the basic rules of pronunciation and teach them to use their dictionaries as a resource for pronunciation.

Conversation

As in previous years, the performance by candidates ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory. Some candidates were able to answer questions asked with great spontaneity and correctness of expression, while for others repetition was required in order for them to grasp some form of understanding of the questions. Weaknesses in grammar and vocabulary were identified. Some candidates experienced difficulty in understanding certain questions, for example, *Où se trouve...*, *Parle-moi...*, *Décris...*, *Combien coûte...* These are basic forms of questions and should not have posed problems at this level. There is therefore need for much training of students on the part of teachers.

Further Comments on the Oral Examination

Students must be helped to understand that their participation in the oral examination is a natural progression from the kind of oral activities in which they had engaged upon entry to secondary school. Students could be trained to expand on their responses to make the conversation as normal or natural as possible.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE[®] EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2012

FRENCH

GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Performance in the 2012 examination was comparable to that of 2011. Many candidates displayed fair to excellent levels of linguistic competence, spontaneity and grammatical accuracy. Nonetheless, there is still much room for improvement.

Teachers are again encouraged to continue exposing students to authentic samples of language from electronic and paper-based sources to stimulate real-life situations in which students may practise the target language. Teachers must continue their good work in engaging students in language learning by making it relevant, personal and meaningful.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 — Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprised two sections, assessed candidates' ability to (i) listen to and understand a number of items in the target language and (ii) read and understand a number of written items. Both sections required candidates to have a mastery of essential grammar as prescribed in the CSEC syllabus and vocabulary appropriate to this level of competence. The good performance here was comparable with that of previous years.

Paper 02 — Free Response

Section I (Question 1) — Directed Situations

This section assessed candidates' ability to respond in French to ten situations described in English which required written responses. All situations drew on functions/notions and settings and topics (see syllabus) that could be within the experience of a 16-year-old candidate.

The performance of candidates this year in this section of the exam was generally quite strong. There was a close relationship between the functions/notions of the syllabus, the settings, and the wording/requirements of each item. Teachers should, as a first exercise, focus their students on identifying the *essential* elements (usually two) of each response. (What, for example, is the *function* being tested, what *vocabulary/idiom* does the setting require?) This is a crucial skill, since several candidates lost valuable marks this year either by adding non-essential information or by omitting the essential.

While a fair number of candidates were able to demonstrate excellent mastery and control of grammatical structures, there were still too many candidates who demonstrated weaknesses in basic areas such as agreement of subject and verb and nouns and adjectives, verb forms in the present tenses and particularly, tense formation and usage.

It is noteworthy this year that many candidates opted to answer some questions using short phrases instead of complete sentences. These phrases were very often inadequate and incomplete.

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SITUATION	FUNCTION/NOTION	SETTINGS AND TOPICS
(a)	Describing a person	Description of a person
(b)	Completing an application form	Stating hobbies and interests
(c)	Issuing an invitation	Expressing event, time and place
(d)	Describing clothing	Description of things
(e)	Expressing an apology/stating a task	Apologizing
(f)	Stating an absence	Stating location and reason
(g)	Listing future plans	Future plans/Weekend projects
(h)	Expressing a wish/desire	Wishes and desires
(i)	Expressing sadness	Expressing feelings, giving reasons
(j)	Expressing prohibition	Forbidding someone from doing something

Specific comments on individual questions

- (a) The challenge for many candidates here was the use of the words *positive characteristics*. Many candidates provided physical descriptions as *il est noir*. Quite a number of candidates also ignored or misinterpreted the word *positive*. An example of an excellent response was: *Ma meilleure amie est très sympa et on peut compter sur elle*. In many instances the word *meilleur* was misspelt.
- (b) This question tested a basic function in the syllabus. However, it proved to be quite problematic for many candidates who lacked mastery of basic rules of agreement (subject/verb). The function/notion here was to complete an application form asking that two hobbies be stated. Many candidates responded by simply stating two hobbies such as *le foot et la natation*. Candidates who answered in a full sentence were often challenged by subject/verb agreement and the misspelling of key elements like *passetemps*. Many candidates simply and correctly answered *J'adore lire et danser*.
- (c) This question required candidates to issue an invitation to an event giving the time and place. This proved to be quite challenging for many candidates who merely informed about the event and completely ignored the element of issuing an invitation. For those who did attempt to issue an invitation, this was very often incorrectly done. The use of object pronouns was a challenge as candidates used the subject pronoun *tu* instead of the object pronoun *te*. In some cases, *vous* was also used. An example of a good response was: *Je t'invite à ma fête d'anniversaire chez moi à 8h*.
- (d) This question required candidates to provide two features of an outfit they will be wearing to a wedding. While most candidates provided complete responses, a fair number indicated the outfit (*une chemise et un pantalon*) and failed to provide features. Problems encountered here included incorrect articles, agreement and position of adjectives and incorrect tense usage. It is noteworthy that although the setting for the question was a wedding, many candidates opted for 'jeans' and

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'sandals'. An excellent response was: *Je mettrai une chemise à manches longues et un pantalon blanc.*

- (e) The majority of candidates responded correctly to the first part of this question, that is, apologizing. Conversely, the second element, the completion of a given task, was quite challenging for many candidates. The use of the Perfect Infinitive: 'de ne pas avoir/être + past participle' was rarely used correctly. Far too many candidates included the word 'task' as in 'complete le task' in their response instead of specifying the task. Many candidates also unnecessarily provided a reason instead of a task. A good response was: *Je suis désolé que je n'ai pas pu faire tes devoirs hier.*
- (f) This question was quite well done. The majority of candidates responded fully by addressing all elements of the question. However, correct formation and usage of tenses proved very problematic for some candidates and there was also frequent misspelling of words that should have been quite simple for candidates at this level.
- (g) Candidates were required to list two things that they would do over the weekend. However, many of them could not correctly use the future tense. They used the present tense which, in many cases, did not convey the correct message for the question posed.
- (h) Candidates were asked to suggest two improvements to their school. In as much as examiners may have understood what candidates may have wanted to convey, candidates had a lot of difficulty making the required suggestions. Responses such as *je voudrais voir les escaliers et une cantine avec beaucoup de chaises*, or, *les cantines et les toilettes*, which did not convey much, were seen.
- (i) This question required candidates to give two reasons for their being sad. It was reasonably well handled. Nevertheless, some candidates wrote short answers which did not say anything about their being sad but which still conveyed meaning, for example, *J'ai la grippe et j'ai mal à la tête.*
- (j) This question was well handled. Candidates had to write about prohibiting someone from doing something. Many candidates used the negative imperative which worked quite well when they could not find a phrase showing interdiction — *Ne regardes pas la télé!*

The following are examples contained in a good script.

- a) *Marie est très gentille et aimable.*
- b) *J'aime jouer au foot et sortir avec mes amis.*
- c) *Peux-tu aller au théâtre samedi soir à huit heures avec moi?*
- d) *Je porterai une chemise blanche et une jupe noire.*
- e) *Je regrette mais je ne peux pas laver les vêtements aujourd'hui.*
- f) *Je suis allée à l'hôpital parce que ton père a eu un accident.*
- g) *Je vais au cinéma avec ma famille et je vais aller à la plage aussi.*
- h) *Nous devons nettoyer l'école tous les jours et nous devons avoir une télévision dans toutes les classes.*
- i) *Je suis triste parce que ma mère est très malade et je ne peux pas trouver mon livre favori.*
- j) *Tu ne peux pas regarder la télé ce soir.*

Section II (Question 2/Question 3) — Letter/ Composition

This section assessed candidates' ability to produce a piece of French of about 130–150 words based on given cues. As is usually the case, the answers here ranged from excellent to poor.

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A significant number of candidates chose to do Question 2 (Letter) over Question 3 (Composition). The topic/setting of the composition, however, seemed to hold universal appeal, and seemed also to be within the experience of candidates.

The topic of the letter also gave candidates the opportunity to draw on their experience of exchange visits to French Caribbean islands and to indulge their hopes of gaining a scholarship or some other possibility of spending an extended period of time in a French-speaking country.

Question 2: The Letter

- i) Rubric: Too many candidates did not read the rubric carefully enough or did not adhere to the requirements outlined therein — for example, not writing a full address (a city/island name would suffice), omitting the date in French, writing at length (over 150 words), or the converse, not writing the minimum number of words (130). Both of these latter scenarios, usually meant that the candidate was also unable to address and develop all of the four cues within the given word limit. A penalty is exacted for failure to observe all of the above. The performance of some of these candidates would seem to suggest that they need more practice in reproducing the letter format: candidates wrote out the French numbers in the date, instead of using the numeral, and interference from Spanish was evident from the addition of ‘*de*’ before the name of the month. Some candidates addressed their letter to a friend and not to a teacher, as required, and inappropriately used the familiar form of address, or mixed the polite and familiar forms indiscriminately throughout the letter. * *J’espère que vous êtes bien...* * *Écris-moi vite.*
- ii) Range of vocabulary and idiom: The functions/notions aspects of the syllabus which candidates were asked to address in the letter included the description of a school, locating the school, making comparisons between one school and another, using *passé composé* to describe a completed event in the past, and using the future tense to describe benefits to be derived from an activity. Many candidates used the verb *attendre* to express the idea of ‘going to school’ instead of verbs such as *assister* or *aller*. Candidates could have scored more marks if they had mastered the use of connectives such as *tandis que*, *par contre*, *cependant*, *qui* and *que*, *au contraire*, *ainsi que*, *en revanche*, *d’abord*. Instead, most candidates juxtaposed sentences by means of repetition of nouns and abuse of *et*. Most candidates had a wide range of vocabulary and idioms related to description of their schools (first cue), but were limited and less proficient when expressing benefits (fourth cue). These benefits were limited to ‘speaking French better’, ‘knowing another culture’, and ‘making friends’. A wide range of erroneous expressions was used to express ‘location of their school’, for example, **locaté*, **on se trouve l’école*, **est trouvé* instead of structures such as *l’école se trouve*, *est située*, or *l’école est*.
- iii) Knowledge and mastery of essential grammar: The very good candidates showed a wide range and mastery of essential grammar such as correct usage with the expression *manquer à*, for example, *vous me manquez*, and *après avoir/être* + the past participle to express ‘after having done something’. However, the replacement of nouns by pronouns was badly handled — *Le collège est situé au centre-ville. Elle est grande.*

Many candidates failed to realize that *c’est* is a subject and verb structure and that no agreement is required with that structure, or that it should not be used in the same sentence with another subject, for example, *l’école est à Paris, *c’est bleue et grande*. The use of preposition with geographical locations also posed a challenge to most candidates. The general rule of *à* with the names of cities was neglected, so *à Paris* became *en Paris*, *dans Paris*. Candidates omitted the *de* in prepositional phrases such as *à côté de*, or *près de*. Some candidates also used *avant* and *devant* interchangeably. A general weakness was demonstrated in candidates’ use of *mieux*, *meilleur* and *bien* and *bon*. The adverb *mieux* was used to qualify nouns such as *l’école à Paris*

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est mieux as well as *maintenant je parle français meilleur*. The same was observed with the adjective *bon* and adverb *bien*. The use of double determinants with nouns was very common, for instance, **cette l'école, mon l'école* and *le l'école*.

Candidates also failed to use comparative and superlative structures such as *plus grand que, moins grand que...* Instead, candidates repeated the nouns concerned — *L'école à Paris école est grande. L'école dans mon pays est petite*. The general tendency among candidates was to use the present tense where the *passé composé* was required. The auxiliary was often omitted when using the *passé composé*. Although past participles were used fairly well, some candidates had difficulty with the past participle of *apprendre* in their responses.

The use and placement of pronouns with the modals *vouloir, pouvoir, and aimer* posed a challenge. For example, **je le veux manger*, was observed frequently among weak candidates. However, strong candidates handled such usage correctly — *je veux le trouver*.

Subject/verb agreement, feminization and pluralization of adjective were a major cause for concern. Candidates frequently used plural nouns with singular verbs such as *les filles* porte un uniforme; les étudiants *est marrant*.

Quand requires the use of the future tense. An English interference was clearly observed as many candidates used the present after *quand*. *Quand* demands the present tense when it means *whenever*.

Below is an example of a good letter submitted by a candidate.

Port d'Espagne, le 14 mai, 2012

Chère Madame James,

Comment ça va? Bien, je l'espère. Moi, je vais très bien en France. Je voudrais vous parler un peu de l'école ici.

*D'abord, elle est située dans la ville près de la Tour Eiffel. Il y a environ six cents élèves et c'est bien *équipée avec *un bon ambiance. Elle a quatre laboratoires de sciences tandis que notre école a seulement deux laboratoires. Toutefois, nous avons de la chance car il y a *plein de professeurs alors que l'école ici a vingt professeurs. C'est dommage!*

La semaine dernière, j'ai gagné un concours de tennis à l'école et j'ai eu l'occasion de faire la connaissance de Jean-Paul Mattrajean! C'était très formidable! En plus, ce séjour en France est assez utile car maintenant je suis forte en français et je l'adore!

J'attends avec impatience de vous lire. A bientôt!

Votre étudiante

Alexa Morales

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CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE	CORRECTIONS REQUIRED	CORRECT RESPONSE
<i>Equipée</i>	Should be masculine	Équipé
<i>Un bon</i>	Ambiance is feminine	Une bonne
<i>plein</i>	Need an adverb here	beaucoup

Question 3: The Composition

- i) **Rubric:** While most candidates adhered to the demands of the rubric, there were those who lost marks because they failed to comply with the first element of the rubric, that is, setting at school. Stronger candidates managed to maintain a coherent flow of events in the composition. Weaker candidates' stories lacked a clear structure and became mere juxtaposed ideas.
- ii) **Range of vocabulary and idiom:** In general, there was a paucity of idiomatic expressions. Good candidates used *être déprimé et dépité; c'était casse-pieds*. Stronger candidates showed a clear distinction between the use of *laisser* and *quitter* or *chercher* and *trouver*. Most candidates used *laisser* and *quitter* interchangeably when expressing the idea of leaving an object. Likewise, *regarder* was used erroneously in lieu of *chercher* and in most cases, *chercher* was followed by *pour*. For the fourth cue in the rubric, it was observed that many candidates copied the last line of the reading comprehension. Candidates used many expressions incorrectly to express 'next time'. These included **la prochaine heure, *le prochain temps* and **l'autre temps*.
- iii) **Knowledge and mastery of essential grammar:** The composition required the use of a wide range and proper sequencing of tenses. For description in the past and habitual actions, candidates used the *passé composé* instead of the imperfect tense. In attempting to explain how items were acquired, candidates used structures which required the pluperfect tense. However this was poorly done. The English structure of use of a modal and infinitive such as 'will keep' or 'will take care of' was clearly apparent in candidates' work in attempting to express future actions to avoid a similar occurrence. For example, the use of *je serai laisser ma montre à la maison*.

Below is an example of a good composition submitted by a candidate.

Ma tante favorite m'a donnée mon premier roman d'horreur. Il était écrit par le superbe Stephen King. C'était très petit, cependant il y avait beaucoup de pages intéressants. Elle me l'a donnée parce que j'avais réussi à mon grand examen de la chimie.*

*L'année dernière, je suis allée chez ma sœur et j'ai apporté le roman avec moi. Ma sœur a décidé de sortir avec ses amis et je suis allée avec eux. J'ai quitté le roman sur la fenêtre dans la chambre de ma sœur. Quand je suis rentrée chez elle et je suis allée dans sa chambre, le roman n'était pas là ! J'ai commencé à pleurer car j'étais choquée. Mon cœur a commencé à battre comme un tambour. J'ai commencé à crier « secours ! » et ma sœur *est dépêchée à sa chambre pour me demander si j'allais bien. J'étais déprimée et dépitée.*

Je ne quitterai jamais mes romans sur une fenêtre *encore. Je les apporterai toujours avec moi, ou peut-être je les laisserai chez moi.*

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CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE	CORRECTIONS REQUIRED	CORRECT RESPONSE
<i>De la chimie Est dépêchée Quitterai</i>	No need for partitive article. Reflexive pronoun required Wrong verb	De chimie S'est dépêché laisserai

***Please note as well that this candidate has used the wrong setting for the essay. The setting is the school and not her sister's house.

Section III (Question 4/Question 5) — Contextual Announcement/Contextual Dialogue

The topics allowed candidates to show their ability in French. Less able and less prepared candidates appeared to find the questions quite challenging. A few candidates combined the announcement and the dialogue into one, others lacked the ability to organize their responses coherently, tried to translate instead of interpret certain words in the cues (for example, fund-raising activity; French-speaking country) or did not have a strong grammatical or lexical base.

Contextual Announcement

A high percentage of candidates attempted the announcement this year. Most of them completed it within the word limit. The major obstacles to the effective handling of this question were poor organization of responses and the lack of relevant vocabulary. Expressions such as *car sale*, *car wash*, *fund-raiser*, *beach or pool party*, *admission* proved to be problematic. Anglicisms were also used in some instances. *French-speaking* was often rendered as *français parlé/parler*, and few candidates seemed to know *francophone*.

Some relevant comments are listed below

- Candidates mentioned many activities but failed to specify how funds for the trip could be generated.
- Several candidates forgot to mention the sum to be raised.
- Many candidates seemed unaware of the value of the euro (for example, a cake for €100). Still others quoted prices in pounds/francs.
- Several candidates did not follow the required rubric — fund-raising activities were in aid of persons who were ill or for someone who had lost a relative.
- Scripts from countries with a creole background were problematic. In some scripts there were hardly any recognizable words from standard French.

Candidates are advised to plan their responses before beginning to write. Circumlocution is a skill candidates would do well to apply here (for example, many used the name of an actual French-speaking country instead of trying to translate the words). Candidates must also revise how to express the date, the spelling of numbers and how to express time/time span (*de 8h jusqu'à midi*).

Below is an example of a good announcement submitted by a candidate.

*Le club de français ira *au Guadeloupe *pour *un semaine. Ainsi, nous aurons deux concerts, mais, tous les jours, nous vendrons les bonbons et les gâteaux ! C'est super ! Le *première concert *est le six *de juin a la Grande Salle William Webb. Le deuxième concert *est le deux*de juin et il sera incroyable avec beaucoup *d'amusant ! Nous vendrons *le gâteaux tous les jours *a la récréation sur l'arbre jacaranda. Les gâteaux seront tres délicieux ainsi *prenez beaucoup d'argent ! Nous avons besoin de deux milles dollars ainsi achetez, achetez, achetez et aidez-*vous le club, et venez *a les concerts. Ne le manquez pas!*

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CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE	CORRECTIONS REQUIRED	CORRECT RESPONSE
<i>Au</i>	Guadeloupe is feminine	A la
<i>Pour</i>	Duration here is pendant	Pendant
<i>Un</i>	Semaine is feminine	Une
<i>Première</i>	Masculine needed here	Premier
<i>Est</i>	Future needed	Sera
<i>six de juin</i>	No need for « de »	Le six juin
<i>Est</i>	As above	Sera
<i>Deux de juin</i>	As above	Le deux juin
<i>D'amusant</i>	Amusements	Amusements
<i>Le</i>	Plural needed	Des
<i>A</i>	Accent needed	à
<i>Prennez</i>	Wrong verb	apportez
<i>Vous</i>	No need for reflexive	drop vous
<i>A les</i>	Plural of a les is aux	aux

Contextual Dialogue

The dialogue was the more popular choice with candidates. Again, candidates' work suggested that they did not read the cues properly before they began to write their responses.

Other relevant findings include:

- Many candidates spoke about attractions in France as opposed to their own country.
- Some good candidates would switch from *vous* to *tu* when addressing the male caller.
- Some very good candidates lost marks for not including all the cues and for exceeding the word limit.
- Weaker candidates tended to simply repeat the words in the cues showing a lack of comprehension of written French.
- In a few instances, the appearance of the work presented was untidy: the space provided was not used properly.

Examples of poor language use:

- Incorrect use of negative constructions (**Ce ne problème pas*)
- The position of adjectives (**nationale festival*)
- The construction: *Il est* vs *C'est* (** Il est une grande festival*)
- The spelling of *intéressant*, *musée* (and gender) was often incorrect
- The future tense, particularly after *quand/espérer*
- The use of the infinitive after verbs of perception – a point not known by many candidates
- The use of prepositions in expressions like *aider à* + infinitive, *beaucoup de...*
- The formation of questions (**Qu'est-ce que voudrais –vous savoir?*)
- *Amener*: to bring (people), *Apporter*: to bring (things)
- *Attendre* often used to mean 'to attend'.

Here is an example of a good dialogue:

Client: Bonjour Mademoiselle/Monsieur. Je téléphone de la Martinique, je pense passer deux semaines dans votre pays et j'aurai bien aimé avoir quelques renseignements.

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- Vous:** *Bonjour Monsieur. D'accord, je peux vous *aider avec ca.*
- Client: Que me conseillez-vous pour visiter la capitale de votre pays?
- Vous:** *Vous pouvez prendre l'autobus.*
- Client: C'est cher l'autobus?
- Vous:** *L'autobus n'est pas cher. *Généralement l'autobus est trois dollars.*
- Client: Et qu'est-ce qu'il y a voir dans votre pays?
- Vous:** *Il y a beaucoup a voir a Ste Lucie. Il y a les pitons et des cascades a Soufrière. Aussi, vous pouvez voir les sites archéologiques a Morne Fortune.*
- Client: Et comment est-ce que je fais pour visiter ces endroits?
- Vous:** *Vous pouvez prendre un taxi.*
- Client: Et quelles sont les activités culturelles?
- Vous:** *Il y a *un journée *creole en *Octobre et il y a *du Carnaval.*
- Client : Parlez-moi un peu du Carnaval?
- Vous:** *Le carnaval est une grande boum *sur les rues et il est en juillet pour deux jours.*
- Client: Avez – vous un dernier conseil?
- Vous:** *Non, je n'ai pas *un dernier conseil*

CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE	CORRECTIONS REQUIRED	CORRECT RESPONSE
Aidez	After 'pouvoir' one used the infinitive	aider
Généralement	Accents missing	Généralement
Un journée	Journée is feminine	Une
Creole	Accent missing	Créole
Octobre	Small letter	octobre
Du	Use of the definite masculine article here	le
Sur les rues	One says 'dans les rues'	dans
Un	After the negative, use « de »	de

Section IV – Reading Comprehension

This section assessed candidates' ability to read and comprehend a short passage in the target language. The questions on the passage and candidates' responses were in English.

Although the reading passage was appropriate for the level of the examination and the topic was one with which candidates were familiar, it still proved to be a bit challenging. Generally, candidates' responses were below average. Many candidates showed poor comprehension skills, contrary to what are required to successfully negotiate the questions asked.

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure. Two asterisks (**) indicate an omission.*

Specific comments on individual questions

- (a) What is Marie-Louise's job and for how long has she been employed?

Candidates generally understood the protagonist's job, and how many years she had been working. However, there were variations such as 'female host', 'host in the air', 'hostess on air'. A few candidates had difficulty identifying *deux* as *two*, translating it as 'ten' or 'twelve'. Additionally, some candidates did not understand the term *depuis* and interpreted it as 'less than' or 'more than two years' or 'from since two years'.

- (b) Where does she work?

Most candidates understood that the protagonist worked at a new Caribbean airline. However, the literal translations and the interpretation of *la nouvelle ligne aérienne caribéenne* as the name of the airline were prevalent — for example, 'the new Caribbean Airline', 'Caribbean Airlines', 'the New Caribbean Airline' were a few common incorrect responses received. Other responses were far too vague — 'she worked on a plane'; 'she worked on an airport'; 'she worked on a Caribbean airliner'.

- (c) State TWO reasons why she likes her job.

Although most candidates were able to respond correctly, their English expression contained careless errors. For example, candidates used the term 'to contact with clients', to mean *to interact with clients*.

- (d) Give ONE added benefit of her job.

Most candidates were able to gain the mark allocated to this question but many of their responses were not precise enough, either being too wordy and thus being distorted, or too vague — 'She gets to visit the Caribbean at a reduced rate'; 'She gets profits on discounts to Europe' or 'She gets to visit Europe'.

- (e) State Marie-Louise's plans for this year.

This question was generally well answered. In cases where it was not, *Jeux Olympiques* was interpreted as 'Youth Olympics' and 'Women's Olympics'. Candidates also stated that the protagonist was going to play/compete in the Olympics. A few candidates also misspelt 'London' and 'Olympics'.

- (f) What is Marie-Louise's predicament?

This question was generally misunderstood. The majority of candidates provided incorrect responses. Candidates interpreted *predicament* to mean *predict* and gave responses such as 'Marie Louise thinks she will forget her flight/presentation', which naturally affected the responses for the questions which followed. Many candidates also thought that *distracte* meant 'distracted', 'distraught' or 'stressed'.

- (g) Identify TWO consequences of Marie-Louise's predicament.

Candidates' use of the future tense and past tense distorted their responses. For example, 'Marie Louise will forget flight numbers', '...forgot flight numbers', as opposed to the correct answer *...forgets flight numbers*. Other variations which distorted candidates' responses included 'number of flight' instead of *flight numbers*, interpreting *même* as 'same' or 'at the same time'.

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure. Two asterisks (**) indicate an omission.*

- (h) Explain how Marie-Louise was affected a few months ago.
Most candidates were able to obtain at least one of the two marks allotted to this question. However, poor English expressions such as ‘...had to do a presentation’ and ‘A flight around/in Martinique’ distorted candidates’ responses.
- (i) Describe Marie-Louise’s most embarrassing situation to date.
Many candidates were unable to give the points or responses necessary to obtain full marks for this question. Most candidates did not comprehend the meaning of the term *consignes de sécurité*, interpreting it as ‘seat belts’, ‘security pass’ or ‘security guard’. Candidates also had difficulty identifying at what point in the presentation the protagonist forgot the security instructions.
- (j) Why was this situation so embarrassing for her?
Most candidates were able to obtain at least two of the three marks for this question. However, many candidates did not include the reliance aspect of this response. Others merely inserted their personal experiences with air travel (which were unrelated to the passage), when explaining the reason for the protagonist’s embarrassment.

Recommendations

- Candidates need to pay close attention to the use of prepositions, tenses and moods used in the passage, and be mindful of these when responding to questions as an incorrect tense or preposition can often alter the meaning of a sentence.
- Candidates should avoid direct translations and reproducing French vocabulary from the passage in their responses.
- Teachers in the classroom must insist that their students read the passage and all the questions before attempting to respond.
- Candidates must note the marks allotted to a question and be guided as to the number of necessary elements required in their response.
- Teachers must constantly remind students to follow the instructions to answer in English and refrain from translating directly from the passage. Responses should be read over to ensure that they make sense in English and that they are not distorted.
- Teachers should continue to emphasize/drill students in analytical skills and expose students to a wide and varied vocabulary.
- Students should be warned to respond more concisely in order to avoid distorting their response.
- Candidates should refrain from offering a choice of responses as this will be detrimental to their performance. For example, ‘Marie Louise has been working for two years/months’.
- Teachers must encourage students to present work that is as neat and legible as possible.

Here is an example of a good response submitted by a candidate:

- (a) Marie-Louise’s job is an air hostess and she has been employed for two years.
- (b) Marie-Louise works at the new Caribbean airline.

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure. Two asterisks (**) indicate an omission.*

- (c) Two reasons why she likes her job are because she likes interacting (the contact) with the clients and she also likes the trips that she gets to go on.
- (d) One added benefit of her job is that she can receive discounts on all flights to Europe.
- (e) Marie-Louise's plans for this year, *is going to London for the Olympic games.
- (f) Marie-Louise's predicament is that she is very forgetful.
- (g) Two consequences of Marie-Louise's predicament are that she never remembers her flight numbers or where the plane is going (destination).
- (h) Marie-Louise was affected a few months ago by making a beautiful presentation of Guadeloupe on a flight that was going to Martinique.
- (i) Marie-Louise's most embarrassing situation was last month when she had forgotten some of the security measures in the middle of her presentation on a flight to Martinique.
- (j) This situation was so embarrassing for her because it is her job to present the security measures to the passengers but instead some of the frequent passengers had to assist her at the end of her presentation since she had forgotten them.

Paper 03 — Oral Examination

This paper assessed candidates' ability to (i) produce appropriate responses in the target language in a number of situations; (ii) read aloud a short passage in the target language; and (iii) respond in the target language to general questions based on four out of six topics indicated in the syllabus. An attempt was made to link the theme of the reading passage with the general questions in order to create a more natural flow from one task to another.

Performance in the oral examination ranged from excellent to poor, with a number of candidates scoring full marks on this paper. Again, the comments made by oral examiners suggested that candidates' performance was a reflection of their ease and familiarity with the target language and an indication of their level of readiness for the examination. Nonetheless, there is cause for concern when oral examiners state that there are many candidates who are unable to perform even the simplest of tasks in the foreign language. Every effort must be made by teachers to ensure that students are adequately prepared to perform the simplest of tasks in the oral component of the language.

Section I — Responses to Situations

As would be expected, performance ranged from excellent to poor depending on the quality of candidate and their level of preparation. Comments this year focused on specific problems which seemed to occur across institutions and territories. These included:

- Differentiation between *tu* and *vous*
- Disagreement between nouns and adjectives
- Unfamiliarity with gender of nouns
- Tenses – candidates being comfortable only with the present tense

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure. Two asterisks (**) indicate an omission.*

Section II — Reading Passage

Nearly all comments about the reading were positive. Examiners were for the most part pleased with pronunciation, liaisons and intonation. Where concerns were expressed, they tended to be with regard to specific problems with pronunciation and with specific words.

The following words were mentioned as being problematic:

Représentante

Caraïbes

Xavier

S'entraînant

Clientèle

Joueurs internationaux

Bureau

Emploi

Concern was expressed with the pronunciation of *é* as *e* and vice versa, *e* as *é*. The problem with the pronunciation of *qu* as *qw* persists.

Section III — Guided Conversation

Performance by candidates ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory. While some examiners were pleased with the candidates' responses, others were quite unhappy with their performance, especially with the section on shopping. Another area which seemed to have presented some challenges was the section on travel.

Recommendations

Teachers are encouraged to continue exposing students to authentic samples of language to simulate real-life situations in order to practise the target language.

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure. Two asterisks (**) indicate an omission.*

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2013

FRENCH

GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

GENERAL COMMENTS

Performance in the 2013 examination was comparable with that of 2012. Many candidates displayed fair to excellent levels of linguistic competence, spontaneity and grammatical accuracy. Nonetheless, there is still much room for improvement.

Teachers are again encouraged to continue exposing students to authentic samples of language from electronic and paper-based sources to simulate real-life situations in which students may practise the target language. Teachers must continue their good work in engaging students in language learning by making it relevant, personal and meaningful.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 — Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprised two sections, assessed candidates' ability to (i) listen to and understand a number of items in the target language and (ii) read and understand a number of written items. Both sections required candidates to have a mastery of essential grammar as prescribed in the CSEC syllabus and vocabulary appropriate to this level of competence. The good performance on this paper was comparable with that of previous years.

Paper 02 — Free Response

Section 1 (Question 1) — Directed Situations

This section assessed candidates' ability to provide written responses in French to ten situations described in English. All situations drew on functions/notions and settings and topics (see syllabus) that should be within the experience of a 16-year-old candidate.

Although many candidates performed very well on this question and quite a number of them demonstrated excellent mastery of grammatical structures using an excellent range of appropriate vocabulary, far too many were still unable to master basic structures and were weak in areas such as subject-verb agreement, adjectival agreement and formation and usage of verbs in the present tense, even verbs as common as *faire*, *prendre* and *aller*.

It is advisable for teachers to guide students in how to approach the directed situations by identifying the function being tested in each situation, essential elements, usually two elements, and the vocabulary they have learnt which could be used to respond to each situation. Candidates can lose marks unnecessarily in this question by the inclusion of redundancies in their answers. The following table outlines the functions and topics tested on the 2013 paper.

SITUATION	FUNCTION/NOTION	SETTINGS AND TOPICS
(a)	Describing a place	Describing a bedroom
(b)	Giving advice	Taking an examination
(c)	Requesting with reasons	Speaking to a principal
(d)	Expressing prohibition/obligation	Expressing school rules
(e)	Expressing approval/opinion	Commenting on a television programme
(f)	Expressing feelings	Responding to good news
(g)	Apologizing with reason	Cancelling an event
(h)	Calling attention	Taking precautions in school
(i)	Suggesting location and time	Planning to meet
(j)	Narrating	Commenting on a sporting event

Specific comments on individual situations

Situation (a)

Candidates were required to state two things they like about their room. The majority of candidates performed very well, rendering appropriate responses. However, many candidates made errors of adjectival agreement. They also seemed unaware that adjectives used after *c'est* are invariable, hence errors were incurred as in *J'aime ma chambre parce que c'est *grande et *verte*. Spelling was often incorrect, in particular spelling of the words *confortable* and *couleur*. Weaker candidates sometimes invented words for their description, such as **relaxment*.

Situation (b)

This situation required candidates to give two pieces of advice to a friend who is nervous about taking an examination. It proved to be challenging for many candidates as they had difficulty interpreting the word “advice” in the question. Many were able to give only one piece of advice. Other candidates gave statements or wishes instead. *Bonne chance* was frequently misspelt. Errors included the use of the *vous* form of address for a friend, the misspelling of the imperative form of – *er* verbs (**études bien*) and incorrect versions of “do your best” (**votre faire meilleure*.) Few candidates scored full marks.

Situation (c)

Candidates were required to give two reasons for wanting to speak to the principal. Those who responded succinctly and directly to this question scored full marks as for *J'ai mal à la tête et je voudrais aller chez moi*. Many candidates, however, opted for less concise responses and scored a lower mark as a result ; for example, *j'ai envie de parler au directeur parce que j'ai besoin *d'aider *à choisir mes matières et j'ai oublié **lui donner une lettre importante*. Many candidates erred by using the familiar form (*tu/te*) to address the principal, supplying the incorrect position/use of the indirect object pronoun (*Je voudrais parler *à vous*) and using *environ* and *vers* in place of *au sujet de* and *parce que* for *à cause de*.

Situation (d)

For this situation, candidates were required to state two school rules. It was heartening to note the significant number of candidates who were able to identify the need for some form of interdiction/expression of obligation. Some were not able to identify the appropriate form needed for the setting, an email for a pen pal, and instead used expressions appropriate for a sign or public notice (*défense de..., ne pas +infinitive*.) Far too many used *non* with an infinitive as a form of interdiction. The verb *attendre* was sometimes used to translate “to attend”. An example of an excellent response was *Il est interdit de manger et de boire dans la classe*. Misspellings and incorrect gender frequently occurred for the words *chaussures*, *uniforme* and *chaussettes*.

Situation (e)

Candidates were required to write an email to a friend stating two things they like about a television programme. This was very well done by most candidates, with examples of correct responses being *J'aime la vedette Christina Aguilera et les effets spéciaux* and *C'est amusant et intéressant*. Nevertheless, high frequency words such as *amusant* and *intéressant* were often misspelt.

Situation (f)

This situation was problematic for many candidates who seemed unable to express two feelings in response to receiving good news. There was a wide range of responses including *Chapeau, félicitations, je suis content pour toi, je sais que tu es content, je souhaite que tu réussisses à l'université*. Those who inappropriately wrote *c'est bon, meilleurs voeux* and *bonne chance* as expressions of feeling, gained only a partial score. Many candidates were only able to write one feeling.

Situation (g)

For this situation, candidates were required to write an apology from a teacher cancelling a specific activity. Most candidates were only able to score a partial mark, as they opted to give a reason for the cancellation, rather than apologizing for the cancellation of the activity. Candidates must be encouraged to read the questions carefully to avoid this kind of error. Quite a number of candidates equated a cancellation with a postponement, using *je dois repousser...remettre...* An example of a correct response given was *je suis désolé mais je dois annuler le concert.*

Situation (h)

For this situation, candidates had to write two precautionary measures to take following numerous thefts in the classroom. Performance on this question ranged from poor to very good, with the main challenge being the lexical content of the response. Few candidates used *laisser* when it was needed, opting instead for *quitter* and *partir*. *Regarder* was used as a substitute for *garder* and *surveiller*. Incorrect versions of the imperative form of *prendre* and of disjunctive pronouns and possessive adjectives were prevalent. A reasonable attempt to convey a response was *Mettez vos livres dans vos sacs et évitez de *mettre vos porte-monnaies.*

Situation (i)

Candidates had to write a note for a study partner stating where and when to meet. The situation was generally well handled, with few candidates omitting an element. However, the verbs *rencontrer* and *retrouver* were often misspelt and candidates generally did not recognize the need for the reflexive version of these verbs where required. An example of a good response was *nous pouvons aller à la bibliothèque à deux heures.*

Situation (j)

In this situation candidates, in the guise of a sports reporter, were required to give two reasons for an abrupt end to a match. Responses were varied, spanning the continuum from poor to excellent. Reasons chosen for the abrupt end to the match were often inappropriate. Failure to choose the correct tenses for the response was also common, as were misspellings of weather-related expressions such as *il faisait mauvais, il pleuvait...*

Section II (Question 2/Question 3) — Letter/Composition

This section assessed candidates' ability to produce a piece of writing in French, of about 130–150 words, based on an outline given in English. Candidates had the choice of writing either a letter or a composition.

The responses in this section ranged from excellent to poor. This year the majority of candidates attempted the letter. Although inaccuracy of expression impeded the flow and coherence of the writing of some candidates, most demonstrated that they were familiar with the vocabulary and idiom relevant to restaurant activities. This question elicited a better performance from candidates than the composition.

Question 2: The Letter

This year fewer candidates wrote beyond the given word limit. Candidates generally wrote more prolifically for the first two paragraphs of the letter but rather less for the third, while the final paragraph of the letter often consisted of one sentence. This imbalance affected candidates' marks since the final cue in the rubric invites candidates to showcase additions to the range of idiom and grammatical structure in their essay using, for example, future tense or question formation. The improvement previously requested in the use of the correct format for letter headings and greetings, salutations and closure was present this year. There was evidence that candidates had prepared their opening and closing remarks in the letter, for example, *Je m'empresse de t'adresser ces quelques mots...* and *je dois terminer ma lettre, je dois faire mes devoirs maintenant.* However, candidates should not make these remarks too long at the expense of dealing with the requirements of the set topic within the word limit.

(i) Range of vocabulary and idiom

Candidates generally demonstrated knowledge of the essential vocabulary and idiom for the context of restaurant operations. However, there were many errors of spelling and accents (**beaucoup*, **color*, **dejuener*, **baïtment*, **ouverture*tres*.) The word *restaurant* was often given several different spellings in the same essay. Invented words (**rompage*, **furniture*s) were also evident.

Better candidates saw the opportunity in the first cue — preparations made before the opening of the restaurant — to use vocabulary and idiom learnt in the context of household chores or odd jobs done to earn pocket money. Thus, there was good use of *faire la cuisine*, *passer l'aspirateur*, *laver la vaisselle* (often misspelt), *balayer le plancher*, *faire du shopping*, *acheter des marchandises* (this word was lifted from the reading comprehension and still was often misspelt), *nettoyer les tables/fenêtres*, *ranger la chambre* (several candidates did not seem to appreciate that they needed to change this to *salle*)... We also saw significant numbers of candidates using *place* for *endroit/lieu*.

In handling the second cue, what took place on the day of the opening, the more successful candidates introduced vocabulary learnt in the restaurant context to good effect. There were candidates who described the place as *plein à craquer*. As to what the clientele ordered, we saw evidence of work done on French dishes. *Ratatouille*, *quiche*, *coq au vin*, *macaronis au gratin*, *poulet rôti*, *poisson grillé*, other related vocabulary such as *garçon*, *patron*, *cuisinier*, *chef*, *nourriture*, *repas*, *entrée*, *dessert* and adjectives such as *délicieux*, *incroyable*, *fantastique* were often used.

In most scripts the reaction of clients, requested in the third cue of the rubric, was reasonably well handled. Most candidates used the verbs *aimer* /*adorer* with nouns such as *l'ambiance*; *l'atmosphère*. It was pleasing to note candidates using some appropriate verbs as *s'étonner* and *s'amuser* for the clients' reaction. However, some candidates struggled somewhat to find the appropriate word for 'food' as in **manger la cuisine*, **aimer le mange*.

The fourth cue should have given candidates the opportunity to use the future tense/ immediate future. Some did so very ably, using simple but appropriate vocabulary, as in *le restaurant sera plus grand*, *ma mère et moi allons faire la cuisine française*, *nous allons agrandir le resto*, *ouvrir un mini-bar à côté du restaurant*.

However, there were still far too many instances of candidates' obvious failure to master the future tense, for example, **Ma mère sera aller cuisiner la cuisine de chinois*, **nous pienterions*...

(ii) Knowledge and mastery of essential grammar

The letter required the use of the *passé composé* in the first three sections. Many candidates were only able to write in the present tense or made errors in attempting to form the *passé composé*, especially with reflexive verbs (**s'es amusent*). Verb formation in general was weak (**nous avons adorons*, *ma famille et moi eu*, *nous avons ouvri*). At times, candidates used *vous* to signify "they", and the imperfect tense to express completed action. Some errors also betrayed candidates' non-comprehension of grammatical functions (**nous propres* for "we cleaned", **nous avons eau les jardins* and **nous avons peinture le restaurant*). Subject-verb agreement continues to be a challenge for candidates. There were many instances where *parler* was used in place of *dire* as in **les gentes ont parlé ce ils voudrait retourner*. Adjectival agreement was handled poorly on the whole, and incorrect use of pronouns (**ma mère a dit moi*) was also evident. Lack of subject /verb agreement was frequently seen as in **Ma mère et moi ont acheté* and **Tout le monde ont aimé le resto*. There were problems with the position and agreement of adjectives: **Un neuf restaurant*, **c'était bleue et jolie*, **tout la famille était contents*, **tous le mond*, **l'ané dernier*. Omission of and wrong choice of partitives occurred often (**j'ai acheté le nurriture , riz, poulet, bananes, pommes*).

Among other errors noted were the use of *des* after *beaucoup* (which was often misspelt), omission of prepositions after verbs like *aider* (**J'ai aidé ma mère nettoyer la cuisine*) and problems with use of *que* — **Je pense ça est un bon idée. Ils parle ce est très jolie.*)

Below is an example of a good letter as submitted by a candidate.

Chaguanas, le 12 mai

Mon cher ami Juan

*Bonjour! Ça va? J'espère que tu vas très bien. J'écris pour te *dire au sujet de ma vie. En premier lieu, ma famille et moi avons un nouveau restaurant. Oui! le restaurant *a ouvri il y a deux *semaine.*

*Avant *d'ouvrir j'ai mis le couvert, j'ai balayé. Ma mère est cuisinière et elle était la chef maîtresse. Elle a cuisiné tous les repas, les entrées er le dessert. Mon père *elle a aidé. Nous étions essoufflés quand nous avons * terminés mais les gens attendaient devant le restaurant.*

*Quand ils sont entrés dans le restaurant, ils se sont étonnés parce que le restaurant était incroyablement.** Le garçon *portais une chemise blanche et un pantalon noir. Nous étions occupés mais *en fin nous nous sommes bien amusés.*

**Dans l'avenir la famille voudrait cuisiner les plats du monde. En ce moment ma mère apprend *comme cuisiner les plats *de chinois à l'étranger. Probablement je *peux travailler dans le restaurant comme cuisinier. * sera super! D'accord, mon ami. Au revoir, écris vite*

*Ton ami Ché
Amitiés*

CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE	CORRECTIONS REQUIRED	CORRECT RESPONSE
Dire	Change of verb	parler
A ouvri	Change of verb form	a ouvert
Semaine	Pluralisation	semaines
D'ouvrir	Use of noun	l'ouverture
Elle a aidé	Use of object pronoun and preceding direct object agreement	l'a aidée
Terminés	Removal of agreement	terminé
Incroyablement...	Insertion of adjective	joli
Portais	Change of verb ending	portait
En fin	Spelling correction	enfin
Dans	Change or preposition	à
Comme	Use of preposition	à
De	Redundancy	
Peux	Change of tense	Pourrai
*Sera	Use of subject	Ce

Question 3: The Composition

Fewer candidates chose to write the composition and very few of them performed well on the question. Candidates tended to write about camp activities which had little to do with the world of work and more to do with other camps they had attended. Some assumed that training for the “world of work” involved preparation for their role in participating in housework. Others invented words for abstract concepts (**entrepreneurship*) rather than making use of terminology well within their grasp (*répondre au téléphone, écrire des lettres, parler aux clients.*)

As in previous years, the problem of inaccuracy is a great source of concern. Few candidates seemed to have done a rough copy of their essay and corrected and improved on it before submission. The time allotted for the completion of this paper allows for this to be done and teachers need to practise such techniques with their class, as well as techniques for checking the work once it has been written, in order to eliminate avoidable errors.

(i) Rubric

Content used in response to the rubric was generally fair for the first paragraph of the composition. For the second paragraph candidates tended to draw on their experiences at sporting and summer camps which had little connection with preparation for the world of work. The third paragraph was often rather sketchy as candidates struggled to find ideas to respond to the rubric. As in the case of the letter, the final paragraph of the composition tended to be very brief. The paucity of ideas on what might be learnt at such a camp and how the experience gained there would be used appears to have affected accuracy and range of expression. Candidates would be well advised to plan their essay before beginning to write, as planning would also help to guide them on their choice of essay.

(ii) Range of vocabulary and idiom

Candidates were generally less proficient in producing the appropriate vocabulary/idiom for the composition, particularly when responding to the second cue which required them to state what was learnt at the summer camp. There was wide use of English words and phraseology (**l'été camp, *le announcement, *travail experience, *les vêtements suitable pour travail, *comment sitter*) and verbs inappropriate for the context (**se débrouiller mon temps*). The verb *attendre* was often erroneously used for “to attend”. The efforts to render “a summer camp” were fraught with error, as in ** été camp*. The word “camp” itself had many variations — *campe, campaign*, and even *champagne*.

(iii) Knowledge and mastery of essential grammar

As in Question 2, verb forms and tenses were often poorly handled. The *passé composé* of the verb *apprendre* was frequently incorrect. Candidates encountered difficulty in trying to use the passive voice when they attempted to express the notion of “being chosen”.

In addressing the first cue, how the school leaver was selected, many candidates wrote that their teacher had chosen them. They had much difficulty with the position of the direct object pronoun, **ma professeur a choisi moi*. Other problems encountered were less easily identified: **J'écouté sur la television. L'été camp était pour étudiants aime moi*.

However, better candidates used the opportunity to use structures and vocabulary associated with doing well in school to good effect, for example, *j'ai été choisi parce que j'ai réussi aux examens; j'ai reçu les *meilleres notes*.

The second cue, requiring candidates to define what was learnt at the camp, was often handled in very few words but not accurately — ** j'ai appris comment parler avec les gens, les vêtements porter et jamais être en retard*.

Some constructions used required the passive voice but candidates had difficulty in doing so. For example, some candidates wrote ** Ils ont donné \$300 pour le camp*.

The third cue required the candidate to use either the future or the conditional tense. This was not often successful as candidates tried to conceive an idea in English and render it in French. ** Je utiliserais quelle j'ai connais quand je sortir chercher pour travail*.

In responding to the final cue, most candidates had difficulty with register and in recognizing to whom their comment should be addressed: ** Tu sera apprendre beaucoup des choses. *Prochain année plus estudiants aime moi, faut vas parce que C'est tres important!*

Generally speaking, candidates had good ideas but lacked the facility in the target language to express these ideas in an accurate and coherent manner.

Below is an example of a good composition submitted by a candidate.

**Récement, après mes examens de sciences économique mon collègue m'a choisi à assister à un camp pendant quinze jours à la banque nationale. La banque a eu l'intention d'apprendre à vingt élèves au sujet du monde *du travail.*

*Pendant quinze jours j'ai appris quelle licence on doit avoir *à être comptable, avocat, médecin et professeur, le salaire normal de plusieurs emplois et la technique de s'entendre avec vos collègues et votre patron.*

*J'utiliserai l'expérience à choisir *un licence et, bien sûr un emploi. J'essaie de choisir entre* être médecin et *être avocat. Egalement je pourrai m'entendre bien avec mes collègues de travail et mon patron aussi *dans l'avenir.*

*Quant à moi, je pense que le camp m'a aidé *beaucoup et ce **peut vous aider aussi. Le camp aura lieu la* année prochaine et c'est une bonne opportunité * pour recevoir beaucoup d'information au sujet du monde du travail.*

CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE	CORRECTIONS REQUIRED	CORRECT RESPONSE
Récement, après Economique A Du A etre L'expérience A Un Dans M' a aidé beaucoup Ce La Pour	Spelling and accent Adjectival agreement Preposition Preposition Preposition Accent Accent Preposition Gender Preposition Position of adverb Omission Requires elision Preposition	Récemment, après économiques Pour De pour être l'expérience Pour une A m' a beaucoup aidé ca l' de

Recommendations

The following are recommended for teachers:

- Have students check their work in class before submission.
- Teach skills of written communication to students as early as Form 1/Grade 7, beginning with sentences and short paragraphs.
- Teach specific essay-writing skills to students of Forms 4 and 5, including use of connectives, range of language, paragraphing and respect for the word limit. Candidates continue to write at unnecessary length on the first two components of the letter/composition and dismiss the final component in one sentence, thereby depriving themselves of the opportunity to showcase a wider range of expression.
- Have students practise to build their essay/ letter around what they know in French rather than what they do not know in French. Looking up words in a dictionary encourages students to write in this mode and dictionary use for essay-writing should be discouraged except for checking purposes.
- Identify, with students, some structures which introduce a wider range of expression into their writing.

Section III (Question 4/Question 5) — Contextual Announcement/Contextual Dialogue

This section required candidates to choose to complete either (i) a contextual announcement or (ii) a contextual dialogue. Cues were given in English for both options and candidates were to write between 80 and 100 words to complete their responses.

Question 4: The Contextual Announcement

As it drew primarily from the contexts of school and daily routine, this question was well within the range and ability of candidates as required by the syllabus. In comparison with previous years, many more candidates attempted this option in Section III. For the most part, candidates wrote responses respecting the length demanded; exceptionally short or long responses were fewer than in previous years. Candidates were generally clear as to the format expected for this question. While some candidates opted to use the cues as a guide to write the announcement in point form, others took the opportunity to create poster-like announcements. This does not provide any advantage or disadvantage to candidates.

It is recommended that candidates read the question carefully. Although the majority penned responses that accurately interpreted the question, there were still quite a few who did not understand that the announcement was to be written on behalf of their mother, for a sibling. These candidates wrote the announcement from the point of view of a teacher who was advertising lessons. Yet others wrote as if they were the ones seeking the lessons instead of their mother. Candidates generally produced announcements which included all clues.

The following are comments on candidate performance for each of the cues.

- (i) Purpose of the announcement: In most instances, candidates stated very clearly the purpose of the announcement, for example, *Ma mère a besoin de quelqu'un pour enseigner deux matières à mon petit frère/mon frère cadet*. In addition, candidates were able to navigate around the word for "lessons". One good technique frequently employed was the use of rhetorical questions to begin the announcement – "*Vous vous entendez bien avec les enfants? Voulez-vous travailler à une grande maison...?*"
- (ii) Age of the person taking the classes: This was stated accurately in most cases, (*Mon frère a ... ans*) but there are still candidates who need to recall that *avoir* is used to give someone's age.
- (iii) Subjects, time and duration of classes: Most candidates were able to accurately identify at least two subjects. Some erroneously used *sujet* in place of the word *matière*. While some candidates were able to represent time accurately, others had difficulty in doing so. Some candidates chose to use the 24-hour clock. Instead of using the verb *durer* to indicate the duration of the classes, many candidates gave a start and end time. An example of such a response follows:

*Ma mère propose que les cours de mathématiques seront *les mercredis et vendredis pendant deux heures de 16 h à 18 h et les cours de français seront deux heures *les jeudis de 16 heures à 18 heures et trois heures *les samedis matins de 9 h à 12 h.*
- (iv) Two important qualities of the person(s) providing the classes: The answers produced here were varied. Many candidates used expressions which would have required use of the subjunctive after a verb of wishing/wanting, after an indefinite antecedent or after *Il faut que ...* Some candidates have not mastered the use of impersonal verbs such as *falloir*. Other candidates avoided this by simply using *devoir*.

- (v) Tuition fee and contact details: Many candidates were able to express this well, with some using the future tense as in *ma mère payera* and *cette personne recevra*, or equally appropriate expressions such as *nous pouvons vous payer...* or *le prix est négociable*. Candidates used a range of monetary symbols, with the Euro employed in the majority of cases. Many candidates demonstrated that they have not mastered the imperative, particularly in the second person plural form. Other candidates used alternatives such as *Veillez contacter...* The majority of candidates omitted the *le* required before a telephone number.

Below is an example of a good contextual announcement submitted by a candidate.

*Un Professeur est très *nécessaire!*

*On a besoin d'un bon professeur pour enseigner deux matières. Le professeur enseignera un étudiant *seule qui a quinze ans.*

*Le professeur doit pouvoir enseigner le commerce et la littérature pour la *clase** troisième. Les *clases auront lieu pendant le weekend entre deux heures et quatre heures** après-midi * les samedis et les dimanches pour trois mois.*

*Le professeur doit être, patient et être de *bon humeur. On peut vous payer trois cents euros par mois.*

*Si cela vous *interesse, vous pourriez me contacter *à 721-4627 ou j'aibesoindevous@gmail.com.*

*Merci beaucoup pour votre aide *on avance.*

CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE	CORRECTION REQUIRED	CORRECT RESPONSE
Nécessaire	Accent	nécessaire
Seule	Gender	seul
Clase	Spelling	classe
Troisième	Omission	de troisième
Après-midi	Omission	de l'après-midi
Bon	Gender	bonne
Interesse	Accent	intéresse
On avance	Preposition	à l'avance
A	Omission	au

Question 5: The Contextual Dialogue

This question required candidates to demonstrate knowledge of the context of travel, with specific reference to making arrangements for hotel accommodation, as well as shopping to a lesser extent. Moreover, these arrangements for hotel rooms were being made via a telephone conversation. All of the aforementioned are well within the range and ability of candidates at the CSEC French level. However, while some candidates were able to exhibit mastery and to respond appropriately and accurately to the majority of the cues using language that flowed naturally, others struggled.

The contextual dialogue was again the preferred choice of many candidates. There were many excellent and very good scripts, as many candidates were able to follow and respond to all of the cues and use appropriate and correct vocabulary, idioms, expressions and structures.

It should be noted that many candidates attempt this option without first reading all of the information given in order to discover how the dialogue will unfold. Close and detailed preliminary analysis of the dialogue is important.

Most candidates respected the word limit. Very few wrote beyond what was required; most of those penalized for length fell short of the minimum number of words.

Although quite a few candidates misunderstood some cues, they were still able to complete the dialogue. On the one hand, some candidates were able to maintain the telephone conversational style throughout, through interjections like *une minute, ne quittez pas* and *parfait*. On the other hand, other candidates wrote as if the tourist was physically before the receptionist, introducing themselves with expressions like *bienvenue*, or concluding by saying: *voici votre clé*, or **Tiens les clés pour les chambres*, and *voici votre carte pour la chambre*.

The following are comments on candidate performance for each of the cues.

- (i) Greetings: The majority of candidates were able to produce an appropriate greeting as a telephone response for a hotel receptionist, many opting to identify a hotel name. Far too many candidates had difficulty wording their offer of assistance to the customer. With regard to register, too many candidates still used the informal *tu* instead of the required formal *vous*.
- (ii) Responses to the tourist's request(s): Candidates generally responded adequately to the tourist's request, offering a variety of room options for the four - member family, some with more structural and lexical accuracy than others. Examples of good performance included *Si vous voulez, nous pouvons vous donner un grand appartement pour la famille entière* and *Il n'y a pas de chambres avec deux ou trois lits. Je peux vous donner deux chambres qui sont séparées*.
- (iii) Information on accommodation: Candidates suggested myriad options to render their descriptions of the layout of the rooms, for example, *Nous avons un appartement avec deux chambres... Aussi, ça donne sur la plage*.
- (iv) Suggested solutions: Candidates produced varied expressions such as *je propose* and *je vous conseille de louer un appartement*. Candidates also continued to have difficulty in expressing larger numbers correctly. They also were confused by two expressions — *les chambres doubles* and *les deux chambres*. Some used both expressions interchangeably whilst others treated them as two different options.
- (v) Payment arrangements: Most candidates realized that there needed to be discussion on the means of payment. Some resorted to English because they did not know the monetary terms, but others rose to the challenge and produced expressions such as *l'argent, espèces, payer comptant, payer par chèque* and *arrhes*, as well as other options. At this point in the dialogue, most candidates did not use the required future tense. Additionally, it was evident that most did not understand that a fitting ending comment was required to bring the conversation to an amicable close.

Below is an example of a good contextual dialogue as submitted by a candidate.

Le touriste: Bonjour Madame/Monsieur

Vous: *Bonjour Monsieur. Est-ce que *voulez-vous faire une réservation à notre hôtel Hilton*

Le touriste: Oui, je voudrais faire une réservation pour ma femme, mes deux enfants et moi-même pour sept nuits. Mais nous ne voulons pas séparer les enfants.

Vous: *Chaque chambre peut seulement contenir deux personnes*

Le touriste : Mais nous ne voulons pas séparer les enfants.

Vous : *Oui, Monsieur. Soit une chambre pour les deux adultes et l'autre pour les enfants soit chaque chambre pour *une adult et un enfant.*

Le touriste: Ah non! Vous n'avez rien d'autre à nous proposer?

Vous: *Vous pouvez choisir cela ou vous pouvez louer un appartement avec deux *grands chambres avec les *jumeaux lits*

Le touriste: Alors, c'est combien par nuit?

Vous: *Chaque nuit coûte *un mil cinquante euros.*

Le touriste: 1050 Euros! Pour un appartement! Et les chambres doubles?

Vous: *Le coût d'une chambre double est soixante (60€) euros.*

Le touriste: Nous allons prendre les deux chambres à 60 Euros.

Vous: *Alors, le coût est deux cents euros avec *la taxe inclu. Par carte bancaire ou chèque*

Le touriste: Nous payerons par carte de crédit.

Vous: *D'accord. Je vous * enverrai l'addition à votre compte, aussitôt ** possible.*

L'Agent: Merci Madame/Monsieur.

CANDIDATE RESPONSE	CORRECTION REQUIRED	CORRECT RESPONSE
Voulez-vous	No inversion	vous voulez
Une adult	Article and spelling	un adulte
Grands chambres	Agreement of adjective	grandes chambres
Jumeaux lits	Inversion	lits jumeaux
Un mil	Article redundant and spelling	mille
La taxe inclu	Article gender and spelling	taxe inclus
Enverrai	Spelling of verb form	enverrai
Aussitôt possible	Incomplete expression	aussitôt que possible

Recommendations

It was noted that grammatical, lexical and structural accuracy posed the greatest challenge to candidates in demonstrating writing skills. In addition, candidates must be cognizant of the importance of punctuation, and more specifically the rules of capitalization. Teachers must equip their students with the tools and continue to provide ample opportunity to practise writing in general, and writing these two question types in particular. Such practice must begin from early in the foreign language learner's life.

Section IV (Question 6) — Reading Comprehension

This section assessed candidates' ability to read and understand a short selection in French. However, the questions on the selection and candidates' answers were in English.

The reading passage was well within the capability of the candidates and the topic was familiar to them. Most candidates performed satisfactorily, with a significant number of them scoring in the range of good to excellent.

The passages used for testing comprehension are very concise texts that are generally between 130 and 150 words. There is therefore little room for redundancy with this restricted content. In classroom practice, students should be encouraged to identify the key words or elements in the questions as a preliminary strategy, before attempting to answer the questions. This might help them to read critically and arrive at a sound understanding of the text.

Some answers submitted were ambiguous owing to candidates' poor use of English. Consequently such candidates would not have earned the maximum marks.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question (a)

What are Mr Chrétien's profession and marital status?

Mr Chrétien's profession was usually correctly rendered as vendor, salesman or merchant and candidates also correctly referred to him as a shopkeeper. *Célibataire* was sometimes interpreted as celebrity or divorced or married. Candidates needed to be clear and specific in their answers, as the term "businessman" was rather broad and unspecific to render *marchand*.

Question (b)

Where had Mr Chrétien travelled before?

This question was very often answered incorrectly as candidates did not take note of the word "before" in the question. It is clear that candidates did not look carefully at the title of the selection, which in this case would have given them the correct answer. Answers which stated that he had only travelled within his own country were scored as correct. Some answers elaborated on the text as in "he went to Guadeloupe with his cousin to purchase gifts for his cousin's boutique". A careful, word-by-word examination of the sentence should avoid such errors.

Question (c)

State TWO things that Mr Chrétien did last month.

Candidates were generally able to identify two of the four possible answers to this question and most scored the two marks allotted to it. Loss of a mark was incurred when candidates wrote that Mr Chrétien bought merchandise in a small boutique.

Question (d)

What did the security officer ask Mr Chrétien to do the first time?

Most candidates were able to identify that Mr Chrétien removed his shoes, although a few opted for "socks". The word *bijoux* presented a problem for many candidates who variously referred to other items (accessories, gold, metal, hat) or omitted this element of the response.

Question (e)

What happened when Mr Chrétien passed through?

This question was generally well handled. Even though the expression was often awkward, (“the alarm started sounding”, full points were awarded.

Question (f)

Why was Mr Chrétien angry?

While most candidates were able to obtain full marks for this question by saying that the alarm went off twice or again, others wrote that it went off “continuously”, an example of how ambiguity may impede the award of full marks.

Question (g)

What happened on the third attempt?

This answer was also well handled. Candidates who did not obtain the mark wrote vague responses such as “he went through” or responses from their own surmising of what happened –“he had no problems with security”.

Question (h)

What did Mr Chrétien decide to do on his return trip?

The verb *se coucher* was not well understood. In cases where the candidate wrote that Mr. Chrétien hid, or slept, the candidate usually did not interpret Mr. Chrétien’s behaviour correctly and placed him “under” or “next to” the scanner. Many candidates thought that he passed his baggage on or under the scanner.

Question (i)

How did the security officers react this time to Mr Chrétien’s behaviour?

Although candidates usually understood that the security officers prevented Mr. Chrétien from taking action or told him that it was not allowed, they were less proficient in rendering the word *étonnés* which was rendered as “puzzled”, “angry” or even “pleased”.

Question (j)

Explain why Mr Chrétien made the decision that he did.

Many candidates wrote at length on this question but did not include the key element which was that Mr Chrétien did not want to endure again the same situation he went through the first time.

Recommendations

- Candidates must be encouraged to read the entire selection and all the questions before attempting to answer.
- Candidates must note the marks allotted to a question and be guided as to the number of necessary elements required in their response.
- Responses should be read over to ensure that they make sense in English and that they are not distorted or ambiguous.
- Candidates should be aware that writing two responses in the hope that one may be correct would earn them no mark.
- Candidates need to remember that one word carelessly used can change the meaning of a sentence.
- Candidates must note that reproducing French words from the passage will not gain marks.

Paper 03 — Oral Examination

This paper assessed candidates' ability to (i) produce appropriate responses in the target language in a number of situations, (ii) read aloud a short passage in the target language, (iii) respond in the target language to general questions based on four out of six topics indicated in the syllabus. An attempt was made to link the theme of the reading passage with the general questions in order to create a more natural flow from one task to another.

As in previous years, performance in the oral examination ranged from weak to excellent. This year many examiners were pleased with the candidates' responses to the oral situations and guided conversation. It was suggested that the performance of weak candidates reflected inadequate readiness for the examination. There is cause for concern when examiners state that some candidates remain silent or respond with *je ne sais pas* in Sections I and III of the examination.

Section I — Responses to Situations

In this section the majority of candidates demonstrated that they were well prepared. They displayed a good degree of knowledge of the vocabulary required to communicate ideas appropriately and their responses were well thought out and organized. Many candidates manipulated grammatical structures with a commendable degree of accuracy and range of idiom. However, weaker candidates had difficulty with basic functions such as ordering a drink, giving an excuse, expressing agreement and making a suggestion. Common lexical deficiencies mentioned by examiners included the following:

- *Bonne fête des mères*
- *Seize, quatre-vingt-dix*
- *Eteindre, allumer, fermer, ouvrir*
- *Réparer*
- *Je te présente*

Grammatical errors which occurred frequently included:

- Confusion of *tard, plus tard, en retard*
- Confusion of *est-ce que, qu'est-ce que* and *quell*
- Use of an auxiliary verb in the present tense (**où sont vous allez?*)
- Incorrect use of *d'accord* for *pas de problème*
- Confusion of *aller, avoir, faire* and *être*
- Incorrect use of pronouns (**tu peux aider moi, * je voudrais inviter tu*)
- Omissions (**vous pouvez chez moi*)
- Errors of register, *tu* and *vous* in the same sentence

However, examiners noted some excellent use of idiom in this section, such as:

- *Mon réveil-matin ne marche pas*
- *Ma mère est femme au foyer*
- *Zut alors! J'ai vraiment besoin de cette robe*

Section II — Reading Passages

Most comments received from the examiners indicated that candidates found it to be the most challenging of the three sections. Examiners commented that the passages were of an appropriate level of difficulty but that candidates struggled to show comprehension, fluency, correct intonation and even correct pronunciation of discrete sounds. Teachers may need to re-examine the amount of time and the methods used to foster good performance in this section.

The following were commonly mentioned as deficiencies:

- Anglicization of words (*clients, quitter, pays, pile, nationale, matin, héros*)
- Pronunciation of final consonants (*temps, cartes, minuit, au secours, tout d'un coup, lit*)
- Vocalization of silent verb endings (*manquaient*)
- Inability to differentiate between final *e* and *é* (*répondré*)
- Failure to produce liaisons (*Champs-Elysées, de temps en temps, quelques-unes*)
- Careless rendition (*de* and *des, collègues* instead of *collègues*)
- Erratic phrasing and lack of fluency
- Distortion of discrete sounds (*juillet, ainsi, feu d'artifice*)
- Unfamiliarity with abbreviations and numbers (*M. Lacoste, le 14 juillet, treize*)

Section III — Guided Conversation

Performance by candidates ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory but examiners were pleased with the general level of comprehension and the candidates' responses. The longer questions proved to be the more challenging ones. Candidates at times based their answer on a grasp of one word in the question without processing the entire question. This occurred, for example, when candidates were unsure if they were being asked which country they had visited or which one they would like to visit. There was some unfamiliarity with the words *métier, pièces, quartier, idéal, à l'étranger, moyen de transport*. Although candidates made errors in their use of tenses, it was reported that at many centres answers were well developed and a wide range of idiom was used.

Recommendations

Teachers are encouraged to continue exposing students to authentic samples of language and simulate real-life situations in order to practise the target language. There is also need to practise numbers, as some candidates were unfamiliar with the format for giving their phone number. Candidates should also be discouraged from requesting many repetitions of a question.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2014

FRENCH

GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

GENERAL COMMENTS

Performance in the 2014 examination was comparable to that of 2013. Many candidates displayed fair to excellent levels of linguistic competence, spontaneity and grammatical accuracy. Others were less successful in demonstrating mastery of the target language. In 2014, 75.5 per cent of candidates earned Grades I–III compared with 77.7 per cent for 2013.

Teachers are again encouraged to continue exposing students to authentic samples of language from electronic and paper-based sources to simulate real-life situations in which students may practise the target language. Teachers must continue their good work in engaging students in language learning by making it relevant, personal and meaningful.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprised two sections, assessed candidates' ability to (i) listen to and understand a number of items in the target language and (ii) read and understand a number of written items. Both sections required candidates to have a mastery of essential grammar as prescribed in the CSEC syllabus and vocabulary appropriate to this level of competence. The good performance here was comparable with that of previous years.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section I (Question 1) – Directed Situations

This section assessed candidates' ability to respond in French to ten situations described in English which required written responses. All situations drew on functions/notions and settings and topics (see syllabus) that should be within the experience of most candidates.

Candidates' performance on this question was comparable to that of previous years, ranging from 'No Response' in some instances to 'Excellent' in many cases. While many candidates performed well, displaying excellent mastery and control of grammatical structures and using a wide range of vocabulary and idioms, there were also many candidates who lacked basic knowledge and skills, and as a result, they encountered difficulty in this question.

It is not surprising that candidates who performed the best here were those who were able to identify the function being assessed and essential elements required in each situation, and respond directly and to the point, while avoiding superfluous elements. It is advisable, therefore, that some time be devoted by class teachers to assisting learners in developing this valuable and necessary skill. Candidates also need to understand that unlike Sections 2 and 3 in this paper, this question requires them to be concise and precise with the language, hence the rubric clearly states that they are not to write more than one sentence for each response. For their own benefit, they ought to heed this instruction so that they can avoid losing marks unnecessarily with long and wordy responses.

	FUNCTION/NOTION	SETTINGS AND TOPICS
(a)	Obligation and punishment	Punishment task in school context
(b)	Expressing dislike	Food items, home context
(c)	Congratulating and encouraging	Performance in a football match
(d)	Stating intentions	After-school activities or career choices
(e)	Quantifying and listing	Grocery items with quantities
(f)	Giving advice	Storm precautions, newspaper
(g)	Explaining absence	Email, declining an invitation with reason
(h)	Giving a reminder	Reminder, items of school uniform
(i)	Describing weather	Weather forecast
(j)	Expressing gratitude	Note of thanks for a specific gift item

Specific Comments on Individual Situations

Situation (a)

In this situation, candidates were required to state the punishment that a student was to receive for breaking a school rule. While many were able to identify the function of ‘obligation’ and respond appropriately and correctly using the verb ‘*devoir*’, others were unable to gain full marks as a result of their omission of this essential element. Quite a number of candidates used the interdiction ‘*il est interdit de ...*’ which was inappropriate here and thus incurred a penalty. The imperative mood was commonly used, as in ‘**Nettoies la salle de bains*’ and ‘*Reste chez toi pour trois jours.*’ Both these responses lacked the element of obligation which was essential in this question. Another challenge here was candidates’ lack of understanding as to what constitutes a punishment, as was evident in the response ‘*Tu vas au bureau du directeur*’ and ‘**Tu téléphones * tes parents tout de suite*’.

Situation (b)

Many candidates scored full marks for this item which required them to state one thing that they did not like to eat. However, a major challenge for some candidates was the inability to use the definite article correctly, with many opting instead for the partitive article as in ‘*Je n’aime pas manger *du porc*’. Also, many seemed to be unaware that when two or more verbs are used, the first one is conjugated and the others are left in the infinitive form. Hence they wrote ‘*Je n’aime pas *mange le poulet.*’ A number of candidates simply stated what they eat, totally ignoring the function of expressing dislike, (‘*Je ne mange pas *du porc*’) while others stated what they would like to eat, ‘*Je voudrais manger du poulet*’. These errors may be avoided if candidates read the questions more carefully. The better candidates were very direct and to the point with their responses, as in ‘*Je déteste les fruits de mer.*’

Situation (c)

This question posed the greatest challenge. It required them to congratulate and encourage a friend who had won a football match. While a fair number of candidates were able to respond appropriately and correctly, as in *'Félicitations et continue à jouer bien au football'*, others were only able to score marks for the first element of congratulating, either omitting the second part of the response or failing to express an appropriate encouragement, as in *'*Je suis contente pour toi'*. A significant number offered no response to this element. Many candidates who used *'espérer que'* seemed unaware that it should be followed by the future tense in this case. *'Félicitations'* was widely known but often misspelt. *'Congratulations'* was also very common and often misspelt.

Situation (d)

For this situation, candidates were required to state two things that they were going to do after school. Here, "after school" was interpreted in two ways: i) after school on that day and ii) after finishing school, and both interpretations were accepted. In attempting to state two intentions/activities, the majority of candidates were able to score some marks, but many had difficulty with tense formation and usage. Only the better candidates were able to use the immediate future or future tense correctly and many opted to use the present tense. It was not unusual to see incorrect grammatical structures like *'*Je suis vais'*, *'*Je suis fais'* and even *'*Je suis alle'*. A significant number of candidates also used the verb *'visiter'* where *'rendre visite à'* was needed. Inconsistency with the sequence of tenses used by candidates was noted.

Situation (e)

Although this situation seemed to be very straightforward, many candidates found it challenging. They were required to list two grocery items that they wished to buy, including the quantity for each item. The most common error was the use of non-grocery items such as clothing and stationery, for example, *'Je veux deux chemises *verts et une robe rouge'* and *'J'achète une chemise et un stylo'*. Clearly, there is need for more careful reading by candidates. Many were unable to render appropriate expressions of quantity, sometimes using *'un kilomètre de'* and using partitive articles instead of *'de,'* as in *'Je voudrais *acheiver un kilo *des pommes *du terre et *un livre *du poulet'*. Many candidates were able to circumvent this by simply using numbers for the quantity, as in *'Je voudrais un pain et deux pommes'*. Many gave a price for items instead, as in *'dix pommes de terre pour cinq euros'* and *'*le planton - dix dollars, le stylo - sept dollars'*.

Situation (f)

For this situation, candidates were required to state two precautions that should be taken during a storm as published in a newspaper. It was refreshing to see many candidates using authentic and fully appropriate precautions as in *'Coupez tous les *arbres *près de la maison et achetez beaucoup d'eau'*. However, a common mistake was the use of interdictions *'Il est interdit de ...'* and *'Défense de ...'* Many opted for the use of the imperative to give the precaution but a significant number of them used the familiar singular form as in *'*Reste à la maison et *achète beaucoup de nourriture'*. Many also had difficulty using the infinitive in the negative as in *'Ne *quitter pas *ta maison'*.

Situation (g)

Candidates were required to explain in an email to a friend why they could not attend an event. The level of performance was very good for the most part. However, some candidates failed to indicate their inability to attend the event, merely providing an explanation or expressing an apology. In these cases only partial credit was awarded. The verb *'attendre'* was often used by candidates to convey the idea of 'attend'.

Situation (h)

Candidates were required to issue a reminder to their mother to buy an item needed to complete their uniform. The element of reminder was omitted frequently, as in ‘*Il faut acheter une ceinture*’, and candidates used items unrelated to the school uniform, such as ‘*un sac*’ and ‘*des stylos*’. Although many candidates knew the word ‘*oublier*’, the spelling and use in the negative posed problems.

Situation (i)

In this situation, candidates were required to write the weather forecast for tomorrow in a message to their friends. While most were able to score marks here, many used the present tense instead of the future and a significant number demonstrated lack of knowledge of the need to use ‘*faire*’ with weather expressions. ‘*Il *sera chaud*’ and ‘*Il *est *soliel*’ were often used. In attempting to render ‘*demain*’ there were many variations in the spelling and some candidates even used ‘*hier*’.

Situation (j)

This situation was very well done for the most part by the majority of candidates. They were required to write a note of gratitude to a relative for a specific gift received. The main difficulty here was candidates’ failure to specify the gift. Many, however, provided excellent responses.

Recommendations

It is advisable for teachers to guide students in how to approach the directed situations by identifying the function being tested in each situation, the essential elements (usually two elements) and the vocabulary they have learnt which could be used to respond to each situation. Candidates can lose marks unnecessarily in this question by the inclusion of redundancies in their answers.

Section II (Questions 2 and 3) – Letter or Composition

This section assessed candidates’ ability to produce a piece of writing in French of about 130–150 words based on an outline given in English. Candidates had the choice of writing either a letter or a composition.

The responses ranged from excellent to poor. The two questions dealt with topics to which candidates were well able to relate, namely sitting an examination and travel to a French-speaking territory. Hence, candidates chose the letter and the composition in equal proportions and on the whole displayed a good grasp of the vocabulary, idiom and structures relevant to each title. Performance was similar on both questions. Few candidates offered no response at all to the question, a testimony to teachers’ efforts to provide opportunities for their students to practise written composition skills, while others ventured boldly beyond the 170-word limit. These infractions had to be taken into consideration and such candidates were penalized for writing too little or too much.

There is also a tendency among candidates, also noted by Oral Examiners this year, to use the present tense indiscriminately, particularly when trying to render an idea which requires the *passé composé*. Inaccuracy of expression impeded the flow and coherence of the writing of average to weak candidates and candidates must be encouraged to check their work for errors. It was not uncommon to find an essay, for example, where the word *Guadeloupe* is spelt correctly in the first line and thereafter in several different ways (*Guadelope*, *Guadaloupe* etc). Few candidates seemed to have done a rough copy of their essay and corrected and improved on it before submission. The time allotted for the completion of this paper allows for this to be done and teachers need to practise such techniques with their students, as well as techniques for checking their work once it has been written, in order to eliminate avoidable errors.

Question 2: The Letter

(i) Rubric

Generally candidates wrote on all four sections of the letter but wrote more prolifically for the first two sections. The third and final sections often consisted of one sentence only. If candidates are trained to paragraph their work, they may become more aware of this imbalance. The imbalance affects the mark they achieve, since the final cue in the rubric invites candidates to showcase additions to the range of idiom and grammatical structure in their essay, using in this case, for example, additional lexical elements, the passé composé (possibly using the first person plural and the third person singular and plural) and the future tense and/or expressions of intention. Candidates must be made aware that if they exceed the word limit, their response beyond the limit is not considered for credit in the mark awarded.

The improvement in the use of the correct format for letter headings and greetings, salutations and closure was again evident this year. There was evidence that teachers had prepared their students well for opening and closing remarks in the letter, for example, *‘Je termine cette lettre en te souhaitant bonne chance avec tes examens’* or *‘j’ai eu l’agréable surprise de voir ta carte dans ma boîte aux lettres.’* One excellent performance on this question included the idiom *‘Il faut que je ne pratique pas la politique de l’autruche’* before the candidate went on to relate his/her likely failure of the French examination. This year candidates did not make these remarks too long at the expense of dealing with the requirements of the set topic within the word limit, although many failed to use paragraphs to give structure to their letter. More able candidates paid attention to their style of writing and sought to engage the reader in the accounts they related.

In response to the first cue for the letter, some candidates chose to mention a subject other than French even though it was explicitly required in the question. Many did not demonstrate knowledge of essential vocabulary by bypassing terms such as *‘passer un examen’*, *‘ne pas réussir à un examen’*. Some wanted to express ‘I failed it’ using the verb *‘échouer à l’examen’* but had not mastered the use of ‘y’ as in *‘j’y ai échoué’* or *‘je n’y ai pas réussi’*. In addressing how they prepared for the examination, few candidates used the expression *‘se préparer pour l’examen’*.

In mentioning their feelings on the morning of the examination, some candidates had difficulty expressing *‘le matin/jour de l’examen’*. However, there was some good use of idiom in this section; for example, *‘ma mère m’a dit de respirer profondément’*. Generally, candidates neglected to use the pluperfect: *‘j’étais calme parce que* j’ai étudié’*. Many seemed to think that *‘timide’* was a suitable synonym for *‘nerveux/nerveuse’*. Expressing ‘for’ in the past was also challenging, for example: *‘J’ai étudié pour l’examen *depuis trois jours seulement’*. In some instances, prepositions and conjunctions were not used well, as in *‘*avant de je suis partie **ma maison’* and *‘avant de ce test’*. Finally, better use needed to be made of the conditional: *‘Tous les étudiants étaient sûrs qu’ils *réussiront’*.

The third cue was handled well, with candidates mentioning a variety of causes for stress, such as tiredness, illness or studying for the wrong exam. However, many seemed unaware of the verb *‘s’endormir’*. Oftentimes, ‘during the exam’ was incorrectly expressed as *‘dans l’examen’*.

The most frequent problem observed in dealing with the final point seemed to be the word *‘prochain’* and, in particular, its position in relation to the noun. Many wrote *‘*l’examen prochain’* and *‘*la prochaine année’*.

(ii) Range of vocabulary and idiom

Candidates generally demonstrated knowledge of the essential vocabulary and idiom for the context of examination preparation and performance. However, there were many errors of spelling and accents (**difcile*, **dejuener*, **tres*). Invented words and expressions (**un topic*, **manger santé*) were also evident. Interference of English and Spanish in vocabulary and sentence formation was evident in the scripts of the weaker candidates (**assistir*, **disaster*, **mes parents est s'il plait pas avec mes results*, **ma francais exam*, **retourner maison*).

(iii) Knowledge and mastery of essential grammar

The letter required the use of the passé composé as well as the imperfect tense in the first three sections. Many candidates were only able to write in the present tense or made errors in attempting to form the passé composé, especially with reflexive verbs. Verb formation in general was weak. Better candidates used verb tenses skilfully (*je me coucherai plus tôt*, *je n'étais pas calme*, *j'ai décidé à changer mes moyens d'étudier*). However, many candidates had problems supplying correct verb forms (**j'étais*, **j'étudieras*, **ma soeur aiderai moi*, **je prierais*, **je n'ai sais pas*, **j'ai lis*). Gender of nouns was often incorrect (*un problème*; *quel dommage*; *quelle horreur*). The verb 'travailler' was often used for 'to travel.' Expressions of time posed problems to candidates (*le matin*, *huit heures du matin*, *du soir*, *hier matin*). Failure to differentiate between *temps* and *fois* and between *tard* and *en retard* was common. On the whole the more proficient candidates wrote with a pleasing range of expression in this letter. Inaccuracy was the main impediment to the coherence and flow of the candidates' writing. Below is an example of a good letter as submitted by a candidate.

Port-of-Spain, le 6 mars, 2012

Cher Thomas

*J'espère que tu vas bien. Comme tu *sait déjà, *recemment j'ai passé un examen de français et il était terrible ! Il y a deux mois, j'ai commencé d'étudier le français avec mes amis *Martiniquais. J'ai lu *les romans français, j'ai écrit des passages et aussi j'ai écouté de la musique française.*

*Malheureusement, le matin de l'examen, j'étais très nerveuse et j'ai eu mal à *l'estomac. J'ai pressenti que j'échouerais. Pendant l'examen j'étais triste parce que les questions étaient trop *difficult et je n'ai rien su. J'ai oublié *tout les réponses, le vocabulaire, les verbes et même *l'adjectifs. Que je suis bête ! C'était mauvais.*

*Pourtant, pour *l'examen prochain j'étudierai dur et je réussirai. Je commencerai * étudier trois mois avant l'examen et ce sera parfait ! J'essayerai *voyager à *Martinique pour *pratiquer le français avec mes copains et j'aurai besoin de ton aide. A bientôt.*

**Groses bises*

Félicité

CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE	CORRECTIONS REQUIRED	CORRECT RESPONSE
Sait	Verb ending	sais
Recemment	Accent	récemment
Martiniquais	Incorrect capitalisation	martiniquais
Les	Incorrect article	des
L'estomac	Accent	l'estomac
Difficult	Use of English	difficile
Tout	Agreement	tous
L'adjectifs	Incorrect article	les adjectifs
L'examen prochain	Word order	Le prochain examen
Etudier	Omission of preposition	à étudier
Voyager	Omission of preposition	de voyager
Martinique	Use of article	la Martinique
Pratiquer	Spelling	pratiquer
Groses	Spelling	Grosses

Question 3: The Composition

This year, the essay seemed a more popular option with candidates than usual, probably due to their familiarity with the topic (Travel) in the syllabus.

Some candidates were able to demonstrate their knowledge of French culture by effectively using (in French) the names of Parisian monuments and French dishes in the composition. Although not in the majority, some candidates failed to respect the word limit.

(i) Rubric and mastery of grammar and vocabulary

The first cue required candidates to state where, when and how they got to their French-speaking destination. However, several candidates had difficulty in expressing the mode of transport used (e.g. **à avion*'), the date and/or an appropriate destination in French. The verb *'travailler'* was often used to mean 'to travel'. Instances of incorrect gender occurred frequently and the incorrect preposition was frequently used before countries and cities. Finally, far too many candidates believed that *'journée'* meant 'journey/trip' (*'seulement une heure de* journée'*).

The second cue required that candidates mention some of the activities they engaged in during their trip. The responses given by many candidates suggested that more time needed to be spent planning logical activities. Some candidates wrote about going to the beach in Paris or buying local fruits there. Still others mentioned parents/siblings being present on the trip.

Perhaps the most challenging of the cues was the third, which required candidates to mention a few things that went wrong during the trip. Here, many candidates opted to list a series of unfortunate events without connecting them, or tried to express complicated ideas in the target language. On many occasions, the passé composé was incorrectly expressed, with candidates failing to use the correct auxiliary verb or any auxiliary at all. Agreement of the past participle was also cause for concern. Not many candidates were able to combine effectively the imperfect and the passé composé, or employ the passive voice or the subjunctive after *'jusqu'à ce que'* (e.g. *'C'était super *jusqu'à j'étais perdu'*, or after *'vouloir'* as in **Je l'ai voulu venir pour me calmer.*) The perfect infinitive was rarely used (*'après fait du shopping'*). It must also be mentioned that the word 'for' used in the context of expressing a past action was often rendered as *'pour'* when *'pendant'* was necessary in the context. Prepositions were sometimes not used correctly, *'depuis'* instead of *'après'* (**Depuis, nous sommes allés à un restaurant'*), and *'devant'* when the candidate should have used *'avant'*. As in the letter, *'malheureusement'* was challenging for many candidates. Many of them used the adverb *'mal'* where *'mauvais'* was needed. *Ce qui/ce que* were not

used when required (*'Je ne sais pas *qu'est-ce que s'est passé'*). In addition, candidates must bear in mind that 'the next day' in an account in the past is *'le lendemain/le jour suivant.'* The final cue gave candidates the opportunity to use the future tense for the most part. One candidate used the word *'éviter'* correctly here but candidates must be reminded that this is not a translation. Words in the cues do not necessarily have to be used in the answer. Apart from incorrect tense formation and usage, candidates experienced difficulty in expressing the idea 'the next time' (*'*le temps prochaine'*).

Below is an example of a good composition submitted by a candidate.

*La semaine dernière le club de français de mon école a organisé une excursion à Fort-de-France, Martinique, * pendent le week-end. On a décidé de prendre le *bateau parce que c'est moins cher que prendre l'avion. Nous sommes partis le vendredi et heureusement la mer était calme. L'hôtel était situé au sud de la ville dans un quartier très animé.*

*Le lendemain on a fait du shopping au centre commercial. C'était très grand mais les magasins étaient très chers. Ensuite on a visité le théâtre en plein centre ville. La pièce était nul parce que je n'ai rien compris ! Finalement on est allés à la plage et que c'était sale, cette plage! Quelle journée! En rentrant à l'hôtel je me suis rendu compte que ma valise n'était pas là. « Au voleur ! Au voleur ! » Ai-je crié. « Quelqu'un a volé toutes nos valises ! » Quel *domage !*

*La prochaine fois on va demander plus de *renseignement **du quartier de l'hôtel. Et aussi du pays.*

Candidate's response	Corrections required	Correct response
Pendent	Spelling	Pendant
Bâteau	Accent	Bateau
Domage	Spelling	Dommage
Renseignement	Pluralisation	Renseignements
Du quartier	Omission	Au sujet du quartier

Recommendations

The following are recommended

- The practice of having students check their work in class before submission
- The teaching of free writing skills to students as early as Form 1, beginning with sentences and short paragraphs.
- The teaching of specific essay-writing skills to students of Forms 4 and 5, including use of connectives, range of language, paragraphing and respect for the word limit. Students continue to write at unnecessary length on the first two components of the letter/composition and dismiss the final component in one sentence, thereby depriving themselves of the opportunity to showcase a wider range of expression.
- Practising with students on how to build their essay/letter around what they know to express in French rather than what they do not know to express. Looking up words in a dictionary encourages students to write what they do not know and so end up using phrases that they do not really understand, since words also take their meanings from the context in which they are used. Dictionary use for essay writing should be discouraged except for checking purposes.
- Identifying with students some structures which introduce a wider range of expression into their writing.

Section III (Questions 4 and 5) Contextual Announcement or Contextual Dialogue

Question 4: Contextual Announcement

At this sitting, most candidates attempted to present a response to this section. There were fewer candidates offering no response to the question than in previous years. This year the announcement proved to be the more popular option, although a few candidates presented scripts with both announcement and dialogue. In addition, most candidates respected the word limit and this year fewer candidates were penalized for producing a response that was too short or too long. However, it is of note that there continues to be a strong influence of the mother tongue and/or creole in candidates' writing in French.

(i) Rubric

In general, candidates responded satisfactorily to the cues. Many, however, appeared to ignore the fact that the announcement was for a local newspaper, and wrote as if it were for their school notice board.

Cue (ii) was the most challenging with many misinterpreting the reason required and giving responses such as to raise funds for the club. Many just did not know how to explain it. A common rendition was '**on a besoin de plus personnes s'amuser*'. However, there were some who were able to explain the reason, using apt vocabulary such as '*tarif*', '*réduction*', '*prix abordable*' and '*remise*'.

Many were not specific regarding who could participate (cue iii), giving responses such as '*tout le monde*'. A few candidates did not understand the word '*francophone*' and thus gave non-francophone countries in their responses. However, the majority did, and most used the Caribbean islands as well as France and even La Réunion.

Candidates showed sound cultural knowledge in responding to cue iv. They mentioned, for example, '*la Tour Eiffel, les Champs-Élysées, Le Louvre, La Cathédrale de Notre Dame, la Seine, Marseille*'. Activities in the French-speaking islands included '*visiter la plage*', '*aller au cinéma*' and '*aller aux cascades*'. There were a few who had difficulty spelling the French monuments and also some who placed the Eiffel Tower in Guadeloupe or Martinique.

(ii) Knowledge of grammar

Some candidates used the present and imperfect tenses where the conditional or future tenses were required. Many also had difficulty in expressing the present continuous tense, which is the equivalent of the present tense (e.g. '**nous sommes organiser, *nous sommes inviter vous, *le club est chercher, *le club est voyage à Paris*'). Some used the verb *visiter* followed by *à*. Candidates must be commended for accuracy in the use of the verb *avoir* with age. However, they often used the wrong prepositions in front of the countries (e.g. '**à France, *au Guadeloupe, *à Martinique, *au Paris*').

Candidates this year again experienced challenges with noun/adjective agreement. Further, the majority did not remember to put *le* in front of the telephone number and to use the preposition *à* after the verb *téléphoner*. Some candidates still have not mastered the use of the irregular verb, *aller*, in both present and past tenses, as in '**ils allent*' and '**cela aller*'. Many displayed a good understanding of the placement of object pronoun, (e.g. '*nous vous invitons*', '*trouvez-nous sur facebook*' and '*n'hésitez pas à me contacter*'). However, the positioning of noun and adjectives proves problematic for some, for example, '**un francophone pays*', '**un français pays*' and '**un français club*'. The registers *tu* and *vous* continued to pose problems for candidates, with many being inconsistent in their use. Also, candidates need to be reminded that *beaucoup* is always followed by *de*.

(iii) Use of vocabulary

There was evidence of Spanish interference in the responses of some candidates (e.g. *informacion, viaje, atencion, todas, personas*). Some candidates used *puis* and *alors* as well as *gens* and *personnes* interchangeably. Too often, *informatiques* was written instead of *informations*, *intéressant* was confused with *intéressé*, as in **_êtes-vous intéressant?* and **participater* replaced *participer*. Some candidates made careless spelling errors with words used repeatedly throughout their responses such as **Martinique*, while *pouvoir* was used by some candidates instead of *savoir* to refer to knowing a language.

On the positive side, good use of vocabulary was also noted, in expressions such as:

On doit au moins avoir dix ans
On est obligé d'avoir un passeport
Sinon, ça coûtera deux mille dollars
Merci beaucoup à l'avance
Vous êtes tombé au bon endroit
Un événement/voyage à ne pas manquer
Le prix sera réduit
Goûter les plats exotiques
C'est avec plaisir que
Le club est fier d'organiser
Pour participer vous devez avoir entre 12 et 18 ans
Un restaurant cinq étoiles
Visitez notre site web

Below is a good script that was submitted by a candidate.

*Est-ce que vous parlez *courrament le français ? Ça vous intéresse *de aller *au pays *de francophone ? Maintenant vous avez *l'ocassion *pour aller au pays le plus magnifique, la France, et c'est simple comme bonjour. Le club de français dans l'école qui s'appelle Bishop Anstey vous invite, car il y a soixante pour *cents de remise pour les groupes de trente personnes et il n'y a que vingt personnes. En France nous visiterons le Louvre, *le Tour Eiffel, des châteaux, des parcs d'attraction. Nous resterons dans un hôtel cinq étoiles et nous irons aux restaurants où les repas sont délicieux. Ne manquez pas cette *ocassion. Pour *tous renseignement, téléphonez **ce numéro: 333 5610*

Candidate response	Correction required	Correct response
Courrament	Spelling	Couramment
De aller	Elision	D'aller
Pays de francophone	Redundancy	Pays francophone
L'ocassion	Spelling	L'occasion
Cents	Pluralisation	Cent
Le Tour Eiffel	Gender	La Tour Eiffel
Tous	Pluralisation	Tout
Téléphonez ce numéro	Omission	Téléphonez à ce numéro

Question 5: Contextual Dialogue

(i) Use of cues

Most cues were addressed, though some not accurately. For the first cue many candidates did not know how to give an invitation to ask questions, often using ‘*est-ce que je peux vous aider?*’ instead of ‘*comment est-ce que ...?*’. Many others neglected to give an invitation to ask questions.

Cue 2 was the most misinterpreted. Many candidates related what could be done in Martinique without specifying how to get around. For those who gave means of transport, it was often accompanied by the wrong preposition as in *à autobus* and *au taxi*.

The third cue was also misunderstood often, with several candidates giving directions to the airport instead of indicating whether or not Roger would have been picked up.

Candidates were generally creative in giving advice to Roger, although some had difficulty in developing their ideas.

Most candidates knew how to express ‘you’re welcome’, although there were sometimes errors in spelling.

Candidates need to read cues carefully to know what gender is required. Some used the feminine form of verbs, for example, *‘*je suis allée*’, whilst the required gender was evident from the word ‘monsieur’ at the end of the dialogue. Some candidates inserted apt responses in the wrong place. Candidates need to carefully read the preceding and following lines before inserting responses.

(ii) Use of grammar

Candidates had difficulty in conjugating the reflexive verb ‘*s’habiller*’, especially in the infinitive form.

(iv) Use of vocabulary

‘**Demander des questions*’ was a common error. Some failed to recognize ‘*famille d’accueil*’. Some candidates did not know the word for ‘suit’, using ‘**un suit*’. However, others correctly used ‘*un comple*’. Some also gave options for girls. A few candidates misinterpreted ‘*un bal*’, assuming that it was sport-related. Others did not consider it a formal event, mentioning the possibility of wearing casual outfits. Occasionally very literal translations appeared, for example, ‘**avoir un bon temps/heure*’. Careless spelling errors continued to detract from candidates’ work.

On the other hand, good use of idioms was also noted, as in

Je vous en prie / je t’en prie
*Merci *pour écouter mes conseils*
Qu’est-ce que tu veux savoir?
Une voiture de location.

Recommendations

Candidates should number their questions accurately using the appropriate number/section on the question paper and be reminded to respond to EITHER the announcement OR the dialogue. Some seem to deliberately attempt both in an attempt to get marks. Candidates should try to stay within the word limit and should be made aware of the resulting deduction in marks if they exceed the limit.

Below is an example of a good contextual announcement submitted by a candidate.

- Roger:** Merci d'avoir accepté de me parler.
Vous: *Pas de problème, Roger. Je suis disponible maintenant. Tu as des questions?*
Roger: Comment on va faire pour les sorties et les visites?
Vous: *Tu peux louer une voiture. Ce n'est pas cher. Il y a le *metro et l'autobus dans *le ville aussi.*
Roger: Bien, et est-ce qu'on viendra me chercher à l'aéroport aussi ?
Vous: *Oui, quand tu *arrives, il y aura un homme qui viendra pour toi.*
Le touriste: Parlez-nous un peu du bal dont on parle dans le programme.
Vous: *Le bal sera le vingt-cinq mars. Il sera dans la mairie en face de la banque.*
Roger: Et est-ce que je vais pouvoir inviter ma famille d'accueil?
Vous: *Oui bien *sur. Tu peux inviter ta famille*
Roger: Et comment est-ce qu'il faut s'habiller pour ce bal ? C'est une activité formelle ?
Vous: *Généralement les hommes mettent les chemisiers et les pantalons et les femmes mettent les robes fantastiques.*
Roger: Avez-vous un dernier conseil?
Vous: *Il ne faut pas être dehors après *le minuit.*
Roger: Merci encore monsieur.
Vous: *Pas de problème.*

Candidate response	Correction required	Correct response
Metro	Accent	Métro
Le ville	Gender	La ville
Arrives	Verb tense	Arriveras
Bien sur	Accent	Bien sûr
Le minuit	Article redondant	Minuit

Section IV Reading Comprehension

General Comments

This section assesses candidates' ability to read and understand a short passage in French. The questions on the passage and candidates' answers are in English.

The reading passage for 2014 was well within the capability of the candidates and the topic was familiar to them. Most candidates performed satisfactorily, with a significant number of them scoring good to excellent marks. Some answers submitted were ambiguous owing to shortcomings in candidates' use of English. Although no penalty is applied for candidates' incorrect use of English, candidates may lose marks if poor English makes it unclear whether they have understood the French.

The passages used for testing comprehension are very concise texts that are generally between 130 and 150 words. There is therefore little room for redundancy with this restricted content. In classroom practice, students should be encouraged to identify the key words or elements in the questions as a preliminary strategy, before attempting to answer the questions. This might help them to read critically and arrive at a sound understanding of the text.

Comments on Individual Questions

- (a) On what day does this incident occur?
Most candidates were able to supply the correct answer to this question. However, the wording of some answers suggested that the candidates thought that the return to school was solely Chantal's and not the first day of school for everyone, after the summer holidays. Incorrect answers identified the day of the Maths test, her birthday and the day she brought the cell phone to school as the day the incident occurred.
- (b) Where is Chantal and why is it unusual for her to be in that place?
Most candidates had difficulty in accurately stating that Chantal was *outside/in front of/before* the Principal's office. The prepositions *in/at/by* were not acceptable for the allocation of the first mark. There were some misinterpretations of the phrase *bureau du directeur*, such as *board/board of directors/ waterfall/ plane*. For the other required element most candidates correctly responded that it was because Chantal was a *good/well-behaved* student.
- (c) What milestone did Chantal celebrate during the vacation?
Many candidates understood that the milestone was Chantal's sixteenth birthday but it was apparent that some were unfamiliar with ordinal numbers, as they incorrectly referred to her sixth, sixteenth, sixtieth and seventieth birthday. Candidates who did not observe the mark allocation for the question simply answered *her birthday* and scored only a partial mark. The word "milestone" was a challenge for weaker candidates, with some referring to *diamond*.
- (d) From whom did Chantal receive the cellphone?
This question was well handled, with rare occurrences of incorrect answers such as *her niece, her uncle's daughter, her aunt's daughter*.
- (e) Why did Chantal receive the cell phone on this occasion?
Again candidates generally identified the correct answer that it was because Chantal was his favourite niece. Various incorrect answers were offered by candidates who offered their own speculations such as the fact that Chantal was now mature enough to own a cellphone or cell phones are essential.
- (f) State three things which Chantal could do with her cell phone.
Most candidates correctly provided three of the four possible responses. A few failed to be precise, writing, for example, that Chantal could *send texts/receive emails/watch videos/video chat*.
- (g) Give two reasons why Chantal took the cell phone to school.
Again candidates scored well on this question, although some were too imprecise as when, for example, they stated that Chantal wanted to *show off to people* when the correct answer was that she wanted to show the phone to her friends and make them jealous
- (h) What was Chantal doing when the cell phone rang?
Incorrect answers were rare for this question.
- (i) What reminder did the teacher give to Chantal?
Again the question was well answered. Candidates understood that cell phones were prohibited but instead of making it clear that this applied to the school premises/compound/building, some forfeited a mark by stating that they were banned in class or during a test.
- (j) Why was this situation embarrassing for Chantal?
This question challenged the candidate to synthesize the information in the passage. Candidates struggled to convey the reason for Chantal's embarrassment and in the process

included in their answers information that was not given in the passage, such as that Chantal was scolded by the teacher, disturbed the test because she was seated right in front of the teacher or was mocked by her friends for boasting. They were expected to give a full enough answer to be awarded the three marks allocated. However, a full response required more than simply relating the events of the story, and should have conveyed the information that this well-behaved student, in an attempt to show off her phone to her friends, broke the school rules and got into trouble.

Recommendations

Candidates must be reminded that they should draw inferences from the comprehension alone and beware of offering answers based on their personal experiences.

Candidates must note the marks allotted to a question and be guided as to the number of necessary elements required in their response.

Candidates must re-read their responses to ensure that they make sense in English and that no words are missing as this can distort the meaning.

Candidates should be encouraged to respond concisely in order to avoid ambiguity in their response.

Candidates must note that they will not gain marks for reproducing French words from the passage.

Paper 03 — Oral Examination

This paper assessed candidates' ability to (i) produce appropriate responses in the target language in a number of situations; (ii) read aloud a short passage in the target language; and (iii) respond in the target language to general questions based on four topics, School, Travel, Home and Family and Shopping. The same four topics were the themes of the reading passages, hence creating a natural flow from one task to another.

As in previous years, performance in the oral examination ranged from weak to excellent. This year examiners generally were not satisfied with the performance of candidates on the reading passages and suggested that more practice was needed in this area. Candidates' responses to the oral situations were generally adequate, despite some short responses and some vocabulary difficulties. However, there is still cause for concern when examiners stated that some candidates remained silent or responded with "*Je ne sais pas*" or "*I pass*" in this section of the examination.

The main challenge for candidates in the guided conversation was to produce accurate answers but candidates nevertheless acquitted themselves quite well overall in this section, and found the questions generally within their grasp.

Section I — Responses to Situations

In this section, candidates for the most part demonstrated that they were well prepared. They displayed a good degree of knowledge of the vocabulary required to communicate ideas appropriately and their responses tended to be adequate. Many candidates manipulated grammatical structures with some degree of accuracy and range of idiom. However, several lexical deficiencies were mentioned by the examiners who noted that candidates needed to learn how to rephrase their ideas whenever they encountered such a challenge. The following were problems frequently mentioned by examiners in their reports:

- Failure to express the French for elevator, luggage, refreshment, bill, computer, examination, repair
- Confusion of *visiter* and *rendre visite*, *travailler* and *marcher*, *il est chaud* and *il fait chaud*

- Difficulty giving simple instructions in French («*Fais-tu la lessive! » « '*Tu ne manges pas ici ! »)
- Difficulty with negation («*Ne probleme pas»)
- Noun/adjective and subject/verb agreement
- Object pronouns rarely correct (« *J'attendrai tu » « *Mon amie...a donné moi »)
- Confusion of *aller*, *avoir*, *faire* and *être*
- Errors of register, *tu* and *vous* in the same sentence
- Present tense used indiscriminately

However, examiners noted some excellent use of idiom and correct grammar in this section, such as:

- *Je veux que tu fasses la lessive*
- *Quelle coïncidence!*
- *Vous voudriez quelque chose à boire, mademoiselle?*
- *J'aimerais acheter cet ordinateur là-bas*
- *Ce qui m'a plu le plus, c'était...*

Section II — Reading Passage

Again this year most comments about the reading indicated that candidates found it to be the most challenging of the three sections. However, the passages did enable examiners to discriminate clearly between skilled readers with a good command of the sound system and those candidates who were unable to respond to the demands of reading a continuous passage. Examiners commented that many candidates struggled to show comprehension, fluency, correct intonation and even correct pronunciation of discrete sounds. Teachers may need to re-examine the amount of time and the methods used to foster good performance in this section.

The following were commonly mentioned as deficiencies:

- Anglicization and Hispanicization of words (*éducation, attractions, en, que*)
- Vocalization of final consonants and silent *-e* endings
- Careless errors, for example, *il* for *elle, un* and *une*
- Failure to produce common liaisons (*trois étages, en acier, ses ancêtres, deux ans*)
- Inability to render words unfamiliar to them (*paroisse, siècle, jusqu'à, accéder, Caraïbe, thèmes, prestigieuse, côte-est*)
- Erratic phrasing and lack of fluency

Section III — Guided Conversation

Performance by candidates ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory but on the whole examiners were satisfied with the level of comprehension of the candidates. Answers offered by the average and weaker candidates were appropriate but often limited to one sentence or an incomplete statement. However, it was reported that at many centres answers were well developed and a wide range of idiom was used.

The following areas can benefit from additional attention by teachers preparing candidates for the examination:

- The inversion form of questions
- Appropriate response to a question containing “on” (*Quels sont les sports qu'on pratique... ? *Je pratique...*)
- Questions beginning *Comment est... ?*
- *Raconte-moi, décris, explique...*
- *Taille, pointure, quartier, naïtre*
- Use of prepositions before towns and countries

Recommendations

Teachers are encouraged to continue exposing students to authentic samples of language and to simulate real-life situations in order to practise the target language. Students should also be discouraged from requesting many repetitions of a question and from offering one-word answers.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE**

JANUARY 2004

SPANISH

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SPANISH

GENERAL PROFICIENCY JANUARY 2004

GENERAL COMMENTS

The performance of candidates in the January Examination has improved in general and in Paper 2 in particular. All sections of this paper, but especially Sections II and III showed a better performance compared to previous years.

Students need to be exposed to a wide range of contexts which will familiarize them with the use of the language, as well as to produce the language to carry out different linguistic functions.

Teachers are encouraged to have their Candidates watch television programmes in Spanish, visit Spanish websites, speak with native speakers, read newspapers, magazines and a variety of materials which will help to build their communicative competence in Spanish.

DETAILED COMMENTS

PAPER 01 - MULTIPLE CHOICE

This paper is divided into two parts:

Part A - Listening Comprehension

Part B - Reading Comprehension

Sections 1, 2, and 3 are common to both proficiencies, while Section 4 has a common passage with separate questions for each proficiency. The four sections comprise 30 items.

The performance in this section was very pleasing as some candidates' results were outstanding, the majority performed satisfactorily and the performance of a few was weak. The most common problems were encountered with the following areas:

An asterisk () indicates wrong form, spelling or structure.*

- prepositions after verbs
- the subjunctive
- **ser** and **estar**
- preterite and imperfect
- problems with verb forms

There is indication that students need to work on verb forms, particularly verbs with different types of orthographic changes.

PAPER 2 - FREE RESPONSE

SECTION 1

Directed Situations (Writing)

This section required candidates to write information based on a situation which is given. There are 10 situations.

- 1. Your doctor is unable to see you but has asked you to send him a note, telling what is wrong with you. Write the brief note.**

This question was well answered by most candidates. Many knew and used **me duele, tengo dolor de...** Errors were noted when candidates needed to use **me duelen**. Also, some candidates used **duele** as a noun instead of **dolor**. In rare instances, some candidates misread the question and wrote the note from the doctor.

- 2. While your parents are out, you learn that something has happened on the other street and you rush to investigate. Write the note, which you leave for your parents explaining your absence.**

This question was fairly well answered. Most candidates stated where they had gone. The most frequent grammatical error was **fue** for **fui**, but the preposition **a** was omitted after **ir**.

- 3. You need to tell your father about the arrangement for picking you up from school. Write the text message you send to him on his cell phone.**

An asterisk () indicates wrong form, spelling or structure.*

The majority of the candidates produced a fairly good response to this item. Some difficulty was experienced with the appropriate word for “to pick-up”. Also some responses did not indicate clearly that it was an arrangement for pick-up from school.

4. Your doctor wants you to remember a specific instruction to care for your broken leg. What instruction does your doctor write?

Fair responses. Many candidates used **pie** instead of **pierna**. Commands were well done by most candidates.

5. Your neighbour invites you over to see something she has bought. Write the note you leave for your parents explaining the reason you are at your neighbour’s house.

This question was fairly well done. There were errors noted in sentences requiring the subjunctive “Mary wants me to see” - * **María quiere me ver** was written by most students.

6. You are unable to meet with your classmates to work on a science project at school. Write the e-mail message you send them apologizing for not being able to meet with them.

This question was well answered by the majority of the candidates.

7. A sign at the airport advises arriving passengers of a problem on the main road into town. Write what the sign advises them to do.

This question proved to be the most problematic for the candidates. Most wrote messages that suggested that the passengers were at the main road where the problem was and not at the airport. Relevant vocabulary also presented problems for the candidates.

8. Due to shortages, each customer at the supermarket will be allowed to purchase only a certain amount of a particular item. What does the sign say?

Many candidates demonstrated a lack of complete comprehension of the question and gave general responses about not buying many things, instead of “a certain amount of a particular item”.

An asterisk () indicates wrong form, spelling or structure.*

9. You went to the mall to shop, and found it was unexpectedly closed. Write the notice you saw, which informed customers of the date.

Fair only. Most candidates did not demonstrate knowledge of the passive - **se abrirá** and a number of errors were noted for the future tense. Many candidates did not give a re-opening date but a general time in the future – for example, next week.

10. Your friend who lives abroad offers to buy an article of clothing for you, but he or she has forgotten the details. Write the e-mail you send him or her of what you had written originally.

Fairly well done. Many candidates, however mentioned several items of clothing rather than one.

SECTION II

Letter/Dialogue/Composition

Candidates are provided with outlines which they use as a guide to write a letter/dialogue/composition.

It was heartening to see many candidates choosing the Dialogue on this occasion. The following errors were noted:

- * **Como estas?** - written without accents in both letter and dialogue and in addition * **¿y tu?** - without the accent.

The date in the letter was accompanied by long addresses. There appears to be a need for teachers to be standardized on what exactly is required here. Some candidates are still using words for the numbers themselves.

- * **el país** was often used for **el campo** - in both letter and composition
- * **mi abuela cumpleaños fiesta** - a very common error.
- * **una fiesta por mi tío**
- * **mi tios casa** - sometimes with, sometimes without apostrophe and **tío** without the accent

- * **era muy alegría** } for “was very happy”
- * **están muy alegría** }
- * **comencé** - for it began

An asterisk () indicates wrong form, spelling or structure.*

There were many instances of the omission of **para** - for example ***fui a la ciudad**
comparar

Additional errors included

- omisión of accent on **cómo**; **vacaciones**
- **estaba** or **estaban** instead of **eran**
- **su** instead of **sus** for example, ***como estaba su vacaciones**
- invariably, ***vacadiones** was spelt incorrectly
- ***enojado** - for enjoyed

SECTION III

Reading Comprehension

Candidates are required to read a passage in Spanish and write their answers in English to questions which are given in English.

Questions 1 - 4

Most candidates understood the information required to answer these questions and responded appropriately.

Question 5

In answering this question, many candidates mistakenly thought that the words **orgullosa** and **contenta**, referred to the uncle rather than to Rodolfo and therefore did not give the expected response.

Question 6

Very few candidates recognized that it was a motorcycle that Carlos had repaired for Ernesto. The others did not make the distinction between **la moto** and **el motor**.

An asterisk () indicates wrong form, spelling or structure.*

Question 7

Most candidates understood that Carlos had made a mistake, but some did not express their answers very clearly, which made it difficult to determine exactly what was meant.

SECTION IV

Expanded Paragraph

Candidates are required to connect the cues provided in a logical way, to produce a paragraph of 80 - 100 words.

Most candidates handled the section well. They seemed to have understood most of the cues and were able to use them appropriately.

Some common mistakes were as follows:

- Some candidates used **pasado** as a verb instead of an adjective.
- **aventurero** was written as ***adventurero**
- Some candidates used the cue **muchacho aventurero** for ***mucha aventura**.
- **premio** was misinterpreted by a number of candidates to mean ***primero** or **primo**.
- Several candidates wrote ***la hotel**.
- ***Haber** was used for **tener**.
- ***Gastar** used for **pasar**.
- ***Su vacaciones** instead of **sus vacaciones**
- **Enojar** used to mean to enjoy (***Han enojado...**)
- Errors in agreement, for example, ***mi familia decidieron/decicimose**
- **Ir de vacaciones** was expressed in a variety of incorrect ways.

PAPER 3 - ORAL EXAMINATION

This paper is divided into three sections.

1. Reading aloud
2. Responses to situations
3. Guided conversation

Fluency, instruction, use of appropriate vocabulary and grammatical accuracy are the areas of language usage tested.

An asterisk () indicates wrong form, spelling or structure.*

SECTION I

Reading Aloud

The Reports of Oral Examiners indicate that in general, there has been an improvement in this area of the paper. In reading passages aloud, a number of candidates' performance was outstanding, as they demonstrated their knowledge and ability through accurate pronunciation and phrasing of words. Discrete sounds were well pronounced. For the most part, other candidates read fairly well, with only a few being considered to have performed below average.

Some problems that were encountered included the following:

1. Anglicised pronunciation of **isla**
2. Placing of stresses on the wrong syllable in:
 - **imperio*** for **imperio**
 - **andina*** for **andina**
 - **cultivo *** for **cultivo**
 - **indígenas *** for **indígenas**
3. "h" aspirated in - **hispanas, habas, hermano**
4. Diphthongs not correctly pronounced - **aire, paisaje**
5. Confusion of **ñ** and n.

SECTION II

Responses to Situations

The performance in this section ranged from excellent to slightly below average. Excellent candidates exhibited commendable mastery of the language with grammar and oral skills being outstanding. Satisfactory candidates demonstrated occasional grammatical errors such as, agreement of adjectives, for example; **el próximo semana***, **la blusa bonito*** and some instances of hesitation.

Weaker candidates displayed problems with vocabulary, particularly with situation B(1) and (2); C 3(b); and D (4). A number of candidates lacked knowledge of the command form and were unable to produce alternative ways of expressing this. Others had difficulty with subject and verb agreements. Generally speaking, however, candidates seemed to have been fairly well prepared for this section.

An asterisk () indicates wrong form, spelling or structure.*

SECTION III

Guided Conversation

Some candidates displayed a high degree of comprehension and spontaneity in their responses. These candidates must be commended for excellent oral skills and for often expanding their responses by providing additional information and speaking with clarity and fluency.

Less outstanding candidates were not as fluent or spontaneous and their responses were very brief or curt. Complete sentences were sometimes not used and the use of idioms or more elaborate expressions were lacking.

A number of candidates seemed inadequately prepared and lacked appropriate vocabulary. A few candidates had problems responding to questions on Public Facilities. A small number of candidates answered too many responses with simply **sí** or **no** or had difficulty using object pronouns appropriately and past tenses accurately.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
JUNE 2004**

SPANISH

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**SPANISH
GENERAL AND BASIC PROFICIENCY EXAMINATIONS
JUNE 2004**

GENERAL COMMENTS

There were varying levels of performance which ranged from excellent to very limited this year. Some candidates demonstrated a good level of linguistic competence, spontaneity, fluency and accuracy.

It is important for candidates to be exposed to as many real-life situations as possible. Teachers are encouraged to find innovative and creative ways of making the learning of the difficult aspects of the language as enjoyable as possible. Learning through dramatization, simulations and other fun-filled activities facilitates much retention and the development of communicative and other skills.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Basic and General Proficiencies

Paper 1 – Multiple Choice

Paper 1 is a Multiple Choice paper divided into two parts: Part A – Listening Comprehension; Part B – Reading Comprehension.

Sections I, II and III in Part A are common to both proficiencies while Section IV is distinct. The four sections comprise 30 items.

Candidates performed well in Part A, Listening Comprehension, in this year's examination. All of the items were well within the competence of the majority of candidates.

Part B – The majority of candidates responded correctly to Sections I, III and IV where vocabulary and general reading comprehension are tested. However, Section II, where grammatical correctness is tested, has continued to be more challenging for candidates.

Paper 2 – Free Response

General Proficiency

Section I

Directed Situations (Writing)

In this section candidates were assessed on their ability to produce written responses to a series of real-life situations. The responses to 10 questions were assessed for appropriateness and accuracy of expression and were given 25 marks.

1. *Write the note which you leave for your parents reminding them of your brother's arrival time at the airport.*

Generally well done. Most responses made mention of the airport and specified a time of arrival. Some candidates tended to confuse the use of **recordar** and **olvidar** and several variations to the spelling of **aeropuerto** were encountered. Several candidates could not differentiate between **las (dos)** and **son las (dos)** / **de la tarde** and **por la tarde** with a stated time.

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect item.

Formation of the future tense and use of the appropriate person caused some problems. When **padres** was used to address parents the plural form was not used in many cases.

2. *A police officer visited your class and gave a talk on road safety. Your teacher has asked you to write an important instruction that he gave you. What does the instruction say?*

Sometimes the instructions had nothing to do with road safety. Sometimes instructions were implied rather than clearly stated, for example, **no beber** or **recuerde mirar a la izquierda y a la derecha**. Candidates used **abajo y arriba** instead of **ambos lados / en ambas direcciones / a la izquierda y a la derecha** / when giving directions for crossing the street. The **a** before **la derecha** and **la izquierda** was often left out after **mirar**.

Some candidates were able to use the negative command correctly – **No cruces, no cruce** for the verb **cruzar**. Good response(s): **Siempre use un paso de peatones cuando está yendo al otro lado de la calle.**

Many candidates gave instructions or made statements that made no reference to road safety, for example, **tenga / ten cuidado**. A few candidates used **después de** instead of **antes de**. Some also used the gerund after these prepositions rather than the infinitive or the subjunctive where appropriate.

For example:

- *antes de andando
- *antes de que cruzando
- *favor de no caminar en un grupo pero en una fila

While others wrote:

- se prohíbe correr en la calle
- no tome y conduzca
- no uses el teléfono celular cuando manejes

3. *You are participating in a competition on the internet and one question is asking you to state what impresses you most about your favourite teacher. Write your response.*

Most candidates were able to provide appropriate responses. However the use of the definite article when speaking about the specific person, noun-adjective concord, and **lo que** in the structure **lo que me impresiona ...** was absent.

Most responses describe a physical attribute or an aspect of the teacher's personality. Few made mention of an action. In most cases the teacher was **simpático/a**.

4. *You are staying in a guest house in Mexico and require clean clothes. Write the note you leave for the housekeeper with a request regarding your laundry.*

Some candidates made a statement rather than a specific request concerning the laundry. Again, structures for giving instructions were not capably handled.

Vocabulary posed problems. For example:

- *llavar / llevar for lavar
- *levantarse for coger / levantar
- *la lavandería for el lavado
- *porfavor for por favor

5. *Your parents want you to help more often with the household chores. Write the note in which you promise to do a particular chore everyday.*

Most responses did not include all three elements of 'making a promise' in conjunction with the future tense, identifying a specific household task and mentioning the time span given. The Present Tense was inappropriately used and for several candidates ***todo día, todo el día** served as alternatives for **todos los días** and **cada día**.

6. *While your little brother is out, you inspect two projects on which he is working. Write the note which you leave for him, comparing the two projects.*

Many candidates ignored the need for making an actual comparison of the two projects and merely provided a flat opinion about the quality of the products. **Bien** was often used for **bueno**; **mejor** was given a feminine form; ***más bien / bueno** for **mejor** and ***project** for **proyecto**. Candidates' inability to make comparisons gave cause for concern.

Many candidates did not know the correct spelling of **proyecto** and used ***projecto, *projeto** among others. Some candidates did not make any comparison.

This item posed serious difficulty although a few candidates gave very good responses.

Problems: Candidates often used ***el primero uno** rather than **el primero**, ***más bueno** rather than **mejor**. Many candidates did not know the vocabulary for projects and coined ***projecto**.

Good Responses: **El primero es excelente pero el segundo necesita más información.**
¡Qué pena! El primero es demasiado grande que el segundo.

7. *You discover that there is a problem with the elevator at your apartment building. Write the note which you place on the door to advise other users of the problem.*

Many candidates were unfamiliar with the Spanish for elevator. Many used ***El elevator** or avoided it totally. Distinction between **trabajar** and **funcionar** seemed unknown as many candidates used **no trabaja**. The incorrect position of **no** and use of **es** with the present participle was prevalent.

For example, ***es no trabajando / es no funciona / funcionar**. This was one of the more challenging situations and one of the few omitted.

The main error here was the use of the verb **trabajar** as opposed to **funcionar** as well as the use of the word elevator for **elevador** and **ascensor**.

Other problems were:

***Hay una problema con lo**
***Se prohíbe entrar el ascensor no funciona**
***No funcionaer el ascensor**

8. *You and your sister are invited to a birthday celebration but you decide not to attend. Write the brief apology you send with your sister.*

Most candidates provided fully appropriate responses. Explanations lacked originality and sense, as usual **mi mama está enferma / yo estoy enfermo/a** were overworked.

Problems arose when candidates attempted to merge the apology with the supporting clause and did not recognize the need for the omission of the **lo** and the inclusion of **que + subjunctive**. The use of **ser** for **estar** was widespread.

This was done fairly well but some candidates left off the apology and only stated why they could not attend the party. Many candidates did not use the preposition **a** after **asistir**. Many candidates also had problems with the use of **lo siento** and **siento que**.

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect item.

9. *While you are at the bus stop you find a diary. The owner has written a note in it with information on how to contact him/her, if it is found. What does the note say?*

Several candidates brought real-life experiences to the response and simply made reference to the name and telephone number that would normally be stated on the front page. They did not see the need for rewriting that information in their responses.

10. *Your friend is ill at home and you send him an e-mail. Write the message you send to cheer him up.*

Most candidates sent messages that expressed good wishes. There were a few who sent messages of ill will. Many candidates used the subjunctive quite well in expressing their wishes.

For example, **Espero que te sientas mejor con mi correo – electrónico, recuerda que Dios no nos permite sufrir ...**

General Comments

Candidates need to be reminded constantly that the key to success in this section is brevity. Too many marks are lost to clumsy, long-winded constructions that can be easily replaced with simple expressions that are learnt very early in the candidates' acquisition of Spanish.

Too often, candidates who possessed a good command of Spanish but made simple mistakes in spelling or agreement of adjectives and nouns received fewer marks for a question than very weak candidates.

Candidates should also be given practice in the art of reading the situations presented and detecting the elements requested. Even though some candidates understood what was required, they were unable to formulate responses that were grammatically accurate with the imperative, for example, questions 1, 2, 4, 7. In question 1, candidates who addressed both parents, often wrote **recuerda, recuerde**. In questions 2 and 7, the negative imperative was often written incorrectly ***No usa el elevador, no entra, no cruza**.

In number 6, the comparison requested posed problems. Some responses given were ***es más bueno que, es más mayor que, es más bien como**. There were also problems with giving an apology. There were many errors with **lo siento que** and **siento que + no** subjunctive.

Question 10 seemed to be the most open situation, as candidates' responses to this situation were most varied and far-fetched (often bordering on the ridiculous) but they were awarded marks whenever the expression was adequate.

- The first problem was the wide interpretation by candidates of certain situations – there is the need to read questions carefully to provide the response required.
- Candidates showed a general weakness with respect to basic vocabulary. For example, the verb to wash was rendered as ***llavar / llevar / levantar** by many candidates and clothes as ***las ropas**.
- Conjugation of verbs was a source of difficulty also, for candidates who were unable to render correctly the future tense or the command form – on many occasions the first person was used for the third person.
- Spelling of basic vocabulary was a problem for some candidates, for instance – the tilde **ñ** was missing in **señor**, as well as frequently left out or misplaced in **mañana**.
- Use of the infinitive after **antes de / despues de** seemed unknown to candidates as well as the correct use of the present participle, as in ***cuando cruzando / mirando antes tu cruces la calle**.

- Use of literal translation – for example, nouns used as verbs – ***yo necesidad / yo testamento / agua las plantas; reloj** for watch was used as a verb.
- Vocabulary – word for project – ***proyecto – izquierda** was frequently spelt wrong; the word for elevator was rendered as ***el elevator**.
- Spelling for numbers also caused some difficulty, for example, ***sies / viente**
- Use of double **s** especially in ***professor/a necessites**
- Use of **e** instead of **y** before **interesante / inteligente** seemed unknown to many
- Incorrect spelling of **inteligente, interesante, favorito, simpático, limpiar, preocupes**
- Agreement between nouns and adjectives – ***profesora -favorito / simpatico**
- Incorrect position of adjectives – ***mi favorito professor** but ***el proyecto primero**
- Inability to render *everyday* correctly written as ***todo el día** not to mention agreement problems – ***todas las días**
- Surprising inability to render name/address in Spanish – ***mi llamo es / vivo a**
- Use of **nombre** for **numero**
- Use of ***mirar por** – look out for
- Use of ***peder para – preguntar por**
- Candidates were unable to render comparisons correctly – **es – que / tan – como**
- Incorrect use of **bien / mal** as adjectives instead of **bueno / malo** accompanied by incorrect usage of **ser / estar**.

Section II

Letter, Dialogue, Composition

In this section the candidates' ability to produce written language demonstrating mastery of relevant vocabulary, idiom and language structure was tested, as well as the ability to express ideas clearly. The three options were the letter, the dialogue and the composition, each of which was marked out of 30.

There was an even distribution of responses to the letter / dialogue / composition – all items were equally popular, indicating a fair selection of questions offered to candidates. The majority of candidates who chose to do the letter were unfamiliar with the letter format. They disregarded the instruction given: Do NOT write your real name and address. Some misinterpreted this instruction and included a lengthy address. Most candidates continue to misspell **querida** as ***quierdo / quierido**. There was, however, an improvement this year in the appropriate expressions and language used in the opening sentences of the letter with many candidates writing correctly **deseo que / espero que** plus the subjunctive.

Many candidates who opted for the dialogue tended not to demonstrate mastery of language and wrote a series of responses to the situations presented.

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect item.

A high number of candidates demonstrated grammatical inaccuracy – particularly in the misuse of verbs (Preterite tense) thereby only producing fairly good or moderate responses. Some candidates were more comfortable using the imperfect tense accurately but inappropriately. Disagreement, particularly noun/adjective continues to plague their responses. The word **la gente** was frequently used with an inappropriate verb form. Too many candidates used ***las gentes** for (the people). Those who used **la gente** failed to remember to use the singular verb and failed also to make the appropriate agreement between noun and adjective used.

There were numerous examples of ***la gente son amables, agradables, interesantes, simpáticos, amistosos**. Also, very few candidates used the correct **e** (and) before **interesante, inteligente**.

It is disturbing that so many candidates still fail to make the correct agreement between subject and verb. There were numerous examples of: ***Yo fue, Yo come, Yo bebe**.

Orthographic errors in expressing in Spanish ‘tourist attractions’ were frequent. Very often it was ***tourista** and ***atracciones**.

Many candidates made no effort to use Spanish words (where possible) for some of the meals and drinks of the countries visited. The verb **ocurrir** was hardly spelt correctly. There was the constant misuse of the verb **gusta**. Many candidates did not know the Spanish for *singer, concert*.

Other grammatical errors observed included:

- i. Missing accents from the preterite: ***visite** for **visité**
- ii. Plural verbs used with collective nouns: ***la gente son**
- iii. **Querer** used with **a** and the infinitive: ***quiero a venir**
- iv. ***Porque de** for because of instead of: **a causa de**
- v. The pluralization of **ropa**: ***las nuevas ropas**
- vi. The use of **estar** for nationality: ***estoy Trinidadian**
- vii. **Y** instead of **e** before words beginning with **i**: ***y inteligente**
- viii. Adjective lacking agreement with nouns
- ix. Confusion in using appropriately **ser** and **estar**
- x. The anglicization of words in spelling: ***atracción** for **atracción**
- xi. ***Ir en** instead of **ir de**
- xii. Not enough familiarity with regular preterite forms ***bebe** for **bebí**; ***comé** for **comí**
- xiii. Lack of use of the subjunctive after verbs expressing emotion ***estoy contento que**; after verbs of wishing or wanting ***quiero tú venir** and with command forms both familiar and formal
- xiv. Switching between the use of the familiar and polite forms at will, especially in the dialogues; not understanding the appropriate use of the formal form
- xv. Lack of use of the personal **a**
- xvi. **Tener que** + infinitive: to have to
- xvii. **En** instead of **de** after superlatives
- xviii. Lack of familiarity with common irregular preterites in: ***fuemos**

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect item.

The candidates experienced difficulty moving logically from one element to the next. As a result, the letters and compositions at times appeared unbalanced. There was good use, however, of several descriptive adjectives.

Vocabulary seems to be a problem, even with some of the better candidates there was incorrect vocabulary usage. Some problem words were:

- ***veajo** for **viaje**
- ***bebe** for **bebida**
- ***llama** for **nombre**
- ***comido** for **comida**
- ***juego** for **jugo**
- ***sito** for **sitios**
- ***hermana** for **hija**
- ***tiempo** for **vez**
- ***campo** for **pais**
- ***pago** for **pasar**
- ***tu** for 'to'
- ***hueso** for **huevo**

Generally names of places and foods rendered in English accounted for a large part of the essay and sometimes did not leave scope for the language to flow.

Other errors were:

- ***Muy demasiado ...**
- ***Muy lindísima ...**
- ***Alli son ...**
- ***Ustedes son** for **hay**
- ***Las ropas**
- ***Y inteligente**

Use of adjectives – these were placed before nouns where they should not have been. Indefinite article **a** was often rendered in English.

Some candidates were unable to correctly use the Perfect Tense – ***Yo visitabo, nosotros comido. Tener** was used rather than **Haber** in some instances.

Too many candidates did not know the Spanish for *singer*. Their choice of words included ***contenta, canta, cantara, cantaría, canción.**

Candidates were quite creative in the manipulation of the Spanish they knew and produced items such as: ***A autobús con niños ¡cataplan! Con carro con la familia de ... Mexicano es interesante pupil, mucho cine y Mercado y playa; *Encendía esta muy bella mujer quien; *fui vando a Martinique; *Yo, soy porfavor, mi amo, es Candra Villanueva.** In response to the question, there were answers such as: ***Come te amo, hay esta un accidente quien ocurre en Colombia mi amiga esta canta nexto esta busto esta nada – este día en Colombia.**

Some words such as **interesante** were overused. Candidates need to be encouraged to widen their vocabulary and so make their work more interesting.

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect item.

Below are some misused words and phrases seen:

- ***Concierto libre**
- ***Juego de naranja**
- ***Muy mucho**
- ***El país es muy belleza**
- ***La familia sacan me a la playa**
- ***La gente son simpaticos**
- ***Ellos hace bebes y comes**
- ***Comerimos pollo**
- ***Excribro esta letra**
- ***Gracias para**
- ***Arena vs harina**
- ***Y ellos gustan ...**
- ***Frutas gustar naranja**
- ***Ahorra una familia (salvar)**
- ***Está muy multitud** for It was very crowded

Section III

Reading Comprehension

This question was intended to assess the candidates' ability to read and understand a continuous piece of writing in Spanish. Candidates were asked to respond in English to questions in English. This section was marked out of 15.

The passage in this section was found to be quite straightforward and the vocabulary items should have presented little difficulty for candidates at the General Proficiency level. The questions in English should have provided an adequate guide to the vocabulary to assist comprehension. Nevertheless many candidates did not capitalize on this. While English was not being evaluated here, the communication of ideas or responses needed to be more effective. Generally the candidates' performance ranged from fair to good with the best candidates scoring in the 13 - 15 range.

Question 1

This answer referred to the adjectives **mimada** and **egoísta** and the fact that Marisela had a lack of respect for others and expected that others would respect her. Differences in the regional dialects posed some degree of difficulty in the assessment, but responses were accepted if they conveyed the required ideas, for example, answers like *crude* and *out of order* were accepted.

Question 2

This question required reference to Marisela's lack of respect for others as well as her expectation that others respect her. Some candidates used other adjectives that were more relevant to Question 1 and failed to focus on the concept of respect. Most candidates gave only partial answers referring only to Marisela's lack of respect.

Question 3

This answer referred to the adjectives **entristecidos** and **preocupados**. Certain candidates interpreted **preocupados** as preoccupied with other things. The item **discutir** was not fully understood in the context used and few candidates understood that **entristecidos** and **se entristecieron** conveyed sadness.

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect item.

Question 4

This question required *her own monkey* as the answer. Many candidates did not understand the word **propio** in the context. Some interpreted the word as *proper* and *clean*. Answers regarding **mono** ranged from gorillas to apes and some candidates misinterpreted the word for **mano** (hand) and **dinero** (money). Others used general terms such as *animal* or *pet*. In addition some candidates thought Marisela wanted *to see, to buy* or *to visit* a monkey instead of to own one.

Question 5

This question required the concept of a *good lesson*. Many candidates responded with a partially correct answer to *teach her a lesson* – they did not qualify the lesson with the adjective. Others included the adjective *good* or gave an explanation of the lesson that implied the value of the lesson.

Question 6

This question required reference to the delivery of a gorilla to the house. Many candidates either failed to score on this item or only scored partial marks. Quite a number of candidates simply focused on the sentence: **Su papá hizo los arreglos con los guardianes del zoológico**; and ignored other details of the plan. Also they failed to include the idea of scaring Marisela. Many candidates misunderstood the entire plan and some thought Marisela would be placed in a gorilla's cage. Few candidates realized that the gorilla was to be delivered at home.

Question 7

This question required reference to Marisela's fright, the cause of her fright – the gorilla (instead of a monkey) and an opinion accompanied by a justification. Overall the majority of the candidates recognized Marisela's reaction but many did not explain it or justify their opinions.

The following are recommendations for teachers.

1. Teachers need to stress the importance of observing the instructions for this section, that is, responses should be in English.
2. Reading comprehension skills such as extracting relevant details, providing complete answers and the need for precision must be stressed.
3. Vocabulary in the target language should also be taught in the context of reading passages.
4. Teachers should remind candidates about the requirements of interrogatives, for example, *how* and *what*.
5. Teachers need to focus on the structure and language of responses. English grammar and spelling errors are **too** frequent, and improper use of the language can lead to distorted meanings. Students should also be dissuaded from using dialect and slang. English vocabulary is therefore also an area of concern.
6. The last question of this exercise requires candidates to interpret the information in the passage and make their own inferences. This usually carries three marks.

Section IV

Expanded Paragraph

This question, which was marked out of 20, tested the candidates' ability to write a continuous paragraph, using ten cues given in a logical, coherent, creative and accurate manner.

Responses this year were much better than in previous years. There were fewer 'No response' scripts and candidates were more confident about attempting the question.

Some candidates were able to produce paragraphs of an extremely high standard, replete with appropriate idiomatic expressions. In some cases, candidates disregarded the word limit and produced paragraphs over or under the limit. The scripts marked ranged from poor to fair, good and outstanding and it helped to re-emphasize the fact that more practice should be given to the candidates with regard to this section, in order for them to be able to produce paragraphs of an acceptable standard.

Many scripts however, were placed in the 0 – 8 score range indicating very clearly that those candidates' scripts lacked coherence and clarity. Cues were either used ineffectively or inappropriately, punctuated by poor or limited use of idioms, structures and vocabulary. The following comments and examples were indicative of this level of performance by candidates.

Grammar

- i. Inaccurate use of **por** and **para**
For example, ***Alfredo compró un traje por la graduación.**
***Dio los gracias para la ayuda.**
- ii. Omission of the Personal 'a', for example, ***La policía capturó el ladrón.**
***Invitó su amigo.**
- iii. Omission of preposition **en** after the verb **entrar** when the verb is followed by a noun.
For example, ***Entraron la tienda de departamentos.**
Omission of preposition **a** after verbs of motion, for example, ***Fue la graduación.**
***Vinieron mi casa.**
- iv. Failure to use the infinitive after prepositions such as **después de**, **antes de**, **al**
For example, ***Después de comió ...**
***Al entrando ...**
By extension, failure to use the infinitive after a common construction such as **tener que**.
For example, ***Así tuvo que va a la tienda de departamentos.**
- v. Inaccurate use of verb tenses demonstrated most frequently in the Imperfect and Preterite tenses, for example, ***Veía a un ladrón.**
***Mientras habló con su mama.**
- vi. Inaccurate use of adjectival phrases such as **día de graduación** and **traje de graduación** as candidates wrote ***graduación día** and ***graduación traje.**
- vii. By extension some candidates failed to produce accurate expressions of possession. For example, *Alfredo's graduation day* was rendered as ***Alfredo's graduación día.**

Another example that was rendered inaccurately was *Alfredo's mother* – ***Alfredo's mama.**
Candidates wrote the apostrophe 's' to denote possession.
- viii. Inaccurate use of **ser** and **estar**, for example, ***estaba un ladrón** and ***era caminando.**
Some scripts reflected the inability by candidates to use **fue/fueron** plus the past participle.
For example, *the thieves were captured* was rendered as ***los ladrones estaban capturan.**

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect item.

Many candidates failed to produce the Imperfect tense of **estar** plus a past participle to indicate a state resulting from an action.

For example, *the suit was damaged* was written as ***el traje era destrozado**.

Some candidates failed to use the Preterite tense of **ser** plus a past participle to indicate that an action was performed by an agent.

For example, *the suit was destroyed by the dog* was written as ***el traje fue destrozado por el perro**.

The lack of this knowledge resulted in the indiscriminate use of **ser** and **estar**.

- ix. Spelling and accentuation were identified as areas of weakness in most scripts. Inaccurate spelling of words and inaccurate use or omissions of accents were dominant errors in even the more proficient scripts. In many instances, one word contained both types of error. For example, ***graducion**, ***landron**.
- x. Subject-verb agreement
Many candidates used a plural verb with the subject **la policía**, **todo el mundo**
For example, ***la policía capturaron**.

Vocabulary

In many cases, candidates lacked knowledge of words contained in the cues such as **destrozado**, **robo anteayer** and as a result produced inappropriate statements such as:

***Alfredo fue a comprar un traje destrozado**

***La policía capturó al robo**

***Anteayer y Alfredo fueron a comprar ...**

***Alfredo quería comprar un robo para la graduación.**

Traje was inappropriately used as a verb.

For example, ***Traje comida a la graduación**.

Use of Idioms

A few scripts by the more competent candidates contained idioms such as:

En un abrir y cerrar de ojos

En un dos por tres

With respect to the rubrics for the expanded paragraph it should be stated clearly that:

1. Candidates should NOT underline the cues in their scripts. This creates difficulty for the marker when underlining errors to obtain a clear visible assessment. It becomes even more difficult when candidates underline the cues in pencil.
2. Cues can be used in any order.
3. Candidates can change the order of cues so as to facilitate flexibility in the use of grammatical structures.

Sample Script

This script was excellent. It gained full marks of 10.

Viernes, el 17 de junio, 2003

Queridísimos papá y mamá:

Por fin tengo un oportunidad de escribirles. ¡Va sin decir que les extraño mucho! ¡Ojalá que pudieron venir conmigo a Trinidad! Desde el primer día, me sentí a gusto aquí las gente sumamente cordial. Es fácil trabar amistad con todo el mundo.

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect item.

Hasta ahora, visité muchos sitios turísticos incluso el pantano Caroni, el volcán de lado a Devil's Woodyard y la playa Maracas. Trinidad es un país encantador - ¡parece ser un pedacito de Paraíso! Mañana, vamos a visitar la casaca Maracas - ¡no puedo contenerme!

Como saben, soy muy tiquismiquis en cuanto a la comida. Probé muchas comidas locales pero lo que más me gustaron fueron el pollo condimentado con cari. Aquí ¡la comida es para chuparse los dedos! Probé muchos platos condimentados con cari, y algo que se llama "pelais". También tomé una bebida local "sorrel" ¡Qué exótica!

Muchas días ... me di cuenta de que no había traído mi dinero. ¡Qué impedimenta! Pues, necesito salir. Salúdenme a todo el mundo.

Abrazo y besa de

The following script was also very good but was penalised for being too long. This scored 9+.

Por una competencia

Las vacaciones del verano habían llegado ya. Por toda la aldea se oían los rumores de la gran competencia de baloncesto. Mis amigos y yo habíamos salido a practicar mucho las últimas semanas y así se había demostrado en la cancha. Fuimos las ganadoras de la competencia y además de un crucero por el Caribe. Todas nos pusimos muy contentas y enseguida fuimos a casa a empacar porque esa misma tarde partía el bote. Me aseguré de nada me faltara. Mi cepillo dental, almohadas, ropa, y sobre todo, la foto de mis papás. No sabiendo que nos esperaba, me bañé y mis papas le llevaron al muelle donde partiría el bote.

Allí, me encontré con mis amigos, me despedí de mis papás, y me subí felizmente. Cuando entramos al salón principal, vimos a todos los jugadores de los Lakers de Norte América y brincamos de alegría. Ellos jugaron y jugaron aquella noche con nosotras. Hasta que la última gota de energía se consumió de nuestros cuerpos, fuimos a darnos el caliente y a la cama.

Paper 3 – Oral Examination

General Proficiency

Section I

Reading Aloud

A significant number of candidates performed exceptionally well on this section, pronouncing vowels, vowel combinations and consonants correctly. Among other candidates the performance ranged from good to weak. Except for the very weak candidates, in general, it was evident that there was comprehension of the passages based on the phrasing and grouping of words and observation of punctuation and the level of fluency with which candidates read. The main difficulties encountered with pronunciation were in the following areas:

- i. Incorrect stress on words such as: **geográfica, mediodía, Táchira, cultivó, además, region**
- ii. **g** before **i** and **e**
- iii. Vowel diphthongs such as **ciu**, in **ciudad** rendered as **cuídad**, **ae** in **aeropuerto**, **au** in **fauna**
- iv. **i** sound rendered as **e** in some cases
- v. The omission of syllables in long words such as **panamericana** rendered as ***paramérica**
- vi. **Ll** as in **cordillera**
- vii. **cc** in **occidental, sección**, incorrectly pronounced

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect item.

Section II

There was some outstanding candidate performance in this section. The performance of others ranged from good to weak. Many candidates were creative in their use of the vocabulary to answer questions. In the case of weaker candidates their performance was affected by limited vocabulary. Some candidates were content with responding with **sí** or **no** which was not adequate.

Section III

Many candidates readily understood the questions and provided good responses, showing creativity, spontaneity and accuracy. However, there were those candidates who experienced difficulty responding to questions that required them to give their opinions. The topic Daily Routine is a basic one and candidates at this level should have less difficulty responding to these questions than is indicated.

In some cases, responses were appropriate but lacked fluency and at times vocabulary was limited. The main areas that presented challenges were:

Daily Routine

Question 4

Public Facilities

Question 8

1. The question **¿Qué le gusta comprar a tu papá?** was also misinterpreted.
2. **¿Pertenece a un club?** was also challenging.

Points to Watch:

1. Candidates should be trained to provide additional information after stating **sí** or **no**.
2. Vocabulary items like **pertenecer, almacén, equipo, barrio, tipo, sitio, lugar, sellas**, should not be treated as low frequency words.
3. Candidates must be taught an extensive list of idioms and words which fall under the topic.
4. Candidates should be given practice in listening to authentic Spanish to improve their intonation and fluency.

Basic Proficiency

Paper 2 – Free Response

Section I

Directed Situations

The objective of this section of the paper is to test candidates' ability to produce short, written responses to a series of 10 real-life situations. The responses are assessed for appropriateness and correct linguistic expression and are awarded a total of 15 marks. This section parallels Section I of the General Proficiency paper and there are 5 situations in common – Questions 1 - 5 on the General Proficiency and Questions 6 - 10 on the Basic Proficiency.

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect item.

Situation 1

Write the congratulatory note you send to your older sister who has just had a baby.

Many candidates could not express ‘congratulations’ in Spanish and some of those who knew an appropriate word, spelled it incorrectly. Some candidates wrote: **Enhorabuena** as three separate words. Several candidates used ***con** after **felicitaciones / felicidades**.

Situation 2

Your aunt sends you a very special gift on your birthday. Write the note in which you enthusiastically thank her.

Some candidates missed the aspect of ‘enthusiastically’ and merely wrote **gracias** instead of **muchas / mil gracias**. Frequently ***para** was used instead of **por** to express thanking someone for something, for example, **Gracias tía *para el regalo**.

Situation 3

You receive an e-mail from your new pen-pal who plans to visit you, requesting information about the weather conditions in your country. Write your brief reply.

The majority of candidates did not use an expression with **hacer**. Some who did, used ***muy** instead of **mucho** to qualify the weather condition, for example, **hace *muy frío**. A very popular incorrect response was: **Es muy caliente**. It was evident that candidates had problems using **llover** correctly.

Situation 4

Your pen-pal from Argentina is coming to visit you but is worried that he/she may not recognise you. Write the e-mail message you send to your pen-pal describing what you will be wearing to the airport.

Almost all candidates understood that the question required a description of clothing but there were several grammatical errors in the responses. Only a few gave physical descriptions of themselves. The verb **llevar** was frequently omitted completely, or **tener** used instead by some candidates. Position and agreement of adjective-noun were the cause of most errors, for example, ***verde pantalones, *rojo zapatos**. Some candidates resorted to English when they were unable to express their ideas in the target language or anglicised the spelling, for example, ***blousa** for **blusa**. Following is an example of a very good response:

Yo llevaré una blusa roja, una mini-falda negra y zapatos negros.

Situation 5

You will not be attending music class. Send a brief note to the music teacher explaining the reason for your absence.

Those candidates who tried to express ‘music class’ had difficulty and did not use the construction with ‘**de**’. The question was, in general, well done, but the **ser / estar** problem was evident as some candidates wrote, for example, ***soy enferma** or **mi mamá *es enferma**. Another common error was ***attender/ *atender/*attendir** for **asistir a**.

Situation 6

Write the note which you leave for your parents reminding them of your brother’s arrival time at the airport.

Candidates had difficulty using the verb **llegar**, and incorrect forms such as ***es llegando** were seen. Those who did not know **llegar**, used the English verb ‘to arrive’. The preposition ‘**a**’ was frequently replaced with the incorrect ***en** after **llegar** so: ***Felipe es llegando en el aeropuerto**. Difficulty in expressing time was also evident in the use of ***en la mañana** instead of **de la mañana**. Instead of **a las tres**, several candidates wrote ***son las tres**, to express the time at which the brother was arriving.

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect item.

Situation 7

A police officer visited your class and gave a talk on road safety. Your teacher has asked you to write an important instruction that he gave you. What does the instruction say?

There was a wide variety of responses for this situation. However, many candidates had difficulty when they tried to use the command form of the verb. Some used the infinitive instead, which was accepted. Some candidates expressed something they thought should not be done in general, but did not link it to a traffic / road situation, for example, ***no fumar, no toma, no beber**.

Situation 8

You are participating in a competition on the Internet and one question is asking you to state what impresses you most about your favourite teacher. Write your response.

Noun-adjective agreement and the position of the descriptive adjective were the most prevalent errors, for example, **Mi profesor es *simpática, mi *favorito profesora**. Spelling also created problems and there were several instances of **ss** and **ll** when there should have been a single consonant, for example, ***profesora** and ***intelligente**. There were some inappropriate responses from candidates who tried to express their ideas literally, for example, ***Ella es siempre mirando bien** (She is always looking good).

Situation 9

You are staying at a guesthouse in Mexico and require clean clothes. Write the note you leave for the housekeeper with a request regarding your laundry.

Here again, expressing a command / request proved challenging for candidates. Some used the infinitive. There was obvious confusion between **lavar** and ***llevar**, some candidates even using ***llevarse**. **Ropa** was often used in the plural form, which was penalised. Some candidates used the adjective ***nueva** instead of **limpia** to express clean clothes. A good response was: **Puedes lavar mi ropa, por favor**.

Situation 10

Your parents want you to help more often with the household chores. Write the note in which you promise to do a particular chore every day.

There was a wide variety of responses to this situation but many candidates failed to include the requirement of every day. ***Llavar** for **lavar** (to wash) was frequently seen. An example of a good answer was: **Yo prometo limpiar mi cuarto cada día**.

It is recommended that candidates avoid writing unnecessarily lengthy responses as there is the risk of making more errors.

Section II

Questionnaire

This section has as its objective to test candidates' comprehension by having them complete a multiple-choice questionnaire in Spanish, after reading information in English based on a practical situation. This section is worth 10 marks.

Most candidates performed well on this section, in particular on questions 1, 3, 7 and 10. Questions 2 and 9 proved most challenging for candidates, possibly because they had to produce numbers. Candidates seemed not to know **pescado** (fish) and selected **pollo** (chicken) instead.

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect item.

Section III

Gapped Passage

This section requires candidates to complete gaps in a passage of continuous prose in Spanish with items which require a knowledge of vocabulary and/or grammar. This section is worth 10 marks.

Item #1

Very few candidates wrote the correct form, **caribeñas**, which had to agree with **islas**. There was a variety of versions both in English and Spanish.

Item #2

Here again many candidates did not address the form of the word required, for example, there was no agreement between subject and verb.

Item #3

Few candidates supplied the correct form **nadan**. Many opted for the infinitive or used a completely different incorrect verb.

Item #4

Students were very creative in producing variations that do not exist, of the verb **ir**, for example, ***iraba**, ***vayaba**, ***irgo**.

Item #5

The majority of candidates used **saber**, which was correct, only few used ***conocer**. However, they had difficulty with the imperfect tense of the verb and wrote several unacceptable variations of different tenses.

Item #6

The majority of candidates had the correct answer but some spelled the word with ‘**rr**’, so they produced the word “dog” instead of “but”. **Sino** appeared occasionally.

Item #7

Most candidates had the correct answer for this item, but some used the masculine form ***mucho** which did not agree with the feminine noun **agua**. Others used ***mucho de** or ***muy de**.

Item #8

There was obviously confusion for the candidates between **desde** and **de**, with several using ***desde**. Some of those who used **de**, detracted from their response by adding the definite article so there were responses such as ***del** / ***de la** / ***de los**.

Item #9

Very few candidates wrote **los** or **nuestros**. The majority used the incorrect part of speech, in particular a subject or object pronoun such as **nosotros** or **nos**.

Item #10

This was well done in general except for spelling errors. Frequently, **g** was written for **j**, so we saw ***narangas** instead of **naranjas**.

Section IV

Reading Comprehension

This section had 2 parts, A and B, based on different advertisements. Candidates performed very well in general on both sections, but there were instances of responses in Spanish rather than in English, contrary to the instructions. There are 10 marks for this section.

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect item.

Section A

Question 1

Instituto was taken to mean Institution instead of Institute. Some candidates reversed the position of the adjective in English, applying the Spanish rule, and wrote ***Institute Modern**.

Question 2

Candidates had problems writing intermediate and provided a variety of answers.

Question 3

This posed no problem for candidates.

Questions 4, 5

Many candidates gave the range of hours / days instead of the number of hours / days required by the questions. For Question 5, ***jueves** was incorrectly interpreted to be *Friday*.

Question 6

Most candidates knew the correct answer, but some put that **Sr. Málaga** could be contacted at his website, rather than at his e-mail address.

Section B

Questions 1, 2

In general these posed no problems for candidates. However, for Question 1, a few candidates thought the apartments were for sale, not rent.

Question 3

Candidates could easily identify the amount of money for rental charges, but some assumed that there was a special offer just for the month of September.

Question 4

The vast majority of candidates answered this question correctly. A small number thought interested persons should visit the office, rather than phone.

Basic Proficiency

Paper 3

Section I

Reading Aloud

There were some outstanding performances, but generally the reading ranged from good to weak. In general, candidates showed a knowledge of the sound system, but there were some errors in pronunciation and stress.

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect item.

i and e sounds were confused in the following words:

	viene
lee	aíre
siesta	apellidos
palmaditas	sierra

The stress was incorrectly placed on words such as **orígenes, físico, símbolo**. Several cognates were anglicised such as **arquitectura, diferentes, mayor profesionales, hispanos, título, prestigio, sociedad**.

Some consonants presented problems for some candidates – **c, h, z, j, ll**

Section II

Responses to Situations

Candidates' performance ranged from being fair to satisfactory with a few exceptionally good ones. For the most part, responses were accurate but there were instances of grammatical inaccuracies.

Section 3

Guided Conversation

Performance in this section varied. There were some cases of candidates who demonstrated fluency, while the majority fell in the fair to weak range.

There was some difficulty with guided comprehension, for example:

Vocabulary for **aeropuerto, deportes, fin de semana, talla, almacén, equipo**.

Pronunciation

Most vowels correctly pronounced

orígenes	problematic
viajado	correctly pronounced

h in **hispanicas** varied and not always silent

Intonation

Anglicised cognates and poor intonation for the following words:

Arquitectura diferetes mayor profesionales hispanos

Some candidates understood questions well and responded readily while others struggled as a result of limited grammar and vocabulary which affected comprehension. Questions which included **¿cuál?** and **¿cuáles?** proved difficult for many candidates. A number of candidates responded only with **sí** or **no** without providing additional information.

Points to Watch:

1. Candidates should be trained to provide additional information after stating **sí** or **no**.
2. Candidates must be taught an extensive list of idioms and words which fall under the topic.
3. Candidates should be given practice in listening to authentic Spanish to improve their intonation and fluency.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE**

JANUARY 2005

SPANISH

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SPANISH

GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATIONS

JANUARY 2005

GENERAL COMMENTS

The performance of candidates on Sections I, II and III continues to be better than that on Section IV. This suggests that there is much need for students to be assisted with the acquisition of vocabulary.

Candidates who performed well show commendable levels of competence and managed to use the language with creativity and fluency in all four sections.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper I – Multiple Choice

This paper is divided into two parts – Part A: Listening Comprehension and Part B – Reading Comprehension. Each section comprises 30 items.

PART A - Listening Comprehension

Candidates are required to respond to items read aloud in Spanish by:

- (i) Choosing the correct option from a list of four pictures in a series.
- (ii) Answering or completing sentences read twice.
- (iii) Answering questions based on public announcements.
- (iv) Answering questions in English based on a continuous passage.

Some of the main difficulties include: the lack of vocabulary, unfamiliarity with some idioms such as **menudo, de puntillas, de rodillas, a prueba de.**

An asterisk (*) denotes wrong form, spelling or structure.

PART B - Reading comprehension

Items in this section are grouped under the categories – Vocabulary, Grammatical Structure and Reading Comprehension.

The choices made by students revealed guessing in some cases. However, there were some good responses, some items were not properly answered.

Candidates need to be equipped with a wide range of verbs and other vocabulary for them to do well in the situation with the visual stimuli.

Paper 02 – Free response

Section I

This section of the paper tests candidate's ability to perform specific linguistic functions. Candidates are given ten real-life situations and are required to produce the/a response, which would be used in each situation. Responses are assessed for accuracy and appropriateness and are awarded a total mark of 25. If the response includes all elements in the situation, and adequately communicates meaning, it is marked out of five. If the response is partially appropriate, meaning that it adequately communicates meaning but does not include all elements in the situation; it is marked out of three. The performance in this section was mainly in the 15 – 20 range. This was good. Very few candidates scored below the 3 – 5 range. The functions tested this year were apologizing, expressing disagreement, complaining, explaining, informing, instructing, suggesting and responding to a query.

Overall, the questions were fairly well handled by the majority of the candidates. Although, a minority had difficulty with basic vocabulary such as **tener que**, **hablar** versus **decir**, there was generally good use of idiomatic expressions, object pronouns and exclamations.

Question 1 – Apologizing

Many candidates received a partial score as they apologized but did not say for what they were apologizing.

An asterisk (*) denotes wrong form, spelling or structure.

Question 2 – Disagreeing

This was fairly well handled. The candidate error was “No dogs” rendered ***No perros.**

Question 3 – Complaining

A number of candidates did not state what the problem was and therefore their responses were partially correct.

Question 4 – Explaining

This question was handled very well for the most part.

Question 5 – Informing

This question was fairly well done. Some candidates did not mention what the item was that was taken from the house. Some candidate spelt ***proyecto** as **projecto**, also ***accidente** for **accidente**.

Question 6 – Advising and informing.

This question was well answered.

Question 7- Suggesting

Responses to this question were fair. In most answers, where the subjuncture was required, it was not used, for example, ***Sugiero que practica** instead of **practique**.

Question 8 – Explaining

This question was well done.

Question 9 – Replying

This question was fairly well done.

Question 10 – Instructing

Many candidates did not seem to know **al día** and so quite a few used **tiempos** for example, **dos tiempos** for **dos veces**.

An asterisk (*) denotes wrong form, spelling or structure.

In some cases candidates used a mixture of polite and familiar forms for the command in the same response, for example, ***tome tu medicine.**

Section II

Letter, Dialogue, Composition

The purpose of this section is to test candidates' ability to write coherent, grammatically correct and appropriate paragraphs relating to specific situations; using a range of vocabulary and idiomatic expression. Candidates are expected to develop the main points provided, in a clear, coherent Spanish.

Letter

Most candidates who attempted this question used the correct format. However, there was a tendency to for some to mix formal and informal register, for example, beginning with Snra. or Snr. and then using tú. Some candidates continued to use and address.

Dialogue

This question was attempted by more candidates this year than is the custom with the January examinations. There was a mixture of good and moderate dialogues. Weaker candidates demonstrated difficulty with vocabulary – especially “waiter” – **camarero**.

Composition

This section was fairly well done. Only one candidate did not attempt Section II. This is commendable.

Common errors in this Section:

haber – used for **tener** for example ***he ir a casa,**

bienvenido – used as a verb

gracias used as a verb

Por favor written as one word

An asterisk (*) denotes wrong form, spelling or structure.

***tabla**/table for **mesa**

cita – for – **sitio**

***tratar** – for **probar**

***jenero** for **enero**

***muy mucho**

***yo amo tú**

***mesa por dos**

queda for **estancia**

***una otra**

***gracias para** for **gracias por**
cuando llegado for **cuando llegar**

Section III

The reading comprehension tests candidates' ability to read and comprehend Spanish. Responses are written in English, as language is not being tested here.

The majority of candidates' marks fell in the 7 – 10 range. This performance while being fair can be improved. Candidates need to be given more practice with comprehension.

Question 1

Some candidates did not know the word *vuelo* and thought the incident occurred on a boat or ship rather than on an airplane.

Question 2

Very few candidates used the word 'cockpit' in their answer.

Question 3

Some candidates did not explain that the co-pilot had fainted but just said that he was not feeling well.

Question 4

Most candidates responded appropriately to this question.

An asterisk (*) denotes wrong form, spelling or structure.

Questions 5 and 6

Most candidates had a partial response to these questions, which required more than one element for a complete answer.

Question 7

Most candidates seemed to have understood the problem but some did not express clearly that Dr Gonzales was a doctor of Mathematics and not a medical doctor.

Section IV

Expanded Paragraph

The purpose of this section is to test candidates' ability to produce a coherently written report by connecting cues provided in a logical way. Candidates score marks for accurate use of grammar, content coherence and clarity.

The main difficulty encountered with this question was vocabulary. Although the words used are high frequency words, some presented problems to candidates: **primera cita**.

Cada al rio – this cue was particularly problematic so candidates were unable to use it in the normal form.

Bien vestibles – was used as **buenos vestidos**

Risas was used as a verb.

Paseo en bote – was used as a verb.

The highest score for this question was 18 and the majority scored in the three to five range.

Paper 03 – Oral Examination

This paper comprises three sections:

- (i) Reading aloud,
- (ii) Responses to situations,
- (iii) Guided conversation.

An asterisk (*) denotes wrong form, spelling or structure.

Comments on Section I

This section tests candidates' ability to read aloud and pronounce discrete sounds: vowels, consonants accurately. Candidates are also expected to intone accurately and possess overall fluency in reading.

The performance ranged from moderate to outstanding. Only one case of very limited performance was reported. Generally, candidates demonstrated a sound knowledge of pronunciation system and were able to read with good intonation.

There were several candidates however, who transferred anglicised sounds to the Spanish. These included:

barrio, Aires, Portero, enriqueció, Europa, riqueza, guerra, celebra, figurillas, antibióticas, medinales, tecnológicos, farmacias, espectáculos, remedios.

The sound of the following letters was also very problematic – **ii, u, gi.**

Recommendations

A wide range of activities should be done in class to aid candidates in developing their listening skills. Candidates should be encouraged to watch television talk shows and to listen to radio programmes in Spanish.

Section II

The performance of candidates in this section was mainly in the satisfactory to outstanding range. For the most part, candidates generated correct responses. Different abilities in the control of grammatical structure and knowledge of vocabulary accounted for the performance of weaker candidates. Some candidates did not know the difference between **regresar** and **develouer**. The imperative also presented difficulty for some candidates.

Some communicative functions presented problems for weaker candidates and even for some whose performance was good. These were:

An asterisk (*) denotes wrong form, spelling or structure.

- (i) making a suggestion,
- (ii) giving directions and
- (iii) making an offer.

Section III - Guided conversation

The majority of candidates were rated good, as they were able to understand the questions asked. Other candidates seemed ill at ease with some of the vocabulary used in this section. Words such as: **opinas**, **lugar**, **admiras** and **jarte** were not known.

There were also candidates who demonstrated limited facility with areas of structure, lexis, general fluency and spontaneity. These candidates spoke haltingly and made constant requests for questions to be repeated.

Recommendations

Practice of listening skills through the use of the tape recorders, compact disk players, radio, television, with sounds, dialogue, listening comprehension can be effective ways of reducing these problems.

Some useful reminders:

1. Addresses are not to be written when writing letters only the date is to be written.
2. The numbers in dates are to be stated in figures for example, **el 29 de enero de 2005**.
3. Teachers may ask for assistance from CXC with particular questions for example, workshops.
4. Candidates should keep responses to situations concise, as longer responses tend to have more errors.
5. Teach candidates synonyms for nouns, verbs and expressions.
6. Encourage candidates to use the language both inside and outside of the classroom.

An asterisk (*) denotes wrong form, spelling or structure.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
JUNE 2005**

SPANISH

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**SPANISH
GENERAL AND BASIC PROFICIENCY EXAMINATIONS
JUNE 2005**

GENERAL COMMENTS

There were varying levels of performance which ranged from excellent to very limited this year. Some candidates demonstrated a good level of linguistic competence, spontaneity, fluency and accuracy.

It is important for candidates to be exposed to as many real-life situations as possible. Teachers are encouraged to find innovative and creative ways of making the learning of the difficult aspects of the language as enjoyable as possible. Learning through dramatization, simulations and other fun-filled activities facilitates much retention and the development of communicative and other skills.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Basic and General Proficiencies

Paper 1 – Multiple Choice

Paper 1 is a Multiple Choice paper divided into two parts: Part A – Listening Comprehension; Part B – Reading Comprehension.

Sections I, II and III in Part A are common to both proficiencies while Section IV is distinct. The four sections comprise 30 items.

Paper 2 – Free Response

General Proficiency

Section 1

Directed Situations (Writing)

Performance on this paper was generally quite good. Many candidates were able to score above half of the allocated 25 marks. It was noted that many candidates who performed badly on the other three questions, made marks that were quite satisfactory on this question. Below, is a breakdown of performance and comments on the individual questions.

Situation 1

You go to a sports shop for a special item but you do not find it. Write a note to the manager who is not there, requesting the item.

- a . Many candidates requested items that may not be at a sports shop and lost marks for failing to put the word **deportivo** after the item.

- b . Some candidates did not make a direct request and therefore lost marks. E.g. Señor gerente tiene un bate de cricket.
- c . Students must remember that the article **el** or **la** is not needed when speaking to or writing directly to a person. E.g. *El señor John me gustaría tener unos pantalones de cricket.
- d . Many candidates were unable to produce appropriate vocabulary for items found in a sports shop. However, most were able to use the function of requesting.

Situation 2

While you are at the gym, you get a text message from your friend with information about the venue for the meeting you had arranged. Write the text message you receive.

- a . Many candidates used the verb 'estar' instead of 'ser' to say where the meeting would be. E.g. *La reunión está en el colegio.
- b . Many candidates wrote the time the meeting would be held without putting a venue and therefore obtained no marks. E.g. *La reunión es a las dos.
- c . Some candidates reminded others of the meeting without putting a venue. E.g. Chica, por favor recuerda la reunión planificada.
- d . Many candidates did not mention anything about the venue. Responses like ¿Dónde está ..? and 'Gracias por la información' were quite common. Most candidates were not able to use **en** for 'at'. Rather they used *'al cine', *'al restaurante'. Candidates used **estar** instead of **ser** meaning **to take place**.

Situation 3

The elevator in the hospital is out of order. What does the notice advising you of this say?

- a . Many candidates used the verb **trabajar** instead of **funcionar**. Some candidates spelt **funcionar** incorrectly. E.g. El ascensor no ***funcionar**.
- b . The word **ascensor** was incorrectly spelt. E.g. ***Asensor no está trabajando**.
- c . Most candidates scored marks for this question. However, candidates were not able to use the negative commands appropriately. Many instances of ***fuera de orden**, ***no en servicio** were found.

Situation 4

You are on holiday overseas when you hear that your mother has won an award. Write the e-mail message you send to congratulate her.

This situation was fairly well done, although many candidates spelt the word **felicitaciones** incorrectly e.g. ***felitaciones**.

Situation 5

You have been admiring a classmate and wish to let him/her know how you feel. What do you write in the Valentine's Day card you send?

- a. The verb **gustar** was incorrectly used, as most candidates are accustomed to using the singular ending **gusta** and therefore could not visualize **gustas**. E.g. ***me gusta tú** instead of **me gustas tú**. The sentence ***yo amor tu** was also quite frequent, also ***tu me gusta me** / ***mi me gusta tu mucho**.
- b. There were instances where candidates simply put ***Feliz día du su valentín** with no indication of admiration for the person.

Situation 6

Your aunt sends you an e-mail inviting you to a concert. Write a note declining the invitation.

- a. This situation was done quite well. However, many candidates forgot to apologize. E.g. **lo siento**, or **gracias** before giving the reason for declining the invitation.
- b. Some candidates did not read the situation carefully and simply thanked the aunt for the invitation but did not decline.

Situation 7

You are very concerned about the environment but your friend is not. Write a note suggesting to him something he can do to improve the environment.

- a. Many candidates had some very good answers although the vocabulary *environment* which was not really needed but used as the English word e.g. ***environnemente** instead of **ambiente**.

Some good answers included: **No tires la busura en el suelo.**
Limpia tu barrio.

Students must also remember that they need to maintain the different registers of **tú** for friends. **Ud** for adults.

- b. The use of the command form needed here was badly done.

Situation 8

There is a shortage of gasoline in your country and its purchase is being controlled. Write the notice informing the public about the amount they are allowed to purchase.

- a. Many candidates did not read the situation well and therefore did not notice *the amount they are allowed to purchase*, and wrote. E.g. ***Compra poca gasolin**. They also failed to use the polite form of the command.
- b. It was disappointing to note how few candidates used the word for gasoline accurately. Different versions such as ***gas**, ***aceite**, ***petrol** were used. Again through not having read the question

carefully many candidates produced responses such as: ***no tenemos gasoline.**
***Gasolina es veinte dólares por gallon.**

Situation 9

Your assignment is done but you are unable to submit it on a particular date. What apology do you write in a note to your teacher?

- a . This situation was also well done by most candidates. However, many candidates did not mention the apology or make mention of the assignment and therefore failed to gain any marks. E.g. **Mi mamá está en el hospital.**
- b Many candidates used the word ***asignatura** for assignment.
- c . The use of **salir** for **dejar** was frequent. E.g. ***Señorita Smith he hecho mi tarea de casa sino lo sale.**
- d . Many candidates simply said that they were sorry. There were problems with **lo siento** and **siento que**.

Situation 10

Your neighbour's dog has destroyed a beautiful plant in your garden. Write the brief note you leave for him/her making a recommendation about the dog.

- a . Many students failed to make recommendations and just wrote what the dog did. E.g. ***Tu perro estaba en mi garden.**
Pedro su perro ha destrozado mi planta muy hermosa y también costoso.
or **Tu perro comió mis flores.**
- b . The word **perro** was wrongly spelt in a great number of scripts. E.g. ***Pero.** ***Tú pero es malo.**
- c . Many candidates failed to use the word **amarrar** which was misspelt in most cases e.g. **amarar** or **atar** instead they used **corbata** e.g. ***Corbata tu perro.**

General/Frequent Errors

- 1 . Not reading the situation carefully. Many candidates scored only partial marks, not because of their ability to use the language but due to carelessness. Candidates are advised to read each situation carefully, identify what elements are required and then respond.
- 2 . Not respecting the rubric. Too many candidates lost marks because they wrote more than one sentence. At times the necessary element was in the second sentence.

3. Grammatical and vocabulary errors

ser vs estar
por vs para
gustar
salir vs dejar
tú vs usted
en for at
pero vs sino
más que vs más de

- Very often candidates wrote very lengthy responses. This should be discouraged by teachers as lengthy responses allowed candidates to make many errors. This often led to low scores.
- Candidates at times did not appear to read the situations carefully and so their response did not reflect the requirements of the given situation. e.g. Question 2 - The time was given for the meeting rather than information **about** the venue.
- E.g. Question 5 - Candidates wished classmate a happy Valentine's Day instead of expressing his/her feelings.
- More practice is needed in several functions of the language e.g. Question 4 - congratulating someone. E.g. Question 6 - declining an invitation.
- Candidates are advised to read each situation carefully, identify what elements are required and then respond.

Note to teachers: It is advisable to expose candidates to the functions found in the syllabus. If candidates are acquainted with and practice these functions on a regular basis they will be able to cope more easily with this question.

The following are examples of good work done by candidates:

1. Quiero un traje de baño pero no hay ningún traje de baño en su tienda.
2. Encuéntrame delante del cine a las once.
3. El ascensor no funciona.
4. ¡Felicitaciones mamá!
5. Te admiro mucho y quiero que seas mi novio.
6. Lo siento pero no quiero ir al concierto porque no me gusta el grupo.
7. Tira los papeles en la basura.
8. No se puede comprar más que cincuenta dólares de gasolina.
9. Lo siento pero estaré ausente hasta el martes y así no puedo entregarle mi proyecto mañana.
10. ¡Guarda tu perro travieso en tu corral!

Section 2

Letter/Dialogue/Composition

This question was not beyond the scope of the average student. The letter, dialogue and composition all dealt with topics within the range of the syllabus. The students therefore should have been acquainted with the vocabulary and grammar.

As usual, on the whole, there were some weak responses, but there were also a number of excellent scripts. The overall effort seemed to have been fairly good.

Common Errors

1. Lack of knowledge of irregular verbs - ser, tener /for example ***tenió**
2. Misuse of the prepositions en/ a for example ***fuimos en casa.**
3. Lack of knowledge of the subjunctive after **querer** with different subjects.
4. Anglized vocabulary items such as ***cumunidad**
5. Adjectives and agreements
6. Candidates still writing essays that exceed the word limit.
7. Lack of use of personal 'a'
8. No accent on regular preterite tense
9. Lack of knowledge of common radical changing verbs such as **cerrar**
10. Collective nouns like **gente** often being used
11. The difference between using **conocer** and **saber**
12. Frequent incorrect spelling for **ciudad**
13. Accent frequently left out on the verb form of **está**
14. Incorrect use of the word **facilidades** for facilities
instalaciones and **servicios**
15. Confusion in the use of **por** and **para**

The following are examples of incorrect usage of grammatical phases and expressions:

Por

- *Compré unos pantalones por mi hermano y un reloj por mi hombre.
- *¿Qué compraste por tu mamá?
- *El trajo pollo frito, cartas, jugos por nos.
- *Hay un campo de béisbol por jóvenes.

- **Nosotros**
 - *Ellos tuvieron una fiesta para nos.
 - *El vecino hizo una torta para nos.

- **A Causa De**
 - *Yo siempre porque de huracán Ivan.
 - *Muchas personas no tienen casas porque del huracán.
 - *No puedo venir a Mexico porque del mal tiempo.

- **Gustar**
 - *Mi madre gusta la casa.
 - *Las personas son muy simpáticas me los gusta.
 - *Lo me gusta
 - *Me gusté lo / no me gusta lo / yo gusta la

- **Divertirse**
 - *Tienes un buen tiempo.
 - *Tuvimos un tiempo bueno.
 - *Vamos a tener un tiempo bueno.

- **Dar la bienvenida**
 - *Ella bienvenido nosotros.
 - *El vecino nos bienvenido con alegría.
 - *Bienvenidaron nosotros con las frutas y una fiesta.

- **Object Pronoun and Verb**
 - *Ellos nos invitamos a su casa.
 - *Los vecinos compramos regalos para mi familia.
 - *Un hombre que vive en la casa al lado invitamos a casa para comida.

- **Agreement - Collective Noun**
 - *La gente son muy simpático y amable.
 - *Durante el verano mi familia compraron una casa.

- **Pronouns**
 - *Fui afuera y encontré los.
 - *Ella tuvo una fiesta grande para mi familia y yo.
 - *Quiero viajar próximo año con tu.

- **Use of Mirar / Parecer**
 - *Los parques miraba muy bonito.
 - *Mi dormitorio miraré fantástico.
 - *Dormitorio va a mirar muy bonito.
 - *Quiero ver los parques como miraré.
 - *La casa mira muy bien.

- HAY
*allí era / hace / esta es / hay esta / eso es / hay son / es / hube /
allí son / hay es / allí estuve / era / este ha.
- JÓVENES
*joven personas / gente joven / joven niños y niñas / joven las
muchachas / joven los muchachos / la gente jóvenes

Sample script

The following is an example of an excellent letter:

San Andres, mayo 23, 2005

Querida Glendy,

Espero que te encuentres bien de salud y feliz junto a tus seres queridos. Quiero disculparme por no poder ir a visitarte. Me imagino que ya oíste del huracán que tocó a nuestro país. Como comprenderas, estas son cosas que yo no puedo controlar y aunque tenía muchas ganas de conocerte a ti y a tu país, Mexico, no podre ir.

Aquí en mi país la estamos pasando de lo peor. El huracán nos dejó casi sin nada. Si sales a las calles, sólo encontrarás árboles destruidos, casas en total ruinas, postes de luz, agua y lodo por donde sea.

Si hubiese podido ir contigo a tu país me hubiese gustado visitar las famosas ruinas de los maya. He oído mucho de esas ruinas y ya que en mi país no hay, iba a ser mi primera experiencia.

De cualquier modo, no quisiera que nuestros planes de ese viaje se olviden. Cuando nos recuperemos de esta desgracia que nos dejo el húrakan, espero poner una nueva fecha para ir a visitarte. Escribeme en cuanto puedas.

Con cariño,

Arelie Vasquez

An example of a good dialogue:

Yo: Los vacaciones *era estupendo. Me gusta el país de España.

Raúl: Sí, por supuesto. ¿Qué piensas acerca del hotel?

Yo: Era, muy eficaz. Los servicios *era excelente y los ayudantes *era muy corteses.

Raúl: Estoy de acuerdo. El cuarto de baño era muy limpio y el dormitorio era muy cómodo.

Yo: Sí ¿Recuerdas cuando caíste en el centro comercial?

Raúl: ¿Cómo puedo olvidar? Estaba corriendo cuando caí sobre el hombre viejo con el helado y el chico. El hombre era muy enojado.

Yo: Sí ¡Qué triste!

Raúl: Pues... ¿Qué compraste para tu madre?

Yo: Una camisa blanca, unos vaqueros, un reloj de pulsera y un collar de oro.

Raúl: Bien, Bien, compré una falda para María. Sabes mi hermana, le gustan las faldas.

Yo: También, compré unos pendientes para nuestras primas y unas gorras para los chicos.

Raúl: Recordaré siempre estas vacaciones. ¡Estaba muy emocionante!

YO: ¿Quieres pasar otras vacaciones otra vez conmigo?

Raúl: ¡Por supuesto! El año que viene podemos visitar *Francés en ves de España.

Yo: ¡Fantástico! Podemos visitar Italia, también.

Raúl: No hay problema. Pues debería ir a mi casa ahora. Adiós.

Yo: Sí, tu tambien. Diviértete.

NB: The candidate made some errors, but in general this was good.

An example of a very good essay:

La semana pasada mi familia y yo nos trasladamos a las afueras del pueblo. Mi casa nueva me impresionó mucho puesto que es muy grande y hermosa con un aspecto algo antiguo.

Tengo muchos vecinos amistosos. El que vive a la derecha de mi casa es amable y siempre me saluda con cortesía. Anoche nos invitó para la cena y aunque la comida no era sabrosa, nos disfrutamos mucho.

En está vecindad tenemos una biblioteca y todas las tardes voy allí para estudiar. También hay un parque rodeado de arboles, con un estanque en medio de él. Lo mejor es la piscina pública donde se puede nadar y tostarse al sol.

Mi dormitorio es muy cómodo y tengo que empapelar los paredes. Entonces tengo esperanzas de cubriros con cualquier cartel que reciba o que compre. Después de que ponga mis persianas con dibujos de "Johnny Depp" mi dormitorio será perfecto y estaré muy contenta de vivir aquí.

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect item.

Section III

Reading Comprehension

Question 1

Approximately 90% of the candidates answered this question correctly. However, the general response of the minority was “*in the house*”, “*in the dining room*”. There was also a mixture of English and Spanish in the responses such as “*in the house of the abuelos*”.

Question 2

Many candidates supplied extraneous information in response to this question. They sought to describe the meal in detail rather than say what the family was doing after the meal.

Question 3

Responses to this question varied significantly. The candidates understood that there was an interruption but their answers became distorted when they tried to state who was interrupted (and why). Such responses were “*Alfredo tried to interrupt the conversation/discussion rather than the story*”. “*He jumped through the window*” and “*He tried to steal from the grandfather*”.

****An outrageous response** - “*Alfredo tried to shoot the thief*”.

Question 4

Candidates performed poorly on this question as they misinterpreted the word “*palo*” to mean *chicken, raccoon, turkey, duck, pail, hole, thief*. Furthermore, incorrect responses to this question affected the type of response given in Question 4. For example, in Question 3, “*Since Alfredo tried to steal from his grandfather, his concern (in Question 4) was that he might be caught by his family and disappoint them or He tried to jump through the window because he had no family*”.

****Some outrageous responses** - “*Alfredo was 95 years old*” / “*He wanted to know what he was getting for summer*” / “*He was afraid he would get charged for attempted murder.*”

Question 5

Candidates responded reasonably well to this question but they misinterpreted the word “*churros*” to mean *sandwiches, cereal, marshmallows, cherries, chocolate fritters*. Also, students failed to recognize that “*churros*” and “*chocolate caliente*” were two separate items, something to eat and something to drink. Some wrote “*chocolate covered churros*”.

****An outrageous answer** - “*He went to the kitchen because he heard gunshots*”.

Question 6

This was the most poorly done question with the majority of the responses stating that Raul found the thief *“in the kitchen hanging from the window or going/running through the window”*. The word *“recado”* was misinterpreted to mean *recorder (musical instrument), tape recorder, walkie-talkie*, and *“colgado”* to mean *colgate*. For example, *“Raul found colgate with dentures” “in the kitchen or he found a note written in colgate on the mesh wire of the window”*. Like Question 4, the response to Question 6 was affected by Question 3. For example, *“Raul found the items which Alfredo stole, in the kitchen by the window”*.

****An outrageous answer** - *“Raul found Alfredo with an unlicensed gun in his hand”*.

Question 7

Candidates clearly did not understand that thoughtful means considerate of others' feelings. Their interpretation of the word was that the thief was smart/clever/successful in his attempts to carry out his plan. Hence, the majority of the candidates responded to this question in the negative but with good reasons. For example, the thief wasn't thoughtful because *“ he returned the wallet and that was a stupid thing to do because they can get his fingerprints”*; *“he returned to the scene of the crime”*; *“he could have been caught”*; *“he let Alfredo see his face”*; *a real thief does not leave notes or evidence behind”*. Some candidates, who believed that Alfredo was the thief said that *“he was not thoughtful because he left merchandise behind and after 5 years he does not know how to carry out a perfect robbery”*.

****An outrageous answer** - *“He only dropped the chocolates because he had to dodge bullets”*.

Candidates who stated that the thief was thoughtful indicated that *“he did not harm the family” “he returned the wallet”, “he did not steal anything else”, “he did not enter the house”, “he did not disturb the reunion”, he gave them a warning (via the note) so that they would take greater precautions”*.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

1. Observe the instructions - respond in English and **NOT** Spanish. Answer in sentences and **NOT** phrases.
2. Candidates should have done better overall but it was evident that they did not know some vocabulary items, which affected their general understanding of the passage.
3. Candidates lacked good expression in the English Language - they displayed weak syntax, semantics, spelling and expression which distorted their responses.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS:

1. Teach the students to do Reading Comprehension.
2. Subscribe to foreign magazines to give the students greater exposure to the language and to act as a vocabulary builder.
3. Liaise with the English Department for work on general comprehension skills.
4. Teach the students to offer and clearly express their opinions in oral and written forms.
5. Sensitize the students to the various Spanish cultures to build their knowledge base.

Section IV

Expanded Paragraphs

Although it would not have been difficult to build a story-line around the cues, there were three main cues which posed problems owing to the lack of knowledge of vocabulary.

These were:

1. **Anciana ciega**
2. **Un mendigo sopechoso**
3. **La esquina**

There was a reasonable number of scripts which were grammatically accurate and developed a commendable story-line using the cues appropriately.

However, the following were difficulties experienced by candidates:

- The personal **a** was often omitted
- Poor use of indirect and direct object pronouns - subject pronouns were often used instead e.g. ***ayudó ella**
- **Atardecer** became a verb, **Socorro** became a person and verb
- Although **Ayer** was in the first cue, the candidates failed to make use of the required past tenses
- **Esquina** was often misused, becoming an object that was purchased.
- **Gritos** used as a verb e.g. ***ellos gritos la policia.**
- ***Alerto** also used as a verb e.g. ***el detective alerta**
***El detective alertó la policia.**
- Poor subject and verb agreement in many instances
- **Empezar** and **comenzar** were not followed by a in most cases, and these verbs were badly conjugated in the Preterite with the **e** to **ie** stem change skill used.
- **De** and **el**, as well as **a** and **el** were seen in sentences instead of the contractions **del** and **al**.
- Because **bolsa** was in two cues it was often incorrectly used if the candidate was unfamiliar with it; although in most cases they were uncertain as to the use of **devuelta** and **robada**

- **Mirar** was used instead of **parecer**
- The passive voice was either incorrectly used or not used at all.
- **Robo** was substituted for **ladrón**
- **Gritar por - para** was often used
- **Mirar por, Buscar por** were interchanged often.
- Omission of definite article when speaking about a person
- **Realizar** as opposed to **darse cuenta de**
- **Socorro vs ayudar - Yo Socorro** - I help
- **Venir** was badly used - incorrectly conjugated in both Present, Preterite and Imperfect Tenses
- The verb **ser** was confused with **ir** in the preterite.
- **Tocar vs Tomar or robar - *el tocó la bolsa.**

Irregular Preterites that were inappropriately / incorrectly used:

oir	decir	conseguir	oir
tener	obtener	perseguir	decir
andar	ver		
estar	hacer (*hació seen)		
traer	seguir (*sigió seen)		

Use of ***estar miedo** instead of **tener miedo**

Compound Tenses badly used

- 1) Perfect
- 2) Pluperfect

The Gerund also badly used - **Ir** --- 'iendo' instead of **yendo**

- Confusion with **ser** and **estar** and **por** and **para**
- **Tener Que** + Infinitive - not used - most candidates used **tener** and next verb without the **que**.
- Badly used prepositions - **de** was not used simply ***delante**
- ***a lado de**
- Candidates did not use **volver** or **devolver** correctly but made the present tense stem change in the Preterite.
- **La estación de policia** instead of **la comisaría**
- **Vestirse - e - i** change in preterite hardly seen
- Agreement with articles and objects - E.g. ***el bolsa**
- ***Decir gracias, *la vieja gracias**
- **Llegar** and **llevar** confused for to arrive
- ***Su chica amigo** - girlfriend
- ***Comprar para** - to shop for
- **Alegría** was badly used for example. **Era / fue muy alegría**
***Ella alegría**
- French was also used: ***Super maché**
- **Decidir - *ellos decidido**
- **Decir** - and **dar** interchanged for 'to give'
***Yo dice** - I said
***Dígame** - Told me

Candidates' performance in Question 4 (Expanded paragraph) revealed the following:

1. Students' lack of knowledge of vocabulary of some of the cues such as **anciana ciega, esquina, mendigo sospechoso**. As a result candidates were unable to produce a logical sequential storyline.
2. The weaker candidates demonstrated an inability to use the personal "a". This was very prevalent in most scripts.
3. Areas of weaknesses in grammar included inaccurate use of Preterite and Imperfect tenses, **ser** and **estar**, agreement of nouns and adjectives, agreement of subject and verb, verbs that are followed by infinitives and those that require a preposition with the infinitive.
4. Candidates demonstrated weaknesses in spelling and vocabulary.
5. There was also inaccurate use of verbs, such as **volver, regresar** for **devolver, pedir** for **preguntar, salir** for **dejar**.
6. Candidates produced errors in the use of **por** and **para** and **fue/fueron** plus the past participle such as **la bolsa era devuelta**. There was also the misuse of **había** whereby candidates wrote **habían** or **hubo**.
7. Many candidates were unable to use **alegría** accurately. They used the verb **estaba** with **alegría**.

In order to facilitate the marking of scripts, the following recommendations with respect to this question are made.

1. Candidates should NOT underline the cues as this may interfere with the visual impact of producing judgement on the marking.
2. Candidates should write the number of words used in the production of the paragraph.

It was noted that generally scripts lacked very good use of idioms, structures and vocabulary. However, the more competent candidates used very good idioms such as **en un abrir y cerrar de ojos**.

Some examples of good work done by candidates are as follows:

1. Ayer al atardecer, la señora Rodríguez, una anciana ciega, acababa de visitar a su sobrino cuando pasó un incidente raro. En una esquina camino de su casa, estaba sentado un mendigo sospechoso. De repente arrebató su bolsa y se fue corriendo. Al descubrir que su bolsa fue robada, soltó unos gritos estrepitosos.
- ¡Socorro! - gritó ella.
Un detective, alertó por el griterío, cazó al mendigo. Más tarde regresó sin aliento con el ladrón y la bolsa. Luego, la señora Rodríguez golpeó al mendigo con la bolsa devuelta y se puso en marcha, llena de alegría.

2. Ayer al atardecer había una anciana ciega. Iba al mercado para comprar legumbres. Cuando llegó a la esquina la anciana esperó a una persona simpática para ayudarla cruzar la calle. A la esquina había un mendigo sospechoso también. De repente el mendigo robó el bolso de la anciana. Corrió rápidamente con la bolsa robada. La anciana gritó - Después de muchos gritos de socorro un detective alerta llegó. Rápidamente, encontró el mendigo y la dio a la anciana la bolsa devuelta. La anciana estaba muy alegría y le dio al detective una recompensa de mil pesetas.
- * Fairly good despite a few errors

Paper 3 – Oral Examination

General Proficiency

Section I

Reading Aloud

There was a marked difference between candidates who were well prepared and those who were not so well prepared. In the case of the more able students general fluency was good and also the intonation patterns. The main difficulty appeared with the cluster “gui” as in “guiso” and in a few cases overstressing the word “de”. By contrast the weaker candidates exhibited the more common problems like mispronunciation of “ge” as in “generalmente”, “o” pronounced as “a” so that “camino” would be rendered as “caminas” and the stress of “además” falling on the second vowel. In extreme cases the reading was done very slowly and inappropriate pauses were made.

Accentuation seemed to be a major problem. Examples include ***véndiendo** for **vendiendo**; ***salén** for **salen**; ***económia** for **economía** - Passage 1

***jóyera** for **joyería** - Passage 2

***próductos** for **productos**

Some candidates called words totally differently from what was written such as Passage 2’s ***entretenido** pronounced as ***entretinido**. Passage 3’s ***agradable** pronounced ***agraydible**. Some candidates struggled through, which made for a boring time for the examiner.

The following pronunciation errors were evident:

- Candidates encountered difficulty with multi-syllabic words: **predominantemente, imaginativas, antioqueña, emprendedor, sobrellevar.**
- The letters “z”, “u”, “e” and “i” were sometimes given an English pronunciation in words such as ***pulseras, venduras, desempleo, ir, especializados.**
- Some diphthongs were poorly pronounced - **aire, baile, países, restaurante**
- Letter **qu** was rendered as “k”
- Letter **h** was sometimes pronounced - e.g. hoy
- Incorrect stress was seen on words such as **verdad, coctel**

Section II

Responses to Situations

Generally candidates' performance ranged from outstanding to unsatisfactory. For the most part, the responses were relevant and appropriate to the given situation. Nonetheless, there were instances of grammatical inaccuracies in a few of the responses, for example, the wrong use of the definite and indefinite articles, the omission of the preposition after verbs such as **ayudar** and **ir**. The range of vocabulary for this section of the examination was of an acceptable standard.

The well prepared candidates generally exhibited full comprehension of the situations and gave appropriate answers but complicated structures were generally avoided. The majority of the other candidates often understood the questions but did not always produce clear answers. There were also problems with grammatical agreement and sentence structure. In a few cases, sentences such as ***yo muy sientto**, ***lo encanto** or ***yo compro** were offered.

Section III

Guided conversation

The majority of candidates comprehended most of the questions but some encountered grammatical problems. Pronunciation, intonation and fluency were fair but were not of the same standard as displayed in the reading. The less able candidates produced structures like: ***Mi mamá no gusta mío** or ***yo gusta mira**. There were also the usual problems with items like **ser** and **estar**. This resulted in structures like: ***soy bien** or even ***me gusta estudiando**. The latter illustrates confusion between the use of the infinitive and present participle. Nonetheless, the most important point is that most candidates tried their best to communicate their thoughts.

- Some candidates found a number of the questions difficult. Among the questions that were difficult are:
 - a. **¿Qué haces en tus ratos libres?** and **¿Cómo llegas a tu escuela?**
 - b. **Se comparten, modos de viajar, se encuentra** also proved difficult for some candidates.

Some candidates interpreted **¿Cuántas horas estudias cada día?** As how many hours they have classes for each day. Other problems included:

- i. ***En domingo / *por los domingos**
- ii. ***Puedo** used for **sé** (I can - I know how to)
- iii. ***Prefiero a mirar television.**

Section 2

Responses to Situations

Performance in this section was generally fair. Some candidates attempted to respond appropriately to all of the situations presented. Responses were however very disjointed, indicating a significantly limited range of vocabulary with several grammatical errors. Grammatical inaccuracies included: incorrect tense, lack of agreement (subject/verb; noun/adjective; lack of mastery of command forms).

Many candidates found it difficult to produce an appropriate and accurate response. In the event that an attempt was made, it lacked creativity or relevant vocabulary.

There were candidates who responded enthusiastically without heeding certain rules of grammar (e.g. failure to conjugate verbs, poor use of **ser** and **estar**, incorrect use and treatment of **gustar**). Candidates seemed to be lacking sufficient vocabulary and grammar to make effective responses.

Section 3

Guided Conversation

Many candidates found this section challenging. They experienced tremendous difficulty in comprehending many questions, and struggled to produce even average/semi-correct responses.

There was evidence of many major problems such as: comprehension, spontaneity and fluency of expression. The reality of limited vocabulary was a serious one and it rendered most of the candidates unable to give correct responses.

Responses were stilted with frequent requests for repetition of questions. Some errors observed included:

- Lack of mastery of interrogatives and other phrases such as **¿con quién?**, **¿cuál es?**, **¿qué opinas?**

Specific words that posed difficulty for candidates were: **regresas**, **despiertas**, **llegas**, **ratos libres**, **lugar**, **país**.

Many candidates responded to a word cue without having understood the full question. For example **¿Cuándo es mejor visitar a tus amigos?**

- **Tengo seis amigos.**

Difficulties seemed to stem from an inadequate vocabulary base in most cases. Candidates at Basic Proficiency must be encouraged to widen their vocabulary, while striving to master basic grammatical structure.

Basic Proficiency

Paper 2 – Free Response

Section I

Directed Situations

The questions in this section tested a range of language skills and gave candidates an opportunity to use the written form of the language. While some demonstrated their ability to adequately express themselves in Spanish, other candidates failed to demonstrate even a minimal level of acquaintance with the language evidenced by the number of candidates who failed to offer any response to the ten (10) items. An overview of the responses attempted and observations are offered below.

Situation 1

Many candidates failed to capture the essence of ‘Danger’ as stated and gave unsatisfactory responses to the questions posed. Some even displayed a high level of creativity and used the danger sign on roadways to assist them in conveying meaning. On the other hand, many offered long-winded responses and made several grammatical errors.

Situation 2

It was noted that many candidates were not aware of the vocabulary item for ‘Sale’ and none of the candidates offered **liquidación** as a response. ‘Sale’ was simply interpreted as *‘**barato**’, ‘**vende**’ among others. A few candidates used the equivalent **ganga** in their responses.

Situation 3

Several candidates misunderstood the requirements and simply offered ¿‘**qué tiempo hace?**’ Or ‘**hace calor**’, ‘**hace sol**’ as their responses. They did not realize that they needed to respond about the weather condition as it related to winter in Canada.

Situation 4

This question revealed that many candidates struggled with vocabulary (birthday) as well as the imperative forms of verbs. Some candidates even mixed Spanish with English in their responses. *‘‘**Mi cumpleaños es coming up**’’

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect item.

Situation 5

Surprisingly, many candidates failed to capture the appropriate response ‘**Lo siento (mucho)**’ and offered long winded responses that were marred with grammatical errors.

Situation 6

This question posed difficulty for many candidates and they showed a lack of understanding of the requirements of the question. Many failed to request an item and simply asked “**Dónde Está ...?** Or **Tiene (s) ...?** instead of ‘**Deseo ...**’ or ‘**quiero ...**’ an item. They often named items that were not necessary sports items. Spelling was also a challenge for many candidates.

Situation 7

This question was also a challenge for many candidates. Many simply offered a time for a meeting with no mention made of a venue. There were also many who failed to use a preposition in relation to the venue named.

Situation 8

The range of responses varied from good to ridiculous. Many offered *‘**No Trabaja**’, ‘**No en servicio**’, ‘**No en orden**’ as their responses. One classic response was *‘**Lo siento malo uno**’ in relation to the elevator.

Situation 9

Most candidates were able to manipulate this question effectively and comfortably. There were those however, who simply offered the English word ‘congratulations’.

Situation 10

This response revealed that many candidates were not able to use the object pronouns very well, neither did they understand which was required. They failed to capture the essence of ‘admiration for a classmate’ and focused on wishing happy valentines day. Some responses were *‘**Mi amor tu**’, ‘**Tu es mi vida y mi calor**’ as well as ‘**Te quiero**’ and ‘**Te amo**’.

Section II

Questionnaire

On the whole candidates handled this question well with many attempting it. Some candidates though, failed to read the passage carefully and so confused the answers. Number 2 for example, because the passage said that Ana Garcia works in the United States occasionally, many candidates opted for choice A thinking that Ana was American. Number 6 also posed some difficulty. There are some vegetarians who eat fish and option A was chosen by many candidates.

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect item.

Section III

Gapped Passage

This section proved the most challenging for the candidates with many failing to attempt this question.

The use of the preterite tense seemed too difficult for some. Many confused the use of **ser/ estar** and even in cases where their uses were clearly understood, the first and third persons were confused.

Knowledge of vocabulary also posed problems. It seemed as if many either did not comprehend the passage or did not bother at all.

Problems with regard to the uses of **por** and **para** were also noted.

Section IV

Reading Comprehension

Candidates generally performed well in this section. There were a few who thought that it was basically about sports due to the use of the word “**deporte**” and as a result the questions were answered accordingly.

- For Question 1, some were unable to identify ‘**colegio**’ as being college or school, so **course** was used instead. For those who thought that it was an advertisement on sports, the response to number 1 was a sports club.
- Most candidates gave the correct answer for numbers 2 and 3.
- Question 4 was quite problematic as the majority of the candidates were unable to link ‘**ocho niveles diferentes de principiantes a avanzados**’ to the range of courses offered. Few candidates were able to see the link, but due to a lack of vocabulary, the answer was given in Spanish. There were also a few who were able to give the answer in English (basic/beginners to advanced) and scored full marks. Some candidates mentioned the business subjects. It could be assumed that because the question contained the word ‘courses’ and the word ‘ **cursos**’ was also in the advertisement, many candidates linked the two, and as a result gave ‘10 types of courses’ as the answer to Question 4.
- The majority of candidates scored full marks for Questions 5, 9, and 10.
- Question 6 was generally handled well. It must be noted however, that there were a few candidates who gave the items under “**Programa de Actividades**” as the answer to this question.
- A lack of vocabulary impeded the answering of Question 7 as there were some who translated ‘**residencia propia**’ as residential property or proper residence. The majority were able to score at least one out of two marks for giving apartment as the answer without specifying whether it was single or double.

- Question 8 was generally answered well although a few candidates said that girls or women would attract athletes to this place. There were a few candidates who answered this question in Spanish or combination of Spanish and English. In the latter case, the sentence began in English and the part with the key word was in Spanish.

Basic Proficiency

Paper 3

Section I

Reading Aloud

There were a few outstanding performances on this section. Generally, candidates' ability ranged from moderate to good. While some candidates showed some control of the sound system and relative comprehension, a significant number demonstrated weaknesses in punctuation, intonation and stress. Also, inappropriate grouping of words and the tendency to break the sense of the passage suggested an inadequate comprehension of the text. Common errors made by candidates are outlined below:

- Some candidates were challenged by sounds such as g before i and e, **gue**, **gui** and ll.
- Problems existed in pronunciation of the stressed syllable in the word; stress was frequently misplaced, even when accentuated.
- Long words with more than two syllables were indifferently dismissed.
- Vowel sounds were not distinct and 'e' was repeatedly pronounced as 'i' in words like **fue**, **que**, **equipo**, **cebolla**, **leche**.
- Anglicization of the words was very common, as was a strong evidence of the influence of the candidates' native tongue. This was apparent in the pronunciation of the following words.

región	hispanos
béisbol	objetos
variación	equipo
popular	

The following words seemed to have been problematic for several candidates, and yielded many versions.

esqui	millonario	ejemplo
juegan	pollo	ciegos
aun	apellido	país
premio	paella	aficionados
propios	churrasco	

Responses to Situations

In general, students struggled to fulfill the functions in each situation. In some cases the fluency was satisfactory, but for the most part, it was barely average. There were also several grammatical errors.

- More attention needs to be paid to the preparation of Basic Proficiency candidates.

Guided conversation

The majority of the questions were comprehended. There was moderate use of vocabulary. Fluency was satisfactory in some cases but there were several grammatical errors involving subject and verb agreement, use of tenses and agreement of adjectives with nouns.

- Much practice in speaking, pronunciation and intonation.

General Comments

While there were many candidates whose performance was good, there were still many others who were either weak or whose performance was mediocre. A major area of weakness among both Basic and General Proficiencies, is limited vocabulary. Every effort should be made to help candidates to improve their vocabulary. The Preterite and Imperfect tenses, prepositions and adjectives also require much work. Students should be made to study vocabulary in context, listen to radio programmes, watch television programmes and have oral sessions with native speakers, so as to improve their general fluency in the language. Schools should aim to have a Spanish room in which dictionaries, glossaries, magazines, newspapers and other relia are provided for candidates access. The teaching/learning of Spanish should be made to relate to students everyday activities as much as possible.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

JUNE 2006

SPANISH

SPANISH

GENERAL AND BASIC PROFICIENCY EXAMINATIONS

JUNE 2006

GENERAL COMMENTS

There were varying levels of performance ranging from excellent to poor, but the overall performance was significantly improved over that of 2005. Several candidates demonstrated high level of linguistic competence, spontaneity, fluency and accuracy.

It is important for candidates to be exposed to as many real-life situations as possible. Teachers are encouraged to be innovative and creative in teaching their students the difficult aspects of the language. Learning through dramatization, simulations and other fun-filled activities facilitates much retention and the development of communicative and other skills.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Basic and General Proficiencies

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprises two sections, tests candidates' ability to listen to and understand a number of aural items in the target language and to read and understand a number of written items. Both sections require candidates to have sufficient mastery of essential grammar and vocabulary. The good performance on this paper was comparable to that of previous years.

Paper 02 – Free Response

General Proficiency

Section 1 - Directed Situations

This question demands that candidates identify the function for which the situation forms the context, and demonstrate their control of appropriate grammatical structures and knowledge of relevant vocabulary in clearly worded, concise responses. The better candidates were able to satisfy these requirements. Candidates' performance on the whole ranged from outstanding to occasions when no attempt was made to answer the questions in the section.

Situation 1

Shortcomings:

- a. Translating the situation
- b. Inability to form the imperative of *traer*, *contribuir*
- c. Limited vocabulary for item to be contributed

Mostly well done, but many candidates coined the verb *contributar* and those who knew *contribuir* found difficulty in giving the correct form of the command *contribuye* or *contribuya*. In some instances *tomar* was incorrectly used instead of *dar* or *traer*.

Some candidates just gave a general comment e.g. *el comite está planeando una fiesta para el fin de año y cada estudiante tiene una nota en la cual está escrita lo que va a contribuir.*

or

Estamos planeando una fiesta de fin de año.

The specific challenge in this item related to the use of the imperative mood in telling the candidate what to bring.

Traería, traigas, traerías, traes.

Several candidates also used the first person in telling the candidate what to bring: *traigo, llevaré...*

There was also some confusion in the use of *por/para* when using *a fiesta* (some used the word *el partido*)

trae jugo de naranja por la fiesta.

Situation 2

Shortcomings:

- a. Failure to apocopate *bueno* before *viaje*
- b. Inability to perceive the inappropriateness of *felicidades* in this context.
- c. Absence of subjunctive after *esperar*
- d. Expressing the hope that the guest had enjoyed his stay

Many candidates gave simple correct responses *Buena Suerte, Buen viaje* etc. When they attempted longer responses there were many errors. In some instances, candidates interpreted the question as they being in Mexico. The house guest was returning to them in Mexico and so they began with *bienvenido*.

Most candidates handled this fairly well. Some, however, interpreted the question as welcoming someone to the country:

Example:

Bienvenida a Mexico

Bienvenidos que Dios te bendiga

Several candidates misinterpreted this item. Some welcomed the person/house guest to their home

Bienvenido a mi casa

While others neglected to extend good wishes, they simply said “*Adiós*” or “*Hasta luego*”. Even when the response was appropriate, there was some confusion in the correct use of the subjunctive.

Espero que tienes un buen viaje / un viaje bueno*

Un feliz viaje

Others used the adverb instead of the subjunctive form

Bien viaje/ Buen viaje and still some failed to drop (*apocopate*) the “o” off *bueno*

Bueno viaje or keep it *viaje bueno*.

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Situation 3

Shortcomings:

- a. Evading the issues of expressing feelings and confining the response to dissatisfaction with being unable to wear new clothing bought for the occasion. This displayed an absence of sensitivity with regard to the context.
- b. Inability to use *lo siento*, *sentirse* and *sentir por* appropriately.
- c. Use of *terminar* for *cancelar*

There was a variety of responses, but great difficulty in expressing “I am sorry that” and the subjunctive. Sometimes the disappointed was implied rather than clearly stated.

- Good response: a. *Estoy un poco desilusionado porque pensé que él era tu amor verdadero.*
b. *Siento oír las noticias malas.*

Many candidates were not sure how to express disappointment in Spanish; there were responses such as: *Estoy celosa*

Sentir – in most cases was incorrectly used:

- Lo siento oír mucho*
Lo siento sobre su boda.

This item produced many varied responses with candidates in the process neglecting to express disappointment.

Qué pasa, qué pasó, explícalo

When they did express disappointment using: *lo siento* it was used incorrectly (sometimes) when further explanation / comment was forthcoming:

- Lo siento que la boda / el matrimonio*
Lo siento oír...
Lo lamento...

Some of the correct responses (fully appropriate were)

¡Qué desilusión! Estoy triste, lo siento, la lamento, estoy desilusionado/a/decepcionado

Situation 4

Shortcomings:

- a. Absence of mastering of imperative forms – affirmative and negative.
- b. Failure to use formal structure.
- c. Use of *ser* with *mojado*.
- d. Attempts at explanations that showed a disregard for the economy of words required in signs.

Many candidates used appropriately correct expressions. Too often the answer was given in the familiar form. *Ten cuidado* – Problems with spelling *cuidado*, *Piso mojado* was often used, but many times the attempt was incorrect in terms of spelling *pisa moja* or *piso mohado*

This item also gave problems as to the warning sign

Example

Caution

Caución

or there was a translation of the items

La señal dice que el suelo está mojado or *Hoy una mujer con fregasuelo en al señal**

Many varied responses were written.

Piso mojado, el piso está mojado, el piso no está seco, es peligroso

Some of the errors included the use of English caution; confusion in the use of *ser/estar* in describing the floor – *el piso es mojado*, the use of the subjunctive in negative commands *no caminas/ andas*

Situation 5

Shortcomings:

- a. Inability to discriminate between *bueno* and *bien*
- b. Ignoring the superlative nature of the performance

The item was generally well done. Short responses obviously were more usually correct than the longer ones. *Excelente* was very often mis-spelt *excelente**. Problems with the use of *Muy bien* and *Muy Bueno* – *Muy buen trabajo* or *trabajo muy bueno* and the incorrect form *muy bien trabajo*. Candidates were also using *trabaja* and *trabajar* instead of *trabajo*. *Proyecto* was often misspelt *projecto*.

This item was done exceptionally well except that many candidates spelt the word ‘excellent’ in Spanish incorrectly.

Example: *Excelente/exelente*

There was again confusion in the correct use of *bien/buen* in describing the work **Bien trabajo* as opposed to *buen trabajo* or in the positioning of the adjective and the need to change the spelling: *Trabajo buen* as opposed to *trabajo bueno* or *Has echo* **bueno* as opposed to *Has hecho bien*.

There were quite a few candidates who misspelt the word *excelente* with *Excelente* being the most common of the errors relating to this word.

Situation 6

Shortcomings:

- a. Indicating what they liked doing or a personal characteristic instead of specifying the job that they wanted to do – failure to respond to the specific demand of the situation
- b. Failure to omit the indefinite article in statements about profession
- c. Inability to use *gustar*

Me gusta or *quiero ser* and profession were often used instead of *Me gustaría* or *quisiera/querría ser*.

This item was fairly well done, except some candidates used the article (definite /indefinite) with the occupation.

Example: *Yo quiero ser una secretaria*.

In many cases the word ‘secretary’ in Spanish was rendered as *secreteria/secretario*.

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Quiero ser / quisiera / me gustaría when used were too often used with the article when it should have been omitted.

Quisiera ser (un) bombero

Profesor was in quite a few instances spelt with “ss”

The majority of candidates expressed the desire to work with computers though misspelt in several instances, for example, *computadores*.

Situation 7

Shortcomings:

- a. Inability to discriminate between *bueno* and *bien*
- b. Misspelling of *delicioso*
- c. Literal translation of *the school lunch la escuela almuerzo*

Candidates had problems with vocabulary for lunch – *el comido* instead of *el almuerzo*. Sometimes, in describing the lunch, there was no agreement of adjectives. Often *sal* was used instead of *salado/a* to describe food as salty.

This item was well done except, in some cases, where candidates mixed up the uses of *ser* and *estar*, for example, *La comida está buena*.

The use of noun and adjective agreement was not heeded, for example, *La comida es delicioso*.

There was confusion in the use between *bien/bueno* in describing the lunch. Incorrect use of *mal/malo* was also evident.

Al almuerzo es mal/bien

Several candidates also misspelt the word for lunch: *el morzo/ el comido*

Some candidates made reference to the lunch hour or the need to go home for lunch without any reference to the school lunch as requested in the item.

Situation 8

Shortcomings:

- a. Making a statement about unsatisfactory situations at the hotel, rather than making a suggestion for improvement
- b. Inability to use *gustar*
- c. Failure to use subjunctive with *sugerir, aconsejar, recomendar*

Many times candidates simply wrote a comment rather than a suggestion, for example, *no me gusta el servicio / La comida no es buena*.

For “ought to” or “should” – the conditional tense of the verb was being used rather than *Deber* and the infinitive or *Tener que* and the infinitive, for example, *limpiarían los baños más* rather than *Deben/Deberían limpiar los baños más*.

Some candidates used *sugiero que* and subjunctive very well.

Good response: *Sugiero que las empleados trabajen más para hacer a los huéspedes felices*.

Servicio was often misspelt *service*.

Most candidates commented *only* on the service and gave no suggestions.

El servicio en el hotel es malo.

Many candidates expressed dissatisfaction with the service without making a SUGGESTION as to how it (the issues) should or could be improved.

El servicio es malo.

Some candidates did not demonstrate an awareness that they were addressing someone in the polite form – *recomiendo que cambies el chef**

Some candidates could not come up with a verb to express displeasure and used the word *por favor* as a verb. – *Mi familia y yo no son por favor con el servicio.*

Situation 9

Shortcomings:

- a. Translating the situation
- b. Expressing regret for unacceptable behaviour
- c. Misspelling of *prometer*
- d. Failure to use the future tense

Many candidates dealt with this question very well and there was a wide range of simple appropriate responses.

Prometo no fugar en la sala.

Prometo no mirar television por una semana.

Prometo no habernas una voz alta/Prometo no fumar otra vez.

However, too many times candidates spelt *Prometo* as “*promito*”* or used *Promisio* or *Promeso*

This item was a bit confusing to the candidates and some responses were not really practical or realistic.

Example:

Mamá prometo no limpiar la casa

Mamá y papá no prometo que voy a tomar alcohol

Some candidates did not mention anything in particular, for example, *Prometo cambiar.*

The key verb that was used, given the nature of the situation, was *prometer*. In quite a few cases it was incorrectly spelt – *promiso/ prometto / promisio / promito*

The use of the word not in bold print gave many candidates the impression that they had to use the word *no* in their response – *no prometo lavar los platos.*

There was also some confusion in the use of the future, depending on how the candidate structured his/her response.

Te/les prometo no iré a la playa

Prometo que no ir a la playa

Mis padres prometieron que no miro la televisión durante la semana

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Situation 10

Shortcomings:

- a. Widespread use of *asignatura* for assignment
- b. Concern with classmate's health, rather than with providing information about the assignment
- c. Difficulty with familiar imperative of *hacer*

Vocabulary for *homework* posed a problem. *Trabajo de casa* surfaced or *deberes* was used in the singular form *el deber* or *tarea* in the plural form *las tareas*.

There were also some interesting, appropriately correct responses, for example,
No es necesario porque la tarea es una presentación oral.
Estas enfermo, la profesora dice que no tienes que hacerla.

Although there were some good answers this item was also not well interpreted.

Example:

Esperque te mejores pronto
No puedo ir al colegio quiero el trabajo
Voy a mandar esta nota contigo

The word *asignatura* was used constantly for *tarea*.

There was some confusion in the interpretation of the content of the note re: *sender* and *recibir*. Some interpreted it as the child sending a note to the teacher or made reference to a subject area other than Spanish.

Some of the more common errors related to the spelling of the word for homework. *Los debres, la tareja**

Some candidates neglected to make agreement with *números* and *páginas* when reference was made to more than one number or more than one page. *Asignatura* was used for assignment.

La asignatura es... página dos y tres, número seis y siete.

General Comments

- For items which required the candidate to send a text message, candidates in a few cases used abbreviated forms as obtains in (real life) situation where words are not spelt out completely.

Sample responses

1. *Jorge, compre las bebidas por la fiesta por favor*
Rosita, por favor trae un paquete de tazas para la fiesta
2. *Espero que llegues temprano*
Buena suerte cuando vuelvas a México
3. *Ya compré mi vestido ya*
Hola, solo quiero que sepas que te voy a extrañar mucho y que tengas un feliz viaje.
4. *Se prohíbe andar en el suelo*

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

5. *Bien escrito*
Este proyecto es excelente
6. *Me gustaría hacerme abogado*
Me gustaría ser secretario
7. *El almuerzo es terrible*
El almuerzo es demasiado caro
8. *Cocine comida bien*
*Es necesario que provea más toallas**
9. *No hablaré en voz alta en mi clase cuando mi profesora está hablando, prestaré atención.*
*No salirá en la noche con el coche**
10. *Voy a visitarte para dar la tarea a ti*
Tengo ganas de darte los deberes cuando regreso a mi casa

Section 2 – Letter/Dialogue/Composition

This section is intended to assess the candidates' ability to produce written language within the parameters set out by the syllabus. In addition to mastery of relevant vocabulary, idiom and language structure, the ability to express ideas clearly and coherently, is emphasized. The three options given were the letter, the dialogue, and the composition, each of which was marked out of 30.

Grammar

Agreement

There were many errors with subject/adjective agreement, particularly when the candidates had to describe the school and the teacher. No care was taken to ensure that subject and adjective agreed, and there were even cases when there was a mixing of the two i.e. *mi profesora es alta, Delgado y bonita.*

A very common and seemingly obviously avoidable error was: *mi escuela nuevo.* Yet another error to be noticed was that of subject/verb agreement e.g. *yo estuvo, mi papa trabajo* and the ever popular *me gusta mis amigos, mis amigos es simpatico.**

Accentuation: this is often made due to inattention and the candidates desire to “finish quickly”. As a result, clearly avoidable mistakes were still made with basic words: *porqué, está, cómo, día, tú, más.* More than 60% of the candidates did not use the accents.

A less obvious but noticeable grammatical issue was observed with the direct and indirect object pronouns. Specifically, these were often misplaced or misused as subject pronouns – *la era fantástico, la estaba tarde, mis amigos ayudanne con mis deberes.**

Verbs. Interestingly, most candidates had a fair grasp of the verb and their conjugation in the different tenses. There was also a good use of the subjunctive in the opening lines of the letter: *Espero que estés bien,* but it was not used consistently throughout as in *mi madre me quiere estudiar mas en la nueva escuela.*

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Content

It was clear that the topics for the letter was the topic of choice by many candidates. They were well prepared with vocabulary and structures recently learned for the oral examination where there were questions which required the candidate to “describe their school, teacher, best friend/s from school.”

Common errors

1. Uses of *ser* and *estar*
2. Ambivalence between *haber* and *tener*
3. Ambivalence between *por* and *para*
4. Confusion of *bien* and *bueno*
5. Confusion of *dio* and *dijo* – many candidates used *dio* when they meant *dijo*
6. *La gente* and *la familia* - candidates need to be reminded that these take a singular verb. Also, *todo el mundo*
7. *Gustar*
8. Verbs that require the infinitive and verbs that require a preposition before the infinitive.
9. Omission of the “personal a”
10. Omission of the definite article before the proper noun qualified by a tilde e.g. *el señor García*
11. Omission of the accent especially in foundation words in the language e.g. *mamá, papá, día*
12. Uses of the imperfect and *preterite*
13. Sequence of tenses with the subjunctive. Some candidates attempted to use the subjunctive but used the present where the past was needed. The exceptional candidates used the past subjunctive correctly.

Section 3 – Reading Comprehension

It is strongly recommended that teachers give adequate practice to their students on analysis of comprehension passages, to ensure that candidates improve their performance in this area.

Use of the booklet – Teachers need to guide students on the use of the booklet so that they are answering one question per page and not parts of one question on different pages.

It would seem that some candidates were not prepared for the examination.

The overall performance was satisfactory. Many of the vocabulary items posed a challenge to the candidates. The following words were misinterpreted:

- *asistian* – they helped, they assisted
- *ensayo* – essay, seminars, meetings, theatre.

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

- *papeles principales* – the principal papers, the principals of papers
- *director* – professor, teachers, principal, judge

The candidates had difficulty expressing themselves in the English Language. Their inability to express themselves in the language impacted negatively on their overall performance. Candidates should make an effort to spell the words correctly.

Question 1

The overall performance on this question was unsatisfactory. The candidates for the most part misinterpreted *asistían* and *ensayo*.

Examples of incorrect answers

- They helped to open the theatre.
- They assisted in the orphanage
- They attended an opera.

Question 2

Candidates misunderstood the context in which the word *papel* was used so many of them ended up with it being related to papers.

They also interpreted it as an award being presented to Javier or Yola.

Other examples include

- Honour was bestowed upon Yola and Javier.
- Enough embarrassment was bestowed on them.

Question 3

In the response to question 3 candidates were required to refer to Rosa's talent as well as desire to act with Javier. However, a number of candidates cited one aspect.

Question 4

Candidates' performance was satisfactory.

Question 5

The question required candidates to state that the director was aware of Yola's absence. This idea was not captured in most of the responses. The general response cited Yola's absence only.

Examples: Yola couldn't be found.
Yola was not there.

Question 6

The responses to this question were good as they captured the idea that Rosa was asked to play Yola's part.

Question 7

This question required that candidates include in their response, Yola's arrival, the decision taken by the director to let her continue in her role and Rosa's disappointment (stated or implied). Again, many candidates referred to, or included only two aspects – Yola's arrival and Rosa's disappointment.

Section IV – Expanded Paragraph

This year's Section IV performed fairly well. The cues were understood by most of the candidates and in some cases were quite well used. Some candidates did not appear to understand that they could put words in between the cues: (example – *pasajeros asustados*) – *los pasajeros estaban asustados*.

The “*Semana pasada*” cue was used as is, “*La*” was hardly used.

Common errors

1. Confusion of *ser* and *estar* – e.g. El viaje estaba agradable
2. Confusion of *por* and *para*
3. Contraction of “a+el” and “de+el” was hardly seen
4. “*Ir DE vacación*” was hardly used – “*ir EN un(a) vacación*” was used instead
5. The present tense was used in some cases throughout the entire passage, even where the past tense was required
6. “*DE*” after time expressions was substituted with “*en/por*”
7. The personal ‘a’ was often omitted
8. “*Mucho*” vs “*muy*” – often confused
9. “*Asistir*” was used instead of “*ayudar*”
10. FRENCH was also used: “*yo arrivé*”
11. “*Legar en*” instead of “*llegar A*”
12. “*Que*” used as a possessive adjective. “*Ese*” as a relative pronoun
13. Candidates used the preterite tense badly, especially the irregular preterites - *pensar, comenzar, tener, estar, hacer, conducir, saber, ir, llegar*
14. “*Saber*” vs “*conocer*” – “*El medico no conoce que hacer*”
15. Use of “*más tarde*”... e.g. *Diez minutos tarde instead of “diez minutos más tarde”*
16. The preterite and imperfect tenses were confused especially – “*estar, tener, hacer*”
17. Verbs such as – “*decir, hacer, venir*” and “*conducir*” gave problems in the preterite tense with conjugation
18. The preterite of “*DAR*” and “*DECIR*” was confused e.g. “*dio/dijo/ dijeron*”

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

19. “*En la mañana*” instead of “*de la mañana*”
20. Use of OBJECT PRONOUNS – mostly indirect
21. “*Ser*” with occupations, many candidates used “*estar*”
22. Confusion of – *haber and tener*
asistir and atender
parecer and mirar/buscar
23. Improper use of the passive voice
24. Use of the first person plural – anybody “*y yo*”: often used third person instead
25. Omission of the infinitive after the propositions
26. Past Participle vs Preterite Tense

E.g. *El viaje salido*
El piloto hecho
Yo decidido
Mi familia comprado el viaje
27. Subject verb agreement was a problem for quite a few candidates
28. “*Porque de*” was used instead of “*a causa de*”
29. “*Tan*” was used for “so” as opposed to “*asi*”

COINED WORDS ENCOUNTERED THIS YEAR

<i>Tener un buen/bien tiempo</i>	–	to have a good time
<i>Hizo seguro</i>	–	made sure
<i>Buena cosa</i>	–	good thing (there was a doctor on board)
<i>Fortunamente/ Graciadamente</i>	–	fortunately
<i>Aeroplano</i>	–	plane
<i>Allí estaba / hay fue / Estaba</i>	–	there was
<i>Allí amigos</i>	–	their friends
<i>El vuelo</i>	–	flight
<i>Nosotros viaje</i>	–	our trip
<i>Allí</i>	–	their (instead of su)
<i>Rato en vacaciones</i>	–	while on vocation

In spite of this there were a few positives. There were some good phrases and idiomatic expressions seen this time around:

1. ¡*Qué asco!*
2. *Dentro de poco*
3. *En un cerrar y abrir de ojos*

4. *Por fortuna / suerte*
5. *Dar las gracias a ...*

Some cues were incorrectly copied, for example,

<i>Mérida</i>	–	<i>Merida / Merido</i>
<i>Excelente</i>	–	<i>excellente</i>
<i>Pasada</i>	–	<i>pasado</i>
<i>Vacaciones</i>	–	<i>vacciones</i>
<i>Piloto</i>	–	<i>pilito</i>

Other cues seemed to cause problems for candidates:

Sano y salvo

viaje agradable

Aterrizaje inesperado

There was much improvement in the use of *HABÍA*.

Another noteworthy positive was the change of “y” to “e” when “and” in Spanish came before a word starting with the same sound. There was also good use of the SUBJUNCTIVE and synonyms such as *de golpe* and other higher registered phrases instead of just “inmediatamente”

CANDIDATES MUST BE REMINDED ABOUT PENALTY FOR DISREGARDING THE RUBRIC REGARDING LENGTH.

Paper 03 – Oral Examination

Reading Aloud

The performance ranged from limited to outstanding, with the majority falling in the good range. There was evidence of very good preparation despite the weaknesses in pronunciation and intonation displayed by some candidates.

Many candidates mispronounced the vowels, struggled with longer words and those letters which have different sounds in English. This was so for ‘*Michoacán*’, ‘*norteamericanos*’, ‘*definitivamente*’, ‘*atracciones*’, ‘*representativos*’. There was diphthongation of vowels e.g. *guías* as ‘*guyas*’ and ‘*aguas*’ as *agúas*’. The ‘ll’ was sometimes rendered ‘l’ or ‘j’ e.g. *hajan / halan* for *hallan*.

Many of the candidates were able to demonstrate a satisfactory level of fluency and adequate pronunciation while reading. Appropriate variation of intonation indicated that most candidates understood the main ideas contained in the passages. However, some candidates found it challenging to correctly pronounce, among others, the following:

flamenco (flamensó)
gitanos (guitanos)
sean (cien)
geografía (anglicized pronunciation)
tierra (tiria)
patron (parón)
Guadalupe (guadalup)

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Climática (claimatica)
Obstáculo (obsticalo)
Descanso (descansio)
Sur (suer)

The standard of reading was generally good. Despite the occasional stumbling, most candidates were able to pronounce and intone at an acceptable standard.

The most problematic words/sounds were:

variedad – veriedad
cultura – coltura
conserva – anglicized “ver”
carretera – caretera
Guerrero – Güerrero
caraterísticas – various mispronunciation
sean – sían
ferias – ferias
virgen – anglicised
senedad – sieiedad
hallan – halan
tranquilo – tranquillo
abundancia – abundancia
gama – jama
clima – claima
version – anglicised

Responses to Situations

There were some very good candidates who were spontaneous and quite accurate in their responses. Many candidates misinterpreted the requirement of the situation presented. Many did not pay attention to pronunciation as they were trying to concentrate on producing the vocabulary and grammar structures. The weaker candidates failed to use the subjunctive or imperative. “*Tome tu al policia*” for “*Te llevaré a la policia*”. “*No te preocupado*”. “*Presa*” was given for “*prisa*”. “*Escúchante*” was used for “*dispénsame*” “*Tiquetes*” was used for “*boletos*”.

Generally, candidates were able to respond appropriately to situations or part of them. Limited vocabulary and poor command of key grammatical structures affected the fluency and correctness of answers. Some candidates did not understand the word ‘queue’. Some of the errors made are as follows:

No me gusta...
¿Dónde es tu mama...
Muchos gracias...
Soy tarde
No estoy hambre
No vengaria...
Puede voy...

Several candidates demonstrated a lack of understanding of the situations. Limited vocabulary also restricted their ability to convey meaning. Many candidates were unable to express mixed feelings, make suggestions, recommendations, express annoyance and so on. There was much limitation and many verbs were used in the infinitive.

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Guided Conversation

Some questions were not readily understood by many candidates and as a result, they were not spontaneous with the answers. Vocabulary and adequate command of grammatical structures were somewhat limited, resulting in some answers not being appropriately and correctly rendered. Some responses lacked the appropriate variation in intonation with several words having anglicized pronunciations. The questions requiring descriptions and justifications proved extremely challenging for some candidates.

Candidates demonstrated a generally inadequate command of the basic vocabulary, thus limiting their ability to comprehend and respond to simple questions.

Conversation presented a challenge to many candidates. Some had difficulties understanding and readily responding in a fluent manner to the various questions because of limited vocabulary and difficulties with basic elements of grammar. Anglicized pronunciations were also noticeable. Questions requiring descriptions and stating reasons for responses created major problems for some candidates. Some candidates were unable to readily understand the following:

¿Hace cuánto tiempo...?
¿Cuáles...?
Asignaturas
¿Qué se puede ver...?
¿... las mejores compras?
¿Cómo reaccionan...?

Candidates' performance on this section could be considered as average based on the fact that some were excellent whereas others responded incorrectly. The majority had a general knowledge of the topics and responded appropriately.

Nouns and adjectives were sometimes reversed e.g. "mi favorito pariente es..."; IN B5 *¿Cómo es tu profesora de español?* most identified their teacher by name only; errors with time as in B7 were encountered, also. "Tengo clases de español son las nueve y media" or "a son las..."

"Shopping" was fairly well answered as candidates were able to name their favourite shop, describe items purchased and state with whom they preferred to go shopping.

In "Sports and Recreation" *¿Quién...?* Was sometimes misunderstood for "*¿Qué?*" thus they were unable to supply correct responses.

Conversation

Some candidates failed to answer the questions asked even after repeats. Answers were often disjointed or totally irrelevant. There was evidence of lack of preparation and oral practice. The weaknesses in grammar and the lack hindered them seriously. Simple questions like *¿Cómo es...?* were greeted with silence or a wrong answer. The word "pariente" was not known. Some erroneous statements included:

Mi mamá profesión es...
Mi madre alto y negro
Hay personas ocho...
... y historia muy mucho

Basic Proficiency

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section I – Directed Situations

The objective of this section of the paper is to test candidates' ability to produce short, written responses to a series of 10 real-life situations. The responses are assessed for appropriateness and correct linguistic expression and are awarded a total of 15 marks. This section parallels Section I of the General Proficiency paper and there are 5 situations in common - Questions 1-5 on the General Proficiency and Questions 6 – 10 on the Basic Proficiency.

Overall, most candidates performed quite well. Although the rubric emphatically instructed candidates to write no more than one sentence, a few wrote two sentences, while some wrote one very long sentence – about 5 lines in some cases.

Some candidates, in formulating their answer, addressed the situation given, rather than the function which they were to use Spanish to carry out. For example, item # 5: A radio station has announced ... Write a note... stating how you can be contacted. Many candidates said something like “*El ítemo es mío/la bolsa es mío*”.

Situation 1

Most candidates answered competently. A common response was “*me duele la cabeza*”

Situation 2

Many candidates found difficulty understanding what this question was targeting. There were answers like:

- *vengo en avión mañana*
- *Ya voy*
- *No hay autobús*

Situation 3

Most candidates did not know the word “*fecha*” (date) some used “*día*” instead, while others preferred answers such as “*Nos vemos el sábado a las tres.*” Many also did not know the word *reunión* (meeting).

Also, there were several instances of candidates not reading the stimulus material properly, or not understanding the stimulus material. They therefore offered responses like *la nueva fecha de reunion fue cambiada*.

Situation 4

This item gave candidates the opportunity to use the verb “*deber*” or “*poner*” in the imperative, or favor de + infinitive. Most candidates seemed not to have mastered any of these three constructions. They therefore wrote “*Quiero ...*” Some candidates simply wrote the name of a dish. The problem was posed when candidates chose to write an English dish like “cook up”, “macaroni pie”.

Situation 5

Most candidates attempted to use “*llamame/llámeme*”. No candidates used the structure “*se puede ponerse en contacto conmigo en*”

At this level, candidates effectively used “*mi número de teléfono es ... or vivo ...*”

Situation 6

Candidates were required to show competence in using vocabulary on the theme of a party. Answers such as *música, dinero, decoración, comida, bebida*, were accepted. Most candidates did not use the verb *contribuir* properly. Instead they created a verb “*contributar*”.

Situation 7

This item was reasonably well done. Answers such as “*Buen viaje,*” or “*Buena suerte,*” were given.

Situation 8

Lo siento was offered by most candidates. However, many candidates did not seem to know that before a finite verb, they should write only *siento*. For example, “*Siento oír de tu boda,*” instead of *lo siento oír de tu boda*.

Situation 9

Candidates were most creative in answering this item. “*Cuidado, Piso Mojado,*” were accepted.

Situation 10

Most candidates responded appropriately with *muy bien or excelente*. However, *excelente* was incorrectly spelt – *excellente*.

Section II – Questionnaire

The objective of this section is to test candidates’ comprehension. Candidates are required to complete a multiple-choice questionnaire in Spanish, after having read information in English, based on a practical situation. This section is worth 10 marks.

Many candidates performed well on this section, and completed the questionnaire fairly accurately. There were, however, a few candidates who clearly demonstrated a total lack of comprehension. Responses to questions 1, 2 and 4 revealed some weaknesses with respect to candidates’ ability to recognize numbers.

Section III – Gapped Passage

In this section, candidates are required to complete gaps in a passage, with items which require knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

While many candidates may be familiar with the vocabulary, there is a clear indication that their competence in spelling is weak. Failure to place accents and tilde was very common.

Candidates also encountered difficulty conjugating verbs in the present tense. Where a conjugated verb was required, candidates used an infinitive or an inaccurate verb form or tense. There were several variations for *quieren* and *dice*. These include *queren, querren, dece, desen*.*

For items 6 and 8, many candidates failed to provide the correct adjectival form to agree with the noun given.

Vocabulary for items 9 and 10 proved to be the most difficult for many candidates.

Section IV - Reading Comprehension

Overall, candidates did not perform as well as one would have expected them to, even at the Basic Proficiency level.

Where candidates seemed to have understood the stimulus material, they found it difficult to express this understanding.

Question 1

Some candidates interpreted this question as asking for a translation of the name of the store. Some candidates stated that it was a place, without using the word shop/store/boutique.

Question 2

The word *locales* in the stimulus was problematic for weaker candidates. Several responses revealing a lack of comprehension of the word were given. These include:

- ...is famous for the production of important and local people
- ...is famous for importing goods locally and abroad
- ... is famous for their important products and location

Question 3

Some candidates gave a literary interpretation and produced answers such as:

“It is described in a convincing way so that consumers can go and buy.

Question 4

Most candidates did not know that *calzados* means footwear/shoes. Some used the Spanish word, while others gave several meanings to *calzados*; from underwear to belts, hats, scarfs, etc.

Question 5

Most candidates got full marks for this item. Even if they copied the Spanish, it was difficult not to get the full marks, as the word perfume is spelt the same in both Spanish and English.

Question 6

This item was one of the most challenging for most candidates. They found it difficulty to express “decorative cloth” or “household material”. A common response was: “it could be decorated or plain”.

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Question 7

The word *regalos* was interpreted as watches by a large number of candidates.

Question 8

Some candidates did not know the meaning of *visítenos* and therefore offered very creative responses such as

“to come to shop on the 5th of May.”

Question 9

Some candidates, instead of giving the address, gave the e-mail address.

Question 10

Most, if not all candidates scored full marks on this item.

Paper 03 – Oral Examination

Reading Aloud

The reading passage seemed to be challenging to many candidates. Performance on this section was disappointing in many instances. Candidates produced a myriad of errors, spanning all the areas of expected difficulty.

It was generally observed that candidates were unable to fully execute vowel sounds. While for some words the correct vowel sound was made, there were inconsistencies shown when this same vowel sound would be mispronounced a few words later.

The words presented as cognates were anglicized, and those that looked close to an English word were made just that (e.g. *ocasión*, *excursión*). Other discrete sounds which seemed problematic include:

ll in *bullicio*, *millones*, *desarrollado*
h in *hay*, *hispanoamericanos*, *hispanohablante*
g in *región*, *argentinos*
q in *quinceañera*, *equipos*

Multi-syllabic words were the most difficult for many candidates. The length of the word seemed to serve as a deterrent. In addition to approaching the word hesitantly, and stumbling over it, fluency, intonation and pronunciation were severely affected.

Responses to Situations

Generally, the candidates had difficulty interpreting the situations and offering an adequate response. The vocabulary was exceedingly limited for even basic items like clothing, or even asking the price of something.

Also, there was evidence of insufficient knowledge of basic grammar. Common errors included:

- incorrect subject/verb agreement
- confusion in the use of *ser* and *estar*
- adjectives wrongly placed and used incorrectly

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

- *me* used interchangeably with yo.

Far too many candidates opted not to attempt to offer a response.

Guided Conversation

Again, in this area, a lack of vocabulary proved to be the main challenge, both in allowing candidates to understand the questions and in formulating rich answers.

Candidates had problems with the meanings of the interrogative pronouns and question phrases. Basically, there was a clear lack of knowledge, of simple vocabulary. In response to *¿Cómo es?*, most candidates gave a name instead of a description. Words like *deportista*, *tienda*, *pariente* were generally unknown.

The responses offered were too brief, and candidates should be encouraged to provide additional information after stating *Sí* or *No*.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

JANUARY 2007

SPANISH

SPANISH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION
JANUARY 2007

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

This paper, which is composed of two sections, tested candidates' ability to listen to and understand a number of aural items in the target language and to read and understand a number of written items. Both sections required candidates to have sufficient mastery of essential grammar and vocabulary. The good performance on this year's examination (36.59) was comparable to the performance of last year (35.02). However, the paper still provided grammatical difficulties for the weaker candidates. Some of the problems that candidates experienced dealt with:

- I Vocabulary – inability to understand words / terms such as
 - i. *solitarios*
 - ii. *comisaría*
 - iii. *despedida*
 - iv. *fábrica*
 - v. *informes*
 - vi. *un cuento vs una cuenta*

II The use of the subjunctive

III The structure: *Hace* + period of time + *que* + preterite = 'ago'
 For example, *Hace 22 años que se casaron.* OR *Se casaron hace 22 años.*

Candidates need to be given more practice in doing multiple-choice. They need to do exercises in Listening Comprehension on a regular basis, using both short and long passages. Teachers also need to expose candidates to a wide range of synonyms, antonyms and vocabulary related to their everyday experiences, thus enabling them to perform well on this paper.

Paper 02 - Free Response

Section 1 – Directed Situations

This section tested candidates' ability to respond in Spanish to a series of situations described in English and requiring written responses.

General Comments

The situations were straightforward and readily understood. Candidates responded extremely well to this section (a mean of 18.84 out of a maximum of 25 marks) and many candidates confidently attempted to use the subjunctive. However, there were the perennial minor grammatical mistakes. Among these were the following:

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure

- Lack of use/incorrect placement of ‘tilde’ as in *mañana*
- *En domingo*
- Absence of *que* after *siento* / use of *lo siento que*
- Use of *en* after *pensar* instead of *de*
- Agreement of *me gusta* / *gustan*
- *Corto* instead of *bajo* to describe a person
- *Me* instead of *mi*
- Appropriate use of disjunctive pronoun after *a* or *para*
- Incorrect spelling of *necesito*

Detailed Comments

Situation 1

Most candidates scored well on this item. Problem areas included the lack of use of *de* after *pensar*. One notable error was the construction which needed *piensas de que* + conjugated verb.

Situation 2

Many candidates had problems with *el domingo*, *a las* + time. Errors included *en domingo*, *a son ocho...* and *en dos de febrero – 2007*, where the *de* is missing.

Situation 3

This item was well done by the candidates. Most of them included the reason. Quite noticeable was the use of *ser* to show illness.

Situation 4

This item was fairly well done, although there were cases in which candidates incorrectly used the Imperative. In some instances, *levantar* was used instead of *lavar*.

Situation 5

Many candidates stopped short at saying “thanks”. In some instances, *gustar* was incorrectly used, as for example, *Me lo gusta* with the plural form - *Me gusta* las blusas**

Situation 6

Some candidates misunderstood the idea of good wishes. Some responses to this included *adiós*. Vocabulary errors included *suerca* instead of *suerte*. There was also lack of agreement, for example, *buen suerte* / *buenos suertes*.

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure

Situation 7

Candidates performed very well on this item. However, some of them mentioned personality traits rather than physical characteristics. Errors included incorrect agreement and position of adjectives, as well as the omission of the article as in *tiene los ojos marrones*.

Situation 8

In terms of interpretation, some candidates wrote about change in date rather than in time. Many candidates correctly used *sino*.

Situation 9

This item was fairly well done. Some candidates failed to give a reason for wanting the book – *un libro* instead of *el libro* to describe a particular book. In addition, there were many incorrect spelling variations of *necesito* and incorrect use of *por / para*.

Situation 10

Some candidates expressed different emotions instead of the correct ‘disappointment’. Some candidates used ‘disgust’, and others, ‘anger’. Some candidates also seemed to have problems with the use of ‘*lo siento*’.

Section II—Letter/Dialogue/Composition

This section tested candidates’ ability to produce a piece of Spanish of about 130-150 words based on an outline given in English. Candidates performed satisfactorily on this section (a mean of 16.74 out of a maximum 30 marks).

While all the questions were well within the range of candidates, most of them opted to do the letter or dialogue. The dialogue facilitated the writing for the weaker candidates who were able to use basic, simple questions on more than one occasion. For example, - *¿Cómo estás? / ¿Cuánto cuesta? / ¿Cómo te llamas?*

However, for many candidates the concept of a market became that of a mall. Tourists were being directed to stores such as “Payless” or to supermarkets. In the letter and composition, candidates focused on the development of just one or two points while the other points were rendered as one-liners. Perhaps for them, “keeping in touch” does not require much development. Admittedly, the percentage of better scripts was much higher than what is encountered in the June examination. It was heartening to see the correct use of the subjunctive in quite a number of scripts.

The following are examples of common mistakes made by candidates:

- The lack of the subjunctive or infinitive after verbs of emotion
Estoy contento que te encontré
- The date being rendered in words rather than figures
El once de febrero de dos mil siete
- Telephone numbers were also written in words
- ‘En’ used with the subjunctive instead of ‘de’
Fue el mejor en el mundo
- Incorrect use of the verb ‘gustar’
Te gusta - I like you
Mi mamá y mi papá gusta cocinar - My mother and father like to cook
- ‘Tiene’ used in place of ‘hay’
En el mercado tiene muchas frutas
- Inconsistency in the use of ‘usted’ and ‘tú’
- Reciprocity [each other] expressed as ‘cada otra’
- ‘Mí’ vs ‘mi’
- ‘Nuestro’ vs ‘nos’
Me divertí mucho en casa de nos familia*
- Use of ‘simpático’
El reloj es muy simpático / tu habitación es muy simpático
- ‘Con tu’ / ‘con mi’ instead of ‘contigo’ / ‘conmigo’
- Use of ‘estar’
La reunión estaba aburrido / la reunión estaba la semana pasada / la cena estaba deliciosa
- ‘Asistir’ vs ‘ayudar’
¿Quieres que yo asisto tu?
- ‘Reunir’ vs ‘conocer’ in Preterite = To meet
*Tienes que *reunir a mi novio / ...era muy chévere*reunirte*
- ‘Ir de compras’ vs ‘Hacer las compras’
*... ir al centro para *ir de compras...*
- ‘Tocar’ vs ‘jugar’
*Hay los vehículos que*juegan la música*
- ‘Pez’ vs ‘Pescado’
*...Preparan un plato de *pez y arroz*
- ‘Costumbre’ vs ‘Disfraz’
*Me divertí *mirar el color bonito y animado y *los *costumbres bonitos y únicos /
* La gente en Trinidad también le gusta llevar *más tipos de *linda *costumbres*
- ‘Pasatiempo’ vs ‘Estancia’
*Mi pasatiempo en Costa Rica *estuve muy divertido*
- ‘Estación de Policía’ vs ‘Comisaría’
*...a la derecha *del estación de policía...*

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure

- ‘Alrededor’ vs ‘Sobre’
*Escribis en *un carta a mí *alrededor *que dicen
- ‘Por’ vs ‘Para’
Nos preparamos *por el día de Navidad
- ‘Realizar’ vs ‘Darse cuenta de (que)’
...pero cuando *encontrámos *realizé que tu *estabas una persona muy simpática...

There were instances of the linguistic phenomenon of “interference” in the following cases:

- ...como *encuentramos por *un accidente for por casualidad

Also : *ese es*el parte*me*gusté el más

Section III - Reading Comprehension

This section tested candidates’ ability to read and comprehend a short passage in the target language. The questions on the passage and the candidates’ answers were in English.

Candidates appeared not to have practised this type of question enough in order to develop the skills required to gain optimum marks. Performance was satisfactory on this section (a mean of 7.09 out of a maximum 15 marks). Weaker candidates made up a story around the few words which they understood.

The better candidates may have understood the passage but in many instances, they failed to answer fully or express this understanding well enough.

Question 1

Some candidates interpreted “what happened” to refer to Fernando throwing the glass at the mirror.

Question 2

Some candidates failed to mention Fernando being afraid when he saw himself in the mirror. Many of them also interpreted ‘vaso’ as vase.

Question 3

Many candidates failed to mention that Fernando was burnt by the hot coffee.

Question 4

Most candidates answered this question correctly.

Question 5

Most candidates answered “black pants” correctly, but failed to interpret “*abrigo de color oscuro*” correctly. Some interpreted it as “top/vest/sweater”.

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure

Question 6

The majority of candidates were unable to correctly interpret “agarrar”. Some candidates felt that Fernando was going to run down the thief “with the car”.

Question 7

Many candidates performed well on this question and mentioned the wife as being “the thief that he was about to hit”.

Section IV—Expanded Paragraph

This section tested candidates’ ability to use written cues to produce a continuous and coherent paragraph of 80-100 words.

The performance of candidates in this section varied from excellent to poor, with a mean score of 9.62 out of a possible 20. Some candidates produced paragraphs written in a logical manner. They used all the cues given and marked transitions with suitable link words. They also used appropriate vocabulary and idioms and showed mastery in the use of the structures they chose. Many of them satisfied the rubric with regard to length of answer.

However, there were those candidates who reproduced the phrases exactly as written in the cues; for example, - “*los animales capturados*” instead of “*los animales fueron capturados.*” Some words such as ‘*jaula*’ and ‘*lucha*’ seemed unfamiliar to many candidates.

There was no widespread use of idiomatic expressions except by the superior candidates.

Points to watch:

- Candidates must be careful to keep within the length stipulated (80-100 words) for the expanded paragraph. Candidates must not write an introduction to their paragraph, before beginning to use the cues, as they squander in this way, some of the words at their disposal. Candidates who do this find themselves unable to include all the cues, because of their long preamble, and are penalized for failing to complete their paragraph or include all the cues within the stipulated length.
- Candidates must try not to introduce unnecessary errors into their work by copying carelessly words that have been supplied to them in the cues.

Paper 03 - Oral Examination

This paper tested candidates' ability a) to read aloud a short passage in the target language; b) to produce appropriate responses in the target language in a number of simulations; and c) to respond in the target language to general questions based on 3 out of 6 topics indicated in the syllabus.

Section 1 – Reading

Performance in the oral examination ranged from excellent to poor. Excellent candidates paid attention to pronunciation, stress and intonation. They were fluent in their delivery of the passage and produced little or no staccato renditions. Weaker candidates disconnected words from phrases, displaying a lack of comprehension.

Problems with consonants:

The consonant “g” presented problems to a number of candidates especially in “ge” and “gi”, as in “*elegir*” and “*escoger*”.

There were difficulties with stress; candidates stressed the last syllable of the verbs conjugated in the third person plural:

*Interesar - interesán**

*Incluir - incluyén**

*Ofrecer - ofrecén**

*Comenzar - comienzán**

*Guardar - guardán**

Other errors included the following:

Agreement of nouns and adjectives

Agreement of subject and verb

Omission of the ‘personal a’

Idioms with ‘*tener*’

Use of ‘*bien*’ for ‘*bueno*’ and vice versa

Confusion of the command form

Problems with vowels:

Some vowels proved difficult for candidates to distinguish and the pronunciation of these vowels was interchanged. ‘*Elaborada*’ became ‘*alaborada*’, and ‘*adolescente*’ became ‘*adolayscente*’.

Some candidates experienced difficulty with words such as:

fallecimientos

involucrarse

diversidad

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure

tecnología
contemporáneo
exquisita

Section 2 – Responses to Situations

This section was generally well done. Candidates responded appropriately although there were the few who used 2nd person singular when they should have used 1st person.

Some of the common grammatical errors in this section were:

Gracias para
Una otra
Mi prefiero
Yo prefiero
Me vestó

A few candidates seemed to lack the relevant vocabulary to answer the situations suitably. Some situations were also misinterpreted so that the candidates' answers were inappropriate. Other candidates were unable to use commands and subjunctives in their responses. There were also problems with 'ser' and 'estar' and the demonstrative adjective.

Generally, there were appropriate responses, and fluency was, for the most part, satisfactory.

Section 3 – Guided Conversation

While most candidates seemed to understand the questions, some of them lacked the spontaneity and fluency expected at this level. Some candidates showed a lack of command of vocabulary, for example, 'nuevas' for 'noticias' – 'miramos las neuveas'.

Other candidates misunderstood the questions asked and gave inappropriate responses.

The questions on the topics 'Shopping' and 'Sports' were well done. The ability to change to 1st person answer form was satisfactory.

However, there were some notable grammar mistakes such as:

*En los sábados**

Some candidates experienced difficulty negotiating the meaning of some questions and even words such as:

¿Cuándo? / ¿Dónde? / ¿Cómo?

Overall, pronunciation was satisfactory.

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION
CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2007

SPANISH

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SPANISH

GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

MAY/JUNE 2007

GENERAL COMMENTS

There were varying levels of performance ranging from excellent to poor with the overall performance being comparable to 2006. Several candidates demonstrated high levels of linguistic competence, spontaneity, fluency and accuracy.

It is important for candidates to be exposed to as many real-life situations as possible. Teachers are encouraged to be innovative and creative in teaching their students the difficult aspects of the language. Learning through dramatization, simulation and other fun-filled activities facilitates much retention and the development of communicative and other skills. Visits to Spanish-speaking countries and weekend intensive practice sessions could be organised by teachers.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01- Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprises two sections, tests candidates' ability to listen to and understand a number of aural items in the target language and to read and understand a number of written items. Both sections require candidates to have sufficient mastery of essential grammar and vocabulary. The performance on this year's paper was comparable to that of previous years.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section 1 - Directed Situations

This question demands that candidates identify the function for which the situation forms the context, and demonstrate their control of appropriate grammatical structures and knowledge of relevant vocabulary in clearly worded, concise responses. The better candidates were able to satisfy these requirements. Candidates' performance on the whole ranged from outstanding to occasions when no attempt was made to answer the questions in the section.

Situation 1

“You are in the dentist's office after an extraction and need to speak to him/her urgently about your condition. What note do you give to the receptionist?”

Candidates failed to mention the urgency required for this question and focussed more on the condition instead. As a result, words such as *ahora*, *en seguida*, *inmediatamente* were not used. Vocabulary also posed a challenge, for example, “dentist”, and some candidates referred to other parts of the body in their answers besides the teeth or mouth. Some candidates had problems with the use of *me duele (n)...*, *tengo dolor de...* and *hablar con*. Many candidates were using *hablar a...* .

Situation 2

“Your brother/sister has gone out wearing something that belongs to you. What note do you leave on his/her room door to express your annoyance?”

This situation was generally fairly well done, but there were problems with the subjunctive, especially with commands – negative forms.

Situation 3

“Your family doctor has set up an e-mail service which allows patients to request the date and time of an appointment. What do you write to set up your appointment?”

Many candidates wrote answers which effectively fulfilled the function of requesting an appointment. However, quite a few stated the date but failed to include the time as well.

Situation 4

“You have missed an important meeting with the guidance counsellor. Write the brief note of explanation you send to him/her with another student.”

This situation was handled well by many candidates. Some candidates gave apologies instead of explanations. Those who wrote apologies frequently encountered difficulties with the subjunctive especially in expressions such as –*Siento que yo novenga*. *

Situation 5

“You are walking through the lobby of a hotel while the floor is being mopped. What sign do you see to alert guests?”

Generally candidates provided the information adequately. There is a need, however, to reinforce the need to use additional information with *cuidado*, for example – *Piso mojado*.

Situation 6

“Your father is travelling to Spain on business and asks you to e-mail his arrival information to the hotel. What do you write?”

Some candidates did not include a name to make the identity of the parent clear to the receiver of the message. For the most part, however, candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the situation.

Situation 7

“You are overseas watching television when you hear a friend of yours has won a prize in a literary competition. Write the email you send to him/her.”

This situation was generally well done by the majority of candidates. The use of *felicidad** should be discouraged. Only the plural *felicidades** is acceptable.

Situation 8

“You have to prepare a dish for dinner and find that you are missing one ingredient. Leave a note for your mother saying what you have gone to buy.”

Most candidates responded adequately/correctly to this situation. Limited vocabulary restricted some candidates. Problems with *por* and *para* were particularly noticeable in this section.

Situation 9

“You are trying to study for your examinations, but everybody keeps interrupting you. Write the sign you hang on your door.”

Generally this situation was fairly well handled. A few candidates lacked mastery of the negative command form and wrote instructions such as – *no molesta**.

Situation 10

“You missed a test at school and you need to explain to your teacher the reason. You send an e-mail. What does the e-mail say?”

This situation, just as in situation 4, was confused with an apology by some candidates who did not provide an explanation after apologising.

Main Problems Occurring in Section 1

Ser / estar

Por / para

Lo siento /siento followed by infinitive

Negative commands

Limited Vocabulary

Sample Responses

The following are excellent examples of responses submitted by candidates.

- (1) *Necesito hablar con el dentista lo más pronto posible.*
- (2) *Estoy muy enojada porque saliste con mi falda.*
- (3) *Me gustaría hacer una cita para el dos de mayo a las nueve de la mañana.*
- (4) *Lo siento pero no vine porque me sentía enferma.*
- (5) *Tengan cuidado porque el suelo está mojado.*
- (6) *José Jimenez llegará al hotel a las dos de la madrugada con dos maletas.*
- (7) *¡Felicitaciones!*
- (8) *Mamá, salí a comprar una zanahoria.*
- (9) *Estoy estudiando así no me molesten.*
- (10) *Señorita, lo siento pero no vine al colegio porque me sentía enferma.*

Section 2 – Letter/ Composition

This section is intended to assess the candidates’ ability to produce written language within the parameters set out by the syllabus. In addition to mastery of relevant vocabulary, idiom

and language structure, the ability to express ideas clearly and coherently is emphasized. The two options given were the letter and the composition, each of which was marked out of 30.

Most candidates wrote within the given context of the question. Stronger candidates were very creative in their approach while the weaker ones merely tried to answer each part of the questions, sometimes resulting in a very short version of the questions. The format of the letter was generally respected although some candidates still wrote the date in words rather than in figures.

It must be noted, however, that there were several scripts where similar errors were repeated. Generally candidates were able to meet the word length required. Some still need to be reminded about the 130 – 150 words. Those who went above were generally competent candidates in the very good category. Those who were below were the ones who could not write an acceptable level of Spanish.

Grammatical content

Inability to use the preterite/imperfect tenses. There were instances where the imperfect was used instead of the preterite, for example, *nosotros bailábamos y comíamos. Nosotros mirábamos la televisión.* In some instances candidates were unable to use the preterite and used the present, for example, *yo recibo un libro, mi abuela cocina. Mi cantante canta.* The imperfect *había* was not used, instead candidates used *hay* or *allí está**

Areas of concern

1. The irregular preterite tense was a problem; for example, *mi mamá hizo un pastel.* Mis padres me dijeron*, mis amigos venieron.* Mi mamá deme.* Andamos.**

2. *Ser* vs *estar* were incorrectly used in several cases.

- i. *Mis amigos fueron allí**
- ii. *Yo era sorprendido**
- iii. *La fiesta está fantástica.**
- iv. *El regalo estaba una bicicleta**

3. Position of Object pronouns

- Mis padres dieronme**
*Mi papa dígame**
*Mi cantante besome**
*Mi novio besame**

4. Subjunctive

This generally was not properly handled except by the very good candidates.
Mis padres me dijeron que no llegas tarde

5. Agreements

- Subject verb
*Todo el mundo baileron**
*Mi novio y yo fui al concierto**

Noun adjective

*Mi comida favorito**

*Mi actriz favorito**

*Carne asado**

*Otros todos el mundo**

*Mis cumpleaños mucho personas todos las personas.**

6. Incorrect word order

i. *mi cumpleaños fiesta*

ii. *mi padre casa*

iii. *Air Supply concierto*

7. Inappropriate vocabulary

rosado - *asado*

holla - *hola*

perro - *pero*

tiempo - *vez*

dolores - *dólares*

carro - *caro*

delante de - *antes de*

que - *aquel*

se - *conozco*

reglas - *regales*

gusta - *como*

dar - *recibir*

8. Nouns used for verbs

nosotros *natación**

ellos *besos**

*él concierto**

*él alvazos**

*sorpresame**

9. Personal 'a' omitted

Mi madre invitó mis abuelas

Yo vi mi cantante favorito

10. *Para* vs *Por*

El canté por me

yo recibe un carro por mi cumpleaños

11. Spelling of "cumpleaños"

Use of "*cumpleaños feliz*" - *cumpleaños fiesta** for birthday party

12. Accentuation

13. Subject - verb concordance

Allí era for había

14. Conjugation of *sentir*
Use of *lo siento que* + subjunctive instead of *Siento que* + subjunctive
15. *A mi fiesta** instead of *en mi fiesta*
16. Use of *ser* / *estar*
17. *Y* becoming *e* before *i/hi*
18. Use of Imperfect vs Preterite
19. Disregard for sequence of tenses
20. *Cartas* / *cartes* for cards – birthday card
21. Position of adjective
22. Use of *su* to end letter – this attests to the familiar vs formal divide
23. Omission of *tan* in expressions - *¡Qué noche tan buena!*
24. Use of subjunctive after *siento que, espero que*
25. Irregular preterites – *venir, server*
26. *Para nos* when the candidates want to write *para nosotros*

Other Areas of Concern

Grammar

1. Poor sentence structure
Example: *Mi favorito comida en mi cumpleañosfiesta**
2. Incorrect agreement and placement of adjectives (of all types)
Example: *mi primos, mis cumpleaños, rojo carro, favorito artista, blanco blusa**
3. Minimal comprehension of the use of *gustar*
Example: *había mucha comida gusta pollo, arroz...**
4. Preterite conjugation of radical changing verbs
Example: *Todos mis amigos venieron a la fiesta. Me divertí mucho.**
5. Incorrect gender and use of definite and indefinite articles with nouns
Example: *Recibí la coche de mi padre**
6. Description of colour
Example: *una falda roja vs una falda de color rojo.*
7. Use of *haber* – past tense and pluralisation
Example: *En mi fiesta ayer hay mucha comida. Habían muchas personas**
8. Misuse of accents distorting meaning → especially the preterite tense

Example: *hablo, mama, que, como*

9. The use of *por* versus *para*
Example: *Había una fiesta por mi cumpleaños**
10. Inappropriate use of adjectives
Example: *la fiesta fue simpática*
11. Inappropriate pluralisation
Example: *las comidas, las gentes**
12. Placement of object pronouns
Example: *Mi mamá regaló me unos discos compactos. Mi abuela diome un regalo.**
13. *Me* vs *mi*
Example: *Mis padres mi dieron un regalo.**
14. Lack of punctuation

Vocabulary

1. Limited vocabulary as related to themes
2. Poor spelling
Example: *Fútbol* vs football
3. Very few scripts with correct use of the verb *sorprender* versus *una sorpresa*
Example: *Estaba sorpresa**
4. Describing overall look
Example: *Yo mire muy bien.* (*estar* could be used in this case)*

Good Points Noted

It was heartening to see scripts which included good use of adverbs – *especialmente, felizmente, desafortunadamente*. There was a wide variety of idiomatic expressions.

Estar sin blanca – to have no money / to be broke / to be down and out

Echar / tener / hacer una fiesta – to have a party

Chillar – to shout

Tener buena pinta / mala pinta - to look good / bad

De sol a sol – from dusk to dawn

En un dos por tres – in the twinkling of an eye

Me chifla / - I just love

The following is an example of an excellent letter.

Miércoles el 11 de enero de 2006.

Queridísima Maria:

¿Cómo estás? Gracias por tu carta. Estoy escribiendo para decirte de mi fiesta de cumpleaños reciente.

La fiesta comenzó a las seis de la tarde. En un abrir y cerrar de ojos, la casa se llenó de charlas y risas de parientes y amigos. Estaba muy sorprendida de ver a mi mejor amiga de la infancia, Carla. También, nuestro cantante favorito, Alejandro Sanz, quien fue invitado por mis padres, asistió a la fiesta.

A la fiesta, había mucha comida deliciosa por ejemplo el arroz con pollo, el gazpacho y mi plato favorito, la paella. Durante la fiesta, un helicóptero aterrizó en el patio y el piloto me entregó una guitarra que quería desde hacía mucho tiempo. ¡Qué sorpresa! También recibí las joyas, el dinero y una computadora.

Chica, fue un día inolvidable de veras. Bueno, saludos de mi parte a tu familia y escribeme pronto.

*Cariñosamente,
Isabela.*

Section 3 – Contextual Announcement/ Contextual Dialogue

These items were tested for the first time this year and most candidates chose to do the announcement.

This section of Paper 02 requires candidates to choose either to write (i) a contextual announcement or (ii) a contextual dialogue completion. Cues given in English were provided for both options.

There was a wide range of responses for both questions, as candidates produced no answers, to limited answers, to very precise and well thought-out answers.

Contextual Announcement

Some candidates did not read the instructions carefully and this was evident in their omission of some of the cues; in particular the title of the announcement and the fact that the trip was going to another Caribbean Territory (Tobago, Jamaica) rather than a Spanish-speaking country. Some of the responses were very disjointed and hence lacked fluency and clarity of expression. This was primarily due to the omission of vocabulary, the misuse of prepositions (*viaje de Venezuela*), misspellings, a general lack of knowledge of words (*cinco cientos** for *quinientos*) and poor sentence structure. Also, candidates were quite insensitive to the language as they interchanged the use of the familiar and polite command forms and general subject and verb agreement. There was the improper use of tenses, in particular the preterite and future tenses in both the regular and irregular forms (the verb forms carried no accents and their spellings were poor).

Contextual Dialogue

Candidates made some poor attempts at answering this question because of a general lack of comprehension. In some instances, they wrote back either exactly or some parts of what the manager said for their responses, and therefore, the latter made no sense as they did not include any of the given cues.

There was the use of the *tú* form when addressing the manager instead of the polite form of *usted* and very simple expressions were poorly used.

From the outset, it was clear that some candidates lacked vocabulary. The word *plancha* was unknown and was, therefore substituted with *nevera, bicicleta, radio, televisión, appliance** and even sugar. *Regresar** and *volver** were used to replace *devolver* and *trabajar**, *andar** and *server** were used for *funcionar*.

There were also errors with word order whether it was a pronoun or an adjective. For example *La plancha es no trabajar**, *Mi mama viene a ver tu* or *mi mama no es idiota**, *leio las**; *Mi mama quiere una nuevo plancha**. From these latter examples, it can be said that these errors in subject and verb and noun and adjective agreement may not be only due to a lack of knowledge, but possibly poor spelling habits or simple carelessness.

There was the inappropriate use of the subjunctive (*Mi mamá quiere tu devolver ella dinero**) but this, as well as the use of idiomatic expressions, was mastered by the really good students. It was observed that although the Contextual Dialogue was attempted by most candidates, the majority of them performed better in the Contextual Announcement.

In some instances, candidates improvised by using English and French insertions, so that the meaning was still conveyed and their thoughts flowed freely. It must also be noted, that some candidates ignored given instructions since they answered both questions and presented the announcement like an advertisement or poster, aided by colourful drawings.

Quite a few candidates either did BOTH the announcement and dialogue, or they created their own dialogues. Also, many candidates interpreted the announcement as an advertisement and as such, many of them failed to make the minimum word limit because of how they chose to present their announcement. Candidates must be properly prepared using Spanish papers to do this question.

Common errors encountered:

1. Use of the past participle instead of the preterite.
2. Poor and often incorrect conjugation of the future tense – subject – verb agreement and irregular verbs
**Deciré* instead of *diré*
*Veniré**
*Saliremos**
3. Incorrect and sometimes non-existent punctuation.
4. Grave spelling errors.
5. Confusion of *por* and *para, ser* and *estar*
6. Indirect and direct object pronouns were badly used or in some cases such as subject pronouns.
7. Use of *porque* instead of *pero*
8. Absence of the personal “*a*”
9. Position and agreement of adjectives.

10. *Regresar* was often used instead of *devolver* (Dialogue)
11. *Interesante* replaced *interesado*
12. *Tener* instead of *Haber*
13. *Culpa* instead of *error*
14. Confusion of *De nada* and *Bienvenido* and a general misuse of *bienvenido*.
15. Familiar and polite address was misused or intermixed in the dialogue.
16. Inconsistency in use of the commands.
17. *Funcionar* was frequently – *no trabaja**
*No está trabajando**
as opposed to *No funciona/sirve*
18. The subjunctive was also poorly used on many occasions.
19. The literal expression *No problema* instead of *no hay problema*
20. *Poder* was poorly conjugated / used.
21. Incorrect format for writing dates and numbers in the hundreds / thousands.
22. Capital letters were used for days and months.

With reference to general vocabulary usage, a few common threads were evident.

1. Candidates did not know how to say “Spanish-speaking country” – hence expressions such as *un español hablando país**
2. They also did not know how to say “a trip” hence *el tripo** or *la tripa**.
3. *El clubo/clube** was often encountered as well as the placement of words, for example, *El español clube**
4. There was the confusion of *buena* and *bien* (dialogue)
5. In the dialogue quite a few candidates were not aware of what appliance was being referred to and as a result many of them placed their “own” appliances into the dialogue.
6. Candidates did not know their number vocabulary – especially with irregular hundreds – *cinco cientos**
*un mil**
7. “*Problema*” was made feminine
8. *Tener un buen tiempo** as opposed to *divertirse*
9. There was often *un viaje de** instead of *un viaje a*.
10. Confusion of *dejar* with *salir*

11. Misuse of *gusta/gustaría*
12. *Eso* instead of *que* (relative pronoun)
Yo diré a mi mama eso...
13. *La cuesta** was used instead of *el costo / precio*
14. *La cultura española* was badly used in relation to Spanish/Hispanic culture or culture of other countries.
15. Candidates also did not know how to say e-mail
16. *Llamar* – to call with phone numbers was not followed by “al” as it should have been.

Common Spelling errors encountered:

1. *Dólares / dolores*
2. *Atención*
3. *Señor*
4. *Professor / proffesor*
5. *Apprender*
6. *España*
7. *Columbia*
8. *Oportunidad*
9. *Asta*
10. *Quatro* and other numbers

Candidates frequently omitted accents – *Mamá, adiós, país*

11. *Hora* and *tiempo* was used instead of *vez*
12. *Uno oro*
13. *Mucho* and *muy* confused often.
14. The contractions *de + el* and *a + el* were not done.

The following is an example of an excellent response for the contextual announcement.

¡VAMOS A VENEZUELA!

¡El club de español te ofrece un viaje a Venezuela!

*Todo el mundo puede participar en el viaje
y cuesta solamente cinco mil dólares.*

*Saldremos el dos de julio y pasaremos una semana
en el país hermoso de Venezuela.*

*Ven y participa en el viaje y puede aprender la
cultura hispana, puede encontrar a gente nueva en
Venezuela y puede ir de compras.*

*Disfrutarás las playas bellas y los museos
interesantes.*

¡Reserva ya su plaza para el viaje!

*Para más información llama a 623-8253
o habla con la profesora de español.*

Section IV – Reading Comprehension

The performance in this section ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory. Many candidates demonstrated high levels of comprehension while there were some who had difficulty responding to some items and a few who never provided any responses at all. Some candidates even created their own story.

Questions 1, 4, 7 and 8 seemed to have been the most easily understood questions for the majority of the candidates. Question 2, though understood by some, proved difficult to others who did not know the meaning of *antipático* and gave renditions such as “antipatic” and “anticipate”. A lack of the necessary vocabulary was also observed for questions 5 and 6 where *saludó con la mano* was commonly rendered as *she saluted them* or *she raised her hand* and *no volvimos a verla* as *we didn't return to see her*. *Triste* was translated as “thirsty”, *plumas* as “plums” and “pens” and *vestido* as “vest”, *rojo* was confused with *reloj* and some candidates said Teresita was wearing a watch.

The question which proved to be the most challenging for the majority of the candidates was question number 10. Many did not know the meaning of *pajarito* and gave meanings such as *parrot*, *pyjamas* and *parakeet*. Also, the verb *recordamos* was translated to be “records”.

Some candidates ignored instructions and answered questions in Spanish. Teachers need to remind candidates to read instructions carefully and let them know that responses in Spanish for this question are unacceptable.

The overall performance was satisfactory and can be improved in the future if teachers give candidates more practice in answering comprehension items, especially where they are required to make inferences. However, in this comprehension, candidates were not required to make inferences. The passage was quite literal yet some candidates tended to make inferences of number 7 and number 10. In the former, some responded that Don Sebastian responded harshly and was lying to the children and in number 10 some compared the personalities of Don Sebastian to Teresita. Also, candidates need to be exposed to as wide a variety of vocabulary as possible so that they would do very well in this section.

Paper 03 – Oral Examination

Performance on this section of the oral examination ranged from outstanding to very weak. There were some excellent candidates who provided fully appropriate responses since they understood the functions involved. The productions of the better prepared candidates were spontaneously presented and reflected mastery of the structures, knowledge of appropriate vocabulary including expressions peculiar to specific functions.

There were however, several weak candidates whose responses revealed that they had not acquired the strategies and techniques required to perform satisfactorily. They lacked the necessary vocabulary and grammar to express themselves, and also showed deficiencies in terms of their overall fluency and pronunciation. Many struggled to find appropriate vocabulary to express feelings, give directions, explanations or reasons and offer excuses.

While some responses were partially appropriate, candidates lost marks because of the several grammatical inaccuracies rendered. Areas of the grammar that seemed to be problematic include:

- the use of the polite and familiar commands
- subject - verb agreement
- inability to use the Preterite tense correctly
- incorrect use of the Present Subjunctive
- incorrect use of the *Ser* and *Estar*
- failure to make noun and adjective agreement
- inappropriate conjugation of verbs
- use of the infinitive instead of the conjugated verb
- incorrect placement of **no** in a negative statement

With regard to vocabulary, candidates frequently made up words, used French words (*regarder, premier, etage*) or used incorrect vocabulary - e.g. *regresar* instead of *devolver*.

Reading Aloud

Candidates' performance this section ranged from limited to outstanding with the majority falling in the "good" range. While many candidates showed adequate knowledge of the sound system, exhibiting correct pronunciation and stress, several candidates had problems in the areas of fluency and pronunciation. Candidates had problems with the "ge" and "gf" sounds, mispronouncing words like:

Argentina
geografia
ecologia
biologia
originaria

Also, many candidates encountered difficulties with the "ll", "h", and "j": sounds, as evidenced by the incorrect pronunciation of the following words:

ejemplo
humanidad
historico
paellera
polio

Many of the vowels proved quite daunting for some candidates, resulting in the poor delivery of such words as:

polenque
decimos
agradable
independiente

The perennial problem of anglicizing words which resembled English resurfaced. The English influence was dominant in the underlined sections of the following words.

cultura
populares
publicado
declarado
Universidad
internacionales
revolución
funcionan
Europa
especialidades
diferencias
adultos

In longer words, especially English cognates, syllables were collapsed and vowels were omitted. Some notable examples included:

interes (intres)
interesante (intresante)
prepararla (preprarla)
creatividad (criativdad)
artesanía (artensia)
pertenecen (pertencen)
variada (varidad)

Incorrect stress was noted most often in words such as:

selvas
ofrecen
canastas
ultimas
exquisita
pertenecen
incluyen
merecen
encuentran
reflejan

Guided Conversation

It seems that this section proved most challenging for many candidates. Some candidates understood all the questions asked, responded readily, used a wide range of vocabulary and handled the language fairly well with minimal errors.

The large majority however, had difficulty in comprehending a number of the questions on all sections. Many candidates lacked spontaneity for the most part, and frequently requested a repeat of the questions. Too many high frequency words were unknown - *viajar*, *extranjero*,

idioma. Many candidates did not understand "*recreo*", *mejorarla*, *un lugar de interes*, *fuera de casa*, *juntos*, *un almacén*, *ventajas*.

Due to the lack of comprehension of basic vocabulary, many candidates were unable to respond fluently or accurately to a number of the questions. Vocabulary was generally very sparse. Candidates tended to misinterpret basic interrogatives:

¿Quiénes son?

¿Cómo es?

¿En qué ocasiones ...?

The errors were numerous and included:

- incorrect noun /adjective /verb /article agreement
- (*yo estudia*, *la español*, *el libros*, *los montanas son hermoso*)
- incorrect verb structures (*me gusta leo/ comiendo*, *me gustaria visitaria/ visito*, *son muchas flores*)
- responding using same verb form of the question asked (*¿Que prefieres . . . ?*
- *Yo prefieres . . .*)
- lack of comprehension, where candidates named items instead of describing.

Overall, marks were lost because of poor grammar, poor syntax and limited vocabulary. While candidates may have understood the questions and responded without much hesitation, there was very little attempt to elaborate or go beyond the rudimentary.

General Comments

Teachers need to use this report to guide them in their teaching. The same errors seem to be repeated year after year. Effort should be made to provide Oral Practice. Candidates should also be made to think of the functions of language especially for Section I. More practice is needed in Reading Comprehension.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE
JANUARY 2008**

SPANISH

SPANISH

GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

JANUARY 2008

GENERAL COMMENTS

There were varying levels of performance ranging from excellent to poor with the overall performance being comparable to 2007. Several candidates demonstrated high levels of linguistic competence, spontaneity, fluency and accuracy.

It is important for candidates to be exposed to as many real-life situations as possible. Teachers are encouraged to be innovative and creative in teaching their students the difficult aspects of the language. Learning through dramatization, simulation and other fun-filled activities facilitates much retention and the development of communicative and other skills. Visits to Spanish-speaking countries and weekend intensive practice sessions could be organized by teachers.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprises two sections, tests candidates' ability to listen to and understand a number of aural items in the target language and to read and understand a number of written items. Both sections require candidates to have sufficient mastery of essential grammar and vocabulary.

The overall performance on this paper was satisfactory. The main difficulties candidates seemed to face were related to vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. Words such as *enfadada*, *casamiento*, *periódico*, *revista*, *deportivo* proved challenging. Candidates should be taught how to recognize cognates and use them to guide comprehension. *Eufórica*, should have been associated with euphoric. Additionally, candidates should be guided to make connections between different words. For instance, students know *casarse*, the verb. Hence, *casamiento* should have been easy to understand.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section I – Directed Situations

This question demands that candidates identify the function for which the situation forms the context, and demonstrate their control of appropriate grammatical structures and knowledge of relevant vocabulary in clearly worded, concise responses. The better candidates were able to satisfy these requirements. Candidates' performance on the whole ranged from outstanding to occasions when no attempt was made to answer the questions in the section.

Candidates are reminded that they must relate their responses to the situation provided. There is a tendency for candidates to write general responses which do not fulfil a FUNCTION which relates to the specific situation given.

*An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Situation 1

You are going out with friends but would like your brother to collect you at a specific time and place. Write the note you leave him.

The majority of candidates tended to omit the first part of the rubric “collecting the person.” In some cases, the verb *coleccionar* was used and those who attempted to use the verb *venir*, used *para* instead of *por* for “come for me.”

Situation 2

Send an email to a friend giving details of an end-of-year activity at your school.

Candidates who attempted to use the future tense used it incorrectly in many instances. There were also candidates who used the words *haber* or *hacer*, instead of *tener*. ‘A’ was also frequently used instead of ‘en’.

Situation 3

You have been given an assignment but do not understand the task. Write the email you send to your teacher requesting assistance.

Many candidates simply stated that the task was difficult, but did not **request assistance**, which is what they were required to do. The familiar form *tú* was frequently used even though candidates were speaking to their teachers. Additionally *asistir* was repeatedly used in place of *ayudar*.

Situation 4

You have applied for a job but have not received any response. Send an email to the manager expressing your concern.

Many candidates did not perform the function of stating/expressing concern. They wrote very general answers and in some cases even lifted sections of the comprehension.

Situation 5

Your parents are reluctant to buy you an article which you really want. Write the note you leave in which you make a promise to them if they purchase the article for you.

This was fairly well done although in some cases, candidates wrote **promio*, or **promito* for *prometo*.

Situation 6

Your friend has been hospitalized after being involved in an accident. Write the note you send expressing your regret.

Several candidates simply wrote *lo siento* without reason. Many of those who used *siento que*, failed to use the subjunctive.

*An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Situation 7

You go with friends to the cinema, but are met with a notice stating that the film you wanted to see is not being shown. Write the note which explains when and at what time the film will be shown.

The writing of both the date and time proved problematic for many candidates. Common errors were *en* – **en el jueves* and *son* – **a son las doce*.

Situation 8

You are shopping and go to the section where you know your favourite food is kept. However, you find the shelves empty and a notice informing customers of a problem with the item. What does the notice say?

Many candidates incorrectly used the word *mimado* for spoilt. They must be reminded that this is usually used with children.

Situation 9

Your sister has just bought a new book. Write the note of advice she has placed in it.

Many candidates misunderstood this situation and described the book without giving advice. Other candidates provided advice, but did not relate it to the book. General advice such as *¡Cuidado!* was not appropriate. *¡No toques mi libro!* would have been better advice.

Situation 10

Write a note expressing good wishes to your friend who is about to participate in a competition.

Several candidates offered congratulations instead of good wishes before the person had participated in the competition.

Section II – Letter/Composition

This section is intended to assess the candidates' ability to produce written language within the parameters set out by the syllabus. In addition to mastery of relevant vocabulary, idiom and language structure, the ability to express ideas clearly and coherently is emphasized. The two options given were the letter and the composition, each of which was marked out of 30.

In general, the performance on this question was satisfactory. The essays and letters showed that the writing skill needs to be given more attention. Fairly good scripts showed good structures, idiomatic expressions and attempts to use the subjunctive accurately.

Weaker scripts revealed the following:

- Lack of vocabulary

*An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

- Frequent errors of grammar
 - poor use of pronouns, for example, *No puedo ir con tú**
 - expressing sorrow – *estoy mucho lo siento*
 - confusion – *y lavar* and *levantar*, for example, *levantaré la ropa*
 - problems with ‘*ser*’ and ‘*estar*’
 - problems of agreement – *la comida y la música es muy bien**

A few scripts were incoherent as candidates just wrote words in any order and without any consideration for how language functions.

Candidates could be helped by exposing them to more written Spanish. In other words, they should read more and practise writing short prose pieces more frequently. A good knowledge of vocabulary is indispensable to this exercise.

Section III – Contextual Announcement/Contextual Dialogue

This section was first tested in the May/June 2007 examination. It requires candidates to choose either to write (i) a Contextual Announcement or (ii) a Contextual Dialogue Completion. Cues given in English are provided for both options.

Most candidates chose the Dialogue Completion, but few of them used the opportunity to use language creatively and innovatively. The use of language showed basic structures, and copying from the comprehension. Candidates should be cautioned about taking entire passages from the comprehension without relating them to the context given.

Candidates need to be guided to write the Contextual Announcement either as a continuous paragraph or in bulleted format. Either way all the cues need to be included.

The majority of candidates’ performed satisfactorily. A small percentage achieved superior performance.

Candidates must be reminded of the need to establish register – formal or informal – *tú* or *Ud*, based on the context provided.

Section IV - Reading Comprehension

The performance on this section was good. Most candidates attempted this section and in general, demonstrated good comprehension of the passage. The main problem identified with candidates’ responses is their difficulty with English. When candidates cannot express themselves in English, the meaning they want to communicate can become distorted. While candidates are not penalized for English grammar, they need to use language clearly and effectively. Some vocabulary problems were also evident as candidates often translated *mujer* as “manager”, *presentarse* as “to present” and *ísimo* at the end of *contento* was misunderstood by some candidates, so that “very happy” was understood only as “happy”.

*An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Responses to Questions

Question 1

What had Ramón just completed?

Some candidates wrote that Ramón completed his exams leaving out the fact that they were his final examinations.

Question 2

What was he concerned about?

Most candidates emphasized Ramón's finding a job, while the question was about what he was going to do after he graduated.

Question 3

To whom did he write?

The majority of candidates responded accurately to this question.

Question 4

Why was Ramón disappointed?

Candidates focused on how Ramón had studied hard but was unable to find a job.

Question 5

What career did Ramón wanted to pursue?

The word *abogado* was interpreted as banker, business man, accountant, school.

Question 6

Who finally telephoned him?

Many candidates did not state specifically that a woman from the bank called. They simply said the bank called.

Question 7

What information did Ramón receive via the telephone call?

Most candidates mentioned 'interview' but did not state that the interview would be on the following day. Some candidates who did not understand presentarse wrote that he had to make a presentation.

*An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Question 8

How did he react to the information he received?

Contentísimo was interpreted as simply 'happy'. A few candidates said that he celebrated.

Question 9

With whom did Ramón share the good news?

Most candidates responded appropriately. A few wrote 'father', instead of 'parents', for *padres*.

Question 10

Explain why there was a feeling of anxiety among everyone.

Most candidates answered appropriately. However, some did not understand 'anxiety'.

Paper 03 – Oral Examination

This paper tested candidates' ability (a) to produce appropriate responses in the target language in a number of simulations; (b) to read aloud a short passage in the target language; and c) to respond in the target language to general questions based on 3 out of 6 topics indicated in the syllabus.

Section I - Responses to Situations

This section was, for the most part, well done. A few candidates showed a lack of understanding, while others seemed to lack the appropriate vocabulary or were unable to express themselves fluently. As a result, their responses were halting, limited and jerky. The more competent candidates, however, demonstrated a greater degree of confidence and correctness of expressions.

Some of the common problems demonstrated by candidates included:

- Difficulty expressing requests
- Incorrect formation of the imperative
- Incorrect formation of the future
- Confusion of "tú" and "Ud"
- Misrepresentation of some situations
- Incorrect use of direct and indirect object pronouns
- The subjunctive mood

Section II - Reading Aloud

For the most part, this section was well done. A few candidates had problems with intonation, fluency, stress and vowel sounds.

Main challenges faced by candidates were:

- Incorrect pronunciation of consonants - j, ll, - *jamaicanos, tejidos, llegó*

*An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

- Mispronunciation of vowel sounds in cognates such as:

<i>cultural</i>	<i>coltural*</i>
<i>multicolores</i>	<i>m-olticolores*</i>
<i>procede</i>	<i>procide*</i>
<i>celebra</i>	<i>celibra*</i>

- Some cognates were completely mispronounced, for example, *mayo*, *ingredientes*, *colonización*

These were anglicized.

- Diphthongs were not properly pronounced

<i>Dieciocho</i>	<i>dicioicho</i>
<i>Bautizo</i>	<i>bautizó*</i>
<i>Riquezas</i>	often pronounced with an English Z sound.
<i>Territorio</i>	pronounced <i>teritorio</i>

- Words with accents were stressed on the wrong syllables

<i>*práctica</i>	was rendered as <i>practíca</i>
<i>*tomándola</i>	was rendered as <i>tomandóla</i>
<i>*foàaneos</i>	was rendered as <i>foranéos</i>
<i>*significa</i>	<i>signifíca</i>
<i>*encontró</i>	<i>encontro</i>

- Vowel sounds were mispronounced. For example, *euuropeos* was rendered as “urupios”.

Section III - Guided Conversation

Performance on this section ranged from excellent to weak. It was evident from their performance that some candidates had not been adequately prepared for this examination. They showed little knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, did not understand the questions and lacked fluency. Some candidates lacked the confidence to supply meaningful answers.

The main grammatical problems candidates displayed in this section included errors of verb form, incorrect word order and problems expressing time.

Other problems included:

- *Confusion of ‘*por*’ and ‘*para*’
- * ‘*Ser*’ and ‘*estar*’
- *Use of infinitives instead of conjugated verb forms
- *Agreement of subject and verb
- *Expressing the time at which something is/was done: *¿A qué hora te levantas?*

*A son las seis**

or

*Son las seis**

*An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION
CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2008

SPANISH

SPANISH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

MAY/JUNE 2008

GENERAL COMMENTS

There were varying levels of performance ranging from excellent to poor with the overall performance being comparable to that of 2007. Several candidates demonstrated high levels of linguistic competence, fluency and accuracy.

It is important for candidates to be exposed to as many real-life situations as possible. Teachers are encouraged to be innovative and creative in teaching their students the difficult aspects of the language. Learning through dramatization, simulation and other fun-filled activities facilitates much retention and the development of communicative and other skills. Visits to Spanish-speaking countries and weekend intensive practice sessions should be organized by teachers.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 - Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprises two sections, tests candidates' ability to listen to and understand a number of aural items in the target language and to read and understand a number of written items. Both sections require candidates to have sufficient mastery of essential grammar and vocabulary. Candidates performed satisfactorily on this paper, a performance that was comparable to those of previous years.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section I - Directed Situations

This question demands that candidates identify the function for which the situation forms the context, and demonstrate their control of appropriate grammatical structures and knowledge of relevant vocabulary in clearly worded, concise responses. The better candidates were able to satisfy these requirements. Candidates' performance on the whole ranged from outstanding to occasions when no attempt was made to respond to the situations in the section. The majority of candidates scored at least 20 marks out of the maximum 30.

- 1. You watched a movie which you found to be very exciting. Send a note to your friend telling him/her what you liked best about the movie.**

Candidates performed fairly well on this question but many of them did not realize that the question required the use of the past tense, using *me gusta* more frequently than *me gustó* or *me encantó*. The word for film also posed a problem as quite a significant number used *el cine*, *la movie** or even *le film**.

- 2. Your mother has to attend a function and leaves a note instructing you to do a particular task. What does the note say?**

Candidates handled this question fairly well. The problems identified for this question include the incorrect use of the familiar command, the use of the familiar for the possessive adjective *tu*, vocabulary and spelling. There was a problem using *querer que* along with the subjunctive; *Lavar* was rendered as *llevar*; for the spelling *lavar* was constantly written as *llavar** and *labar**.

3. **Your favourite television programme has been discontinued. Send a text message to your friend expressing your disappointment.**

In this situation some candidates failed to mention both their disappointment along with the fact that the program was discontinued, which caused their responses to be only partially appropriate. The words for ‘discontinued’ and ‘disappointed’ proved to be difficult as well and many candidates wrote *mi programa favorita** incorrectly, making the noun feminine. The position of noun and adjective was a challenge for a few candidates.

4. **Your school choir has performed exceptionally well at a concert. The music teacher invites suggestions as to how best to reward the choir. What suggestion do you write?**

This question was generally well done. The outstanding problematic areas were the use of the imperative along with object pronouns, the use of *tomar* instead of *llevar* and the use of the subjunctive after the verb *sugerir*.

5. **The students at your school are unhappy about a number of problems at the school. The Students’ Council request that each student indicate in writing his/her complaint. What do you write?**

The majority of the candidates did fairly well on this question. The problem that surfaced was that they did not identify the specific problem, but merely said they did not like a particular thing in the school. For example a response of *no me gusta el baño*, only gained two marks while the candidate who wrote *no me gusta el baño sucio* would be given marks for a fully appropriate response.

6. **You are unable to attend a meeting with the members of your club. Write the email you send to them apologizing for not being able to do so.**

This situation required an apology and some of the candidates gave the excuse without the apology. The use of *asistir* was also a problem – many failed to follow it with the preposition ‘a’ or misspelt it (*assistir*)* or used *atender* instead. There was also some confusion with the use of *lo siento*, *siento no* + the infinitive. For example, a noticeable number of candidates wrote *Lo siento por no asistiendo la reunion**.

7. **While your family is out, your friend returns an item which he/she had borrowed. Write the note he/she leaves informing your family where he/she has placed it.**

On the whole, this question was handled fairly well. Many of the candidates identified both the item that they borrowed along with its location. Problematic areas proved to be the use of *ser* and *estar*, for example *el libro es en la mesa.** In terms of vocabulary, candidates used *salir* for *dejar* and had difficulties with *prestar* and *pedir prestado*. In addition, *salir* was used for *dejar / regresar / volver / revolver*.

8. **On your way to school you pass a man with a sign in his hand protesting about a hole in the road. What does it say?**

Candidates tended to write answers that were too general and did not address the information it seemed that the situation required. For example – *Queremos justicia* and *¿Dónde está el gobierno?* were clearly protesting, but because there was no mention of the hole or street these types of answers were penalized.

In addition, too many of the candidates gave **warnings** instead of **protests**.

9. **You see an old man sitting at the side of the street. He is holding a note requesting assistance. What does the note say?**

Most candidates demonstrated good use of grammar and structure in this question. The main problems stemmed from the use of the infinitive instead of the command; *asistir** was often substituted for *ayudar*.

10. Your brother who is away studying would like you to send an item he left behind. Write the email he sends explaining where you can find it.

Candidates' responses to this item were good. It was quite similar to question 7 so the incorrect use of *ser* and *estar* was the common error.

Section II – Letter/Composition

This section is intended to assess the candidates' ability to produce written language within the parameters set out by the syllabus. In addition to mastery of relevant vocabulary, idiom and language structure, the ability to express ideas clearly and coherently is emphasized. The two options given were the letter and the composition, each of which was marked out of 30.

Overall, the performance of the candidates was fair, and candidates supplied information for the majority of cues.

Letter

Most candidates chose the letter component of the question but, although the cues given should have been within the reach of the average candidate, many of them struggled. With few exceptions, most of the candidates fell within the fair to moderate category.

Some candidates also used pulled phrases/responses/ideas from the content of the contextual dialogue. This needs to be given serious consideration.

Areas of difficulty for candidates

Many candidates faced difficulty in presenting the information required for cues (ii) and (iii).

Common errors

1. Grammar: *ser* vs *estar*

This year, the comparison between the uses of *ser* and *estar* was worse than in previous years. The main weaknesses were (a) ignorance of the uses of *ser* for statement of facts and (b) uses of *ser* for permanent qualities

Other common examples: *Mi familia fue esperanda.**

2. The Subjunctive

Quiero tú venire for *Quiero que tú vengas*

Te quisera pasar la vacación for *quisiera que pasares la vacación/las vacaciones**

3. Verbs of Emotion

Poor use of verbs such as
gustar, encontrar, amar
*yo amor tu familia ...**

4. Commands

*Dice tus padres hola para mí**

5. Adjectives and Nouns

Use of conjunctions: *Las personas son amables y interesantes*

Use of *por* and *para*, for example, *por mí*

Pluralization of *la gente, son simpáticas*

6. Vocabulary

Many candidates seemed not to know the difference between the noun *diversión* and the adjective *divertido*. They were frequently confused, for example, *tuve mucho divertido**

Buen vs Buena (el viaje fue bien)

Preguntar vs pedir (pregunta a tus padres di puedes)

Por favor / de nada vs gracias

*Sobre vs a eso de**

Bajo vs corto

These were observed to a lesser extent.

Areas handled well by candidates

Opening and closing lines

Varied vocabulary for example *pródigo*, vocabulary for aeroplane context / airport context

Description of activities – vocabulary

Conclusion

Some letters were brought to a proposed conclusion with the following...

- *Saludos a todos en casa...*
- *Espero que me contentes y te voy a estar esperando...*
- *Recuerdos a toda tu familia...*
- *Te echo de menos mucho y escribeme pronto...*

Composition

Overall, this was poorly handled by the candidates. There were numerous cases of poor vocabulary: birthplace, national hero. There was also repetition of information, that was frequently reflected in responses for cues (i) and (iv). The Preterite Tense was used poorly.

Areas handled well by candidates

There were a few outstanding pieces. Some candidates were able to give details of the person's contribution to the society, as well as a vivid description of the birthplace.

Some candidates used good expressions like the following...

- *Espero que todo vaya bien...*
- *Espero que te enciendan de buena salud...*
- *Espero que al leer mi carta estás muy bien...*

- Acabo de regresar a mi país sano y salvo...
- Te invito para que pases la Navidad en mi casa...
- Eran varias vacaciones de alegría, amor y mucha paz...
- Siento por no haber escrito, arden, pero recibí tu carta con mucha alegría...

Section III – Contextual Announcement/Contextual Dialogue

This section of Paper 02 requires candidates to choose either to write (i) a contextual announcement or (ii) a contextual dialogue completion. Cues given in English were provided for both options.

Contextual Announcement

Many candidates presented the announcement using the format and language of an advertisement or a poster and as a result used words or simple phrases rather than complete sentences. A few candidates did not read the instructions carefully because they failed to mention the charity involved as well as two reasons persons should support the event. However, the majority of them attempted to use all of the given cues.

Contextual Dialogue

The majority of candidates elected to do the dialogue rather than the announcement. Many of the candidates' responses to this question were very encouraging. Many candidates responded comfortably in either a simple or more complicated way. Very few candidates rewrote the cues or parts of them as their answers but instead manipulated the language in various ways, using many and varying expressions to give their answers. Also, although very few candidates made up their own dialogues, they were not totally irrelevant as they still attempted to use some of the cues to make their responses meaningful.

Candidates demonstrated a lack of knowledge in different areas which would have affected their performance in this question. Some of these are:

- the use of the *su* or *usted* form when addressing the best friend, Lucia, instead of the familiar form, *tu* or *tú* – *Quiero oír su voz* instead of *Quiero oír tu voz*
- the noun *la gente* was often complemented by a plural verb (as opposed to a singular verb) as well as by masculine adjectives – *La gente son muy amigables y generosos**
- the confusion of *saber* and *conocer* – *Yo conozco que eres mi mejor amiga** instead of *yo sé que eres mi mejor amigo*
- the correct conjugation of irregular verbs *saber, querer, tener, poder*, whether in the present or past tense forms
- the negative *no* after the verb instead of before it
- the use of the second person singular of *gustar* in the conditional tense - *Te gustarías** as well as the expression *me gusta* with more than one thing, as opposed to *me gustan*
- the verb *comer* to mean “come,” the use of *dar* instead of *decir* and *ganar* instead of *pasar*
- the inappropriate use of the object pronouns – their meanings and position
- the use of *demasiado* instead of *también*; *peor* for *pobre*; *belleza* (the noun) for *bella* (the adjective)

- *Bienvenida* to mean *de nada* or *no hay de qué*
- the use of *sympa* instead of *simpática* and *simpático* to describe a place or a thing (weather)

It was also noted that failure to read the instructions caused the candidates to ‘play’ Stephen’s role as if it were a female’s part, since some of them wrote that *Los chicos en Bogotá son muy guapos*.

Conclusion

While the performance on this question showed an improvement over May/June 2007 and January 2008, it is clear that more preparation still needs to be done. There was still too much use of English and French insertions. Some candidates ignored the given instructions since they answered both questions and presented the announcement like an advertisement or poster. Candidates were penalized for disregarding the rubrics.

Some common grammatical errors were:

- the incorrect usage of *por* and *para* and *ser* and *estar*
- the use of *a el* instead of *al* and *de el* instead of *del*
- the use of the pronouns *mi* and *tu* instead of *me* and *te* respectively, with the verb *gustar*
- *tomar* for to take (carry)
- *soy muy bien**
- *y* where *z* should be used
- *por tu* for *para ti*
- *las ropas*
- *con tu* for *contigo*
- *caliente* for *caluroso*
- *conozco* for *sé*
- *con no* for *sin*
- personal *a*
- problems with verbs like *gustar*, *encantar* *echar de menos*
- forms of *hablar* (the future)
- *ser* vs *estar*
- *por* vs *para*
- position of adjectives
- limited vocabulary
- use of *contesto** for *competición* and *concurso*
- *más* for *mucho*
- confusion with *bien* and *buen(o)*
- Severe problems with accents (missing and misplaced)

Section IV – Reading Comprehension

The performance this year was generally satisfactory. However, there is still room for improvement. Reading should perhaps be given more attention than presently exists. It is the basis for acquiring knowledge and building vocabulary. The acquisition of vocabulary skills would eventually lead to an excellent performance on this section. This year, poor sentence construction, poor understanding of Spanish vocabulary and poor penmanship contributed to some candidates gaining under 11 marks out of a possible 20.

Areas of concern

1. Reading well is a skill that must be taught and practised as thoroughly as any of the other skills. Hand in hand with this skill is the building of vocabulary – both English and Spanish. Although

we may, as individuals, be accustomed to our individual country's dialect and candidates may be accustomed to that as well as the dialect of youths, the use of Standard English in writing will aid in diminishing the ambiguity of some responses. Teachers are therefore urged to insist that their students write complete sentences that are clear and concise.

2. The reading of the comprehension question begins with the instructions. This year, too many candidates ignored the rubric which required that answers be in **English**. Some responses were produced entirely in Spanish and others in Spanglish.
3. Answering a question in Spanglish is unacceptable, and is therefore of no benefit to the candidate, for example, "Sebastian found Mauricio hiding en el armario." This does not answer the question. It indicates that the candidate clearly did not know that a specific location was called for.
4. Penmanship should not be ignored. Careless formation of letters create difficulties for the examiners and can therefore lead to fewer or no marks being awarded due to the illegibility of the answer.
5. It is recommended that candidates skip a line or two between each answer. It makes for a neater, more legible script.
6. Candidates should also be reminded that their answers should be numbered according to the question being answered (especially if it is not in the order in which the questions are being presented).
7. An outstanding feature of grammar that presented a problem for candidates was the preposition. There were two questions (#2 and #7) that highlighted this problem. In question 2, one of the activities was "throwing stones through the windows" (*tiraban piedras por las ventanas*). Invariably, "*por*" was interpreted as: "by"; "along"; "on"; "at"; "out". In question 7, where "Sebastian found Mauricio hiding in the closet" (*en el armario*). "In" was interpreted as: "on"; "under"; "on top of"; "by"; "behind".
8. Lack of knowledge of vocabulary was quite extensive among weaker candidates. Following is a list of items that presented problems for candidates, along with their interpretations:

- * *Mauricio* – interpreted as a name belonging to a girl
- * *traviesos* – ill-disciplined; bad-tempered; evil; *travious* (?); travellers
- * *estaban metidos en problemas* – they were troubled/had problems
- * *tiraban piedras por las ventanas* – they jumped through/damaged windows
- * *dañaban las plantas* – they watered the plants
- * *asustaban* – they assaulted
- * *éxito* – exit; exert
- * *pregunta* – pregnant
- * *armario* – clothes set; armchair; armory; cemetery; rocking chair; closer
- * *grave* – grave (as in tomb or cemetery plot)
- * *cura* – cure
- * *contestar* – contest
- * *plantas* – plantains
- * *piedras* – rocks; things

Please note that spelling is as important as penmanship

Question 1

On the whole this question produced the correct answer from most candidates – “They were mischievous (naughty).”

NOT

- * Mauricio is a girl and Sebastian is a boy
- * They are evil
- * They are traviuous(?)

Question 2

The correct response was “They would throw stones through windows, damage the plants and scare the dogs.”

Incorrect responses included

- * “Three activities that they would engage in are: tiraban piedras por las ventanas, danaban las plantas y asustaban a los perros.”
- * “They would interfere with windows, water the plants and abuse the dogs.”

Question 3

The correct response was “Their mother had heard that the priest was successful in disciplining children/boys.”

An example of an incorrect response received was

- * “She heard that he had exit in disciplining Jesus.”

Question 4

The correct response was “He agreed to speak with the boys” and NOT

- * “He responded in a soft voice.”

Question 5

The correct response was “Mauricio gaped at the priest and did not respond. When asked a second time he still did not respond/the priest wanted an answer.”

An example of an incorrect response received was

- * “The priest thought that he was deaf and he wanted to frighten him or to make him behave.”

Question 6

The correct response was “He left the office screaming, ran home and hid in the closet.”

An example of an incorrect response written by candidates is,

- * “He shouted back at him, went home and sat in the armchair.”

Question 7

The correct response was “He found him hiding in the closet.”

Among the incorrect responses produced by candidates, were

- * “He found him in the armchair.”
- * “He found him on top of a shelf.”
- * “He found him behind the armchair.”

Question 8

The correct response was “Sebastian wanted to know what happened” and NOT

- * “Sebastian wanted to know if he really kidnapped Jesus.”

Question 9

The correct response was “He thought he was being accused of kidnapping Jesus” and NOT

- * “He thought that the priest was accusing him of killing/burying Jesus.”

This question, like question 1, was answered correctly by the majority of the candidates.

Question 10

This question lent itself to a wide range of interpretations. In essence, the priest’s question was interpreted the way it was because he knew that they were always getting into trouble and he thought someone had kidnapped Jesus and that they were being blamed.

There were candidates who brought their knowledge of the Bible to this section especially when dealing with questions 6, 8, 9 and 10.

Paper 03 - Oral Examination

The overall performance of candidates on this paper ranged from outstanding to weak. Most candidates made serious attempts at answering every question and were rewarded accordingly. Generally, responses rendered were fully appropriate, with the better candidates responding spontaneously, demonstrating mastery of the structures and vocabulary required, as well as creativity.

Section I – Responses to Situations

There are still many candidates who seriously lack the skills to handle this section adequately. They exhibit deficiencies in structural competence and are unable to recall the appropriate functional vocabulary. Consequently, the quality of their presentation was adversely impaired.

Lack of appropriateness of responses was seen when candidates failed to capture the key words from the function, for example, ask, suggest, reassure, promise, request, offer ...

A number of candidates were penalized because of grammatical inaccuracies. The errors were varied, and reveal a severe lack of command of many basic grammatical elements. Common errors include the following:

- incorrect use of *ser* and *estar* e.g. *¿Dónde es el papel?**

* An asterisk represents an incorrect item

- omission of *que* in the expression *tener que* e.g. *Tengo ir al banco**
*Tengo estudiar**
- incorrect usage of the verb *gustar* e.g. *No me gusto al jefe**
*Yo no men gusta**
*Mi no guste al zapatos**
- poor use of the present tense
- incorrect use of the imperative
- not conjugating verbs and not being able to venture into other tenses other than the present
- subject/verb agreement
- noun/adjective agreement
- failure to use the infinitive when required e.g. *quiero voy a la playa*
puedo tengo...
permíteme voy...
- use of the infinitive instead of the conjugated verb e.g. *yo puedo cino*
- incorrect use of *por* and *para*
- incorrect position of object pronouns
- omission of the personal 'a'

With regard to vocabulary, many candidates failed to remember words that they should have been familiar with, for example:

<i>emotioncante</i>	for	<i>emocionante</i>
<i>promiso</i>	for	<i>prometo</i>
<i>siguiero</i>	for	<i>sugiero</i>
<i>intrestante</i>	for	<i>interesante</i>
<i>es devertiste</i>	for	<i>es divertido</i>
<i>devolver</i>	for	<i>volver</i>
<i>dejar</i>	for	<i>salir</i>
<i>vez</i>	for	<i>tiempo</i>
<i>tener</i>	for	<i>haber</i>
<i>tratar</i>	for	<i>probar</i>
<i>regla</i>	for	<i>regalo</i>
<i>regresa</i>	for	<i>devolver</i>
<i>llevar</i>	for	<i>tomar</i>

Candidates' performance on this section of the examination ranged from good to weak. Good candidates were able to respond appropriately to the majority of situations presented. Errors which occurred were mostly in areas of grammar and, to a lesser extent, vocabulary.

Some examples of grammatical areas were

- (i) agreement of nouns and adjectives – *ese blousa; * ese no es mi comida; en una minuto y una roja vestida.*

- (ii) the use of *ser* vs *estar* – *mi moneda es terminada, mi reloj es roto y ¿Dónde es mi bolsa?**
- (iii) the use of infinitives after verbs like *poder, gustar, y que* after *tener*.
*No puede vine; * ¿Puedes ayudame?, Podemos hace... **
*gustar – me gusta come... **
- (iv) *Que – Tengo.. compre...; Tengo... trabajar y tienes tareas... hacer.** The relative pronoun *que* was omitted after verbs like – *Sugiero... Prometo... Espero... tengo éxito*. Errors also occurred with the use of irregular verbs in the Future Tense – *No venire a casa,* Tenerás diversisón,* Deciré a mama que...** On the other hand, however, some candidates mastered the use of the present tense, the preterite, the present subjunctive and the future. Some responses were of an extended level and candidates were awarded full marks. Idioms were also used.

Section II – Reading Aloud

The performance in this section ranged from outstanding to limited. Some candidates did not demonstrate competence in the reading of the passage by presenting with inaccurate intonation and pronunciation and essentially breaking the sense of the passage. For the most part, the reading was moderate to good, showing some knowledge of the sound system.

Others had generally correct pronunciation, stress and intonation with some inaccuracy. They demonstrated an understanding of the passage.

Section III – Guided Conversation

Some candidates did well in this area. For the most part, they understood the questions being asked and responded without undue hesitation. Vocabulary usage was moderate, as was pronunciation and intonation. Some candidates did very well responding readily to the questions posed with very good vocabulary and grammar. Pronunciation and intonation were also very good. Others had minimal presentations requiring frequent repetition and lacking in fluency and coherence.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK
IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION
JANUARY 2009**

SPANISH

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GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**JANUARY 2009****GENERAL COMMENTS**

The levels of performance varied from excellent to poor. This is comparable to the 2008 performance. Several candidates demonstrated high levels of accuracy and fluency in all questions.

DETAILED COMMENTS**Paper 01 – Multiple Choice**

This paper, which comprises two sections, tests candidates' ability to listen to and understand a number of aural items in the target language, and to read and understand a number of written items. Both sections require candidates to have sufficient mastery of essential grammar and vocabulary. The performance on this year's paper was comparable to that of previous years.

Paper 02 – Free Response

This paper comprises four sections and tests the reading and writing skills of candidates. Overall performance was satisfactory.

Teachers need to pay special attention to the functions required in the syllabus so that students would be able to manipulate structures and vocabulary as required in a variety of tasks. It is recommended that teachers focus on the specific skills required for the contextual announcement and the contextual dialogue using a variety of tasks throughout the students' study of Spanish to provide them with the necessary practice and confidence to respond adequately to the demand of these tasks.

Section I – Directed Situations

This question demands that candidates identify the function for which the situation forms the context, and demonstrate their control of appropriate grammatical structures and knowledge of relevant vocabulary in clearly worded, concise responses. The better candidates were able to satisfy these requirements. Candidates' performance on the whole ranged from outstanding to occasions when no attempt was made to answer the questions in the section.

Candidates are reminded that they must relate their responses to the situation provided. There is a tendency for candidates to write general responses which do not fulfil a FUNCTION which relates to the specific situation given.

Situation 1

Candidates pluralized the 'lo' in 'lo siento' and there were several instances where 'que' and 'por' were used after the expression instead of simply 'siento que/por'.

Situation 2

The invitation part of the situation was ignored by too many candidates who obviously misinterpreted the situation. Combinations of the date and venue or individual parts were given. The use of 'en' with dates was also widespread, for example, 'en sabado/en lunes', as well as after time.

'Estar' was also used in place of 'Ser/Tener lugar'. Additionally, with time, 'son' was used too frequently in the expression 'son las ocho'.

Situation 3

The main errors were (i) the confusion between 'tener razon' and 'estar/ser correcto' and (ii) the use of 'acordarse (me acuerdo)' for 'estoy de acuerdo'.

Situation 4

Many candidates did not write the conditions to be given permission to go, they simply stated what they should do. It was heartening to see the use of the expression 'con tal que' and subjunctive.

Several candidates misspelt the word 'lavar'-(llavar) and omitted the 'que' in the expression 'tener que'.

Situation 5

Many candidates simply gave the message instead of informing that a call had been made. Several candidates also used 'para tu' instead of 'por ti' in their responses.

When trying to use 'decir/querer', candidates did not use the subjunctive. They either used the infinitive or the present tense.

Situation 6

Many candidates tried to express 'should' in their responses and used the conditional tense instead of the verb 'deber' and infinitive (estudiarías).

Situation 7

Many candidates displayed difficulty in selecting the appropriate verbs to be used here. They used 'tratar', 'llevar', 'dar', 'venir'. Those who used 'traer' had difficulty with the spelling of the verb form (traie/traga)*.

Some candidates did not make a request to bring the item, and simply stated where they left the item or just asked for help.

*An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure

Situation 8

Many candidates did not give a negative command and too many commands were not given in the plural form.

The use of 'no' and infinitive also occurred too many times. In several instances many candidates simply used 'no' and noun (*no fiestas*). The misspelling of 'jueguen' 'juegen'* was also very common.

Situation 9

Misspelling was a common error in this situation (telephone/cellular/mobile). These three words were misspelt often. Some candidates also did not say why they disagreed with the ban.

Situation 10

Many candidates did not use the formal form and were willing to contribute items such as food/clothing/electrical items ...

The use of 'yo' with the 'gustar' structure was also used by several candidates.

Section II – Letter/Composition

This section is intended to assess the candidates' ability to produce written language within the parameters set out by the syllabus. In addition to mastery of relevant vocabulary, idiom and language structure, the ability to express ideas clearly and coherently is emphasized. The two options given were the letter and the composition, each of which was marked out of 30.

The levels of performance on this paper varied, with few instances in the excellent range, most in the middle, with a few examples of poor competence. Scripts with many grammatical errors still demonstrated a fairly wide range of vocabulary. Candidates showed interest in both tasks, with an increase in the number of candidates attempting the composition, compared to past years. This may have been due to the fact that they were able to relate well to the topic. Almost all candidates were able to fulfil the length requirement. However, candidates must make sure they attend to each cue presented in the question.

Outstanding grammatical errors included:

- Incorrect formation of the future tense
- Incorrect formation of the present perfect tense – '*tengo queriendo*'*, '*tengo nunca fui*'*
- The incorporation of 'ti' with the use of 'gustar'- incorrectly writing '*te lo gustaría*'*
- Confusion over '*por*' and '*para*'
- Possessive adjectives – '*nostros playas*'*; '*suguiremos nos viaje*'*; '*es sueño de mi*'*
- Object pronouns – '*mirar a tu*'*

Some common errors in vocabulary included:

- '*mientras*' vs '*un rato*' for 'a while'
- '*ese*' vs '*que*' as a relative pronoun
- '*a*' vs '*en*' – '*mis padres coleccionarán al aeropuerto*'*
- '*saber*' and '*conocer*' confused

*An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure

- 'porque' instead of 'a causa de'
- 'excito*', 'éxito', 'emocionante' for 'excited'

Student practice in the use of several tenses within the same task is advisable. Structured practice of sentence formation will also be useful for students. Students must be cautioned about lifting entire portions of the reading comprehension in use in this section as marks will not be awarded for such inserts.

Section III – Contextual Announcement / Contextual Dialogue

This section requires candidates to write on one of (i) a Contextual Announcement or (ii) a Contextual Dialogue Completion. Cues are given in English for both options initially. However, since the Dialogue is in Spanish, the initial clues are included within the context, but in Spanish.

Responses to (i) demonstrated a fairly good effort generally, while responses to (ii) while largely satisfactory, indicated in a few instances where candidates ignored the instructions and composed an entire dialogue.

Teachers must ensure that their students read the cues first in their entirety before attempting to complete the dialogue. The completion should indicate the students holistic understanding of the dialogue. Attention should be paid to the consistent use of either the formal or informal personal pronouns (tú and usted)

Contextual Announcement

1. This question had limited appeal for the candidates probably due to
 - (i) their limited knowledge of the relevant vocabulary
 - (ii) their limited command of the grammar that would produce better sentence structures, for example, the subjunctive - (i) (ii) and (iv) as in
 - Vengar a la reunion...*
 - Quiero que participar ...*
 - Es importante que...*
 - (iii) candidates' uncertainty re formatting/presentation of the announcement.
 - (iv) the fact of unfamiliarity with such clubs since these are not a feature of many schools.
2. Candidates were inconsistent with the use of the register *tú/vd(s)*. They may have practised the familiar form more in class and the announcement may have required more of the polite form(s).

Contextual Dialogue

1. In the first cue, many candidates used names without reference to the female name that followed. (for example, *es, soy Maria/Juan*)

Candidates also failed to observe subject/verb agreement , for example,.

¿Cómo están la familia?

¿Cómo está todos?

*An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure

2. In the second cue, *¿Estás bien?* elicited similar responses in some cases to the third cue *¿Lo pasas bien?*

3. Candidates simply replicated the question in several cases, for example,
 - Sí, hablo(as) mucho español.*
 - Sí, me gusta la comida chilena.*

4. Candidates gave the following responses to indicate that they were homesick.
 - Me siento muy enfermo de mi casa**
 - Quiero venir a casa**
 - Estoy enfermo de hogar**
 - Echo mi familia mucho**
 - Quiero venir a casa**
 - No puedo esperar volver a casa**

5. Few candidates used the perfect tense in response to questions such as *¿Que has hecho?*
6. In many cases there were limited responses to queries *¿Hablas mucho español? ¿Te gusta la comida chilena?* For example, *La comida chilena es muy bueno.**

Many did not use the correct structure for the weather. They wrote

 - Es muy frio en Chilena**
 - Estoy muy frío**
 - El cielo es negro y el tiempo es 8 en la noche**
 - Son las cinco de la tarde*

Many candidates did not use the first person form to ask *¿Puedo usar tu tarjeta?* Instead, they copied “*Puedes*” from the answer.

“*Tener cuidado*” was not often used in response to the final cue. When used, it was not often in the correct form.

For example, *Estaré cuidado**
*Soy cuidado en tu tarjeta**

Section IV - Reading Comprehension

This section tested candidates’ ability to read and comprehend a short passage in the target language. The questions on the passage and the candidates’ answers were in English.

The passage, “Mariela’s experience” on an airplane was on a topic that was of interest to candidates and who therefore drew from their own experiences to answer some of the questions. However, their own experiences did not always coincide with those of Mariela.

Teachers need to train their students to use both strategies of own experiences but also pay close attention to the vocabulary and structure of the target language used in the passage, in order to understand texts. Because of the conciseness of the passages used for testing comprehension, students need to practise at identifying key words or elements in the questions, even before attempting to look for the correct answers.

*An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure

Performance on this section was fairly good. Most candidates gained at least 12 out of the maximum 20 marks. Where candidates earned 16-19 marks, they omitted one element of a question.

The main problems encountered by candidates occurred in the following questions:

Question 4 : Many candidates did not know numbers, stating that there were 5, 7, 41, 60 or 61. Other candidates stated incorrectly that there were 50 students – not taking into account that this number excluded Mariela.

Some candidates responses were in full sentences while others were not.

Question 6: Vocabulary item '*en huelga*' proved to be a problem since candidates knew there was a problem with the airport workers but not what the problem was.

Question 10: Candidates understood the statement made that Mariela would never fly again but did not seem to understand '*siempre*' and therefore answered the question incorrectly.

Paper 03 – Oral Examination

This paper tested candidates ability to (a) produce appropriate responses in the target language in a number of simulations; (b) read aloud a short passage in the target language; and (c) respond in the target language to general questions based on 3 out of 6 topics indicated in the syllabus.

Section I – Responses to Situations

This section was, for the most part, well done. However, a few candidates showed a lack of understanding, while others lacked appropriate vocabulary to express themselves fluently.

Some of the common problems demonstrated by candidates included:

- Incorrect position of object pronouns
- Incorrect sentence structure
- Incorrect use of the present continuous
- '*Por*' vs '*para*'
- '*Ser*' vs '*estar*', for example, '*Soy* en el baño*'
- Inappropriate use of '*puede*' vs '*puedes*' [polite vs familiar]
- Use of '*ser*' in self-identification, for example, '*Es Pedro*' to mean 'It's me, Pedro' as opposed to '*Soy yo, Pedro*'

Section II – Reading Passages

Performance on this section was generally satisfactory. The main problems experienced in this section included the following:

- Intonation and general fluency
- Anglicized pronunciation
- Difficulty pronouncing consonants, for example, '*j*', '*g*', "*ll*"
- Diphthongs – for example, '*bautizó*', '*gauchos*', '*Uruguay*', '*sigue*'.

*An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure

Section III - Guided Conversation

This section also provided generally satisfactory performances by candidates. Many candidates understood the questions that were asked and made genuine attempts at conversation. They responded well to questions posed and used a variety of words and correct forms of verbs.

Main areas of weakness were in terms of:

- Fluency and spontaneity
- Elaboration of responses in required situations
- Variety of tenses
- Subject-verb agreement
- Use of '*gustar*'

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION
CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2009

SPANISH

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GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATIONS

MAY/JUNE 2009

GENERAL COMMENTS

Candidates' performance in the 2009 examination mirrored that of 2008 across the three papers. Several candidates demonstrated high levels of linguistic competence, spontaneity, fluency and accuracy. The Reading and Writing aspects continue to pose challenges for candidates. In addition, candidates are experiencing difficulties with the English Language which subsequently impede their comprehension of the foreign language.

It is important to instil in the students the idea that language is dynamic and that there is not only one correct way of saying something in Spanish or in any language for that matter. Students must be aware that language is a creative and an ever evolving process and this knowledge should carry them very far in their studies of foreign languages.

Foreign language teachers must make use of their creative imagination to introduce challenges in their classrooms through the use of different activities. They must provide opportunities for the students to freely express their opinions about current events, and topics of interest to them in the foreign language they are studying. This will allow students to become more familiar with idiomatic expressions used within an appropriate context and, at the same time, will widen their vocabulary.

Activities such as visits to Spanish-speaking countries, visits of native speakers of Spanish to their classroom, creation of Spanish /French language clubs will help sustain the students' interest in the foreign language which they study. Another such activity could be the students' enrolment in Latin dancing classes such as *salsa* and *merengue*, where the classes are conducted in Spanish. Singing, another activity to which a great numbers of students are attracted, can play an interesting part in the process of foreign language acquisition. Students will love singing the songs of their favourite young Spanish-speaking singers like Shakira. Singing, apart from giving the students an enjoyable time, will help the students to enhance not only their vocabulary but also the language intonation patterns and add a different dimension to foreign language learning which may prove enjoyable to them.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 - Multiple Choice

This paper which comprised two sections, tested candidates' ability (i) to listen to and understand a number of aural items in Spanish and (ii) to read and understand a number of written items. The overall paper required that candidates master the essential grammatical structures and vocabulary. The performance on this year's paper was comparable to that of the previous years.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section I - Directed Situations

In this section the candidates were presented with 10 situations to which they had to provide a response for every situation complying with the function required (such as inviting, expressing opinion, providing information). The candidates must demonstrate control of the grammatical

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

structures and appropriate vocabulary to respond very clearly and appropriately to every situation complying with the function required.

In general, candidates' performance ranged from excellent to cases where no efforts were made at all by the candidates to provide an answer. The following observations were made during the marking of this section:

- There are still candidates who do not conform to the rubric and continue to write the response for every situation on a different page and
- Lengthy responses were given instead of the one full sentence required.

Situation 1

It is your friend's birthday and you send him a photo of himself in place of a birthday card. What do you write at the back of the photo? (Function: expressing good wishes, birthday greetings).

Candidates generally performed well on this item. Most of them used: *Feliz Cumpleaños*.

It was heartening to see candidates giving responses such as:

*“Te deseo lo mejor hoy por ser día de tu cumpleaños.
Esta foto representa nuestra linda amistad, feliz cumpleaños.
Que dios te bendiga con más años, feliz cumpleaños.
Que Dios derrame bendiciones sobre ti por el resto de tu vida.*

However, there were spelling mistakes such as: **felix*, **felice*, * *féliz*, **compleanos*, **cumpleanos*, **cumplir anos*. The ñ grapheme seems to be a challenge to the candidates.

A few candidates opted to describe the picture and the memories it brought to them and never got around to extend the good wishes.

Situation 2

You are in Mexico on an exchange visit. Send an e-mail to your friend telling her of something you like about your new environment. (Function: stating likes and providing information).

The candidates performed well and were able to state what they liked about their new environment focusing on the food, music or general culture of the country. There were good expressions and use of vocabulary, for example, *ambiente, edificios históricos, vista pintoresca*.

The use of the verb *gustar* presents a challenge to the candidates. *Gustar*, meaning to be pleasing to someone, is used in a special construction to express the equivalent of the English “to like”. The verb *gustar* needs to be given special attention in the classrooms.

Quiero was also used to render “I like”.

Candidates did not read the question carefully and replaced *Mexico* with other countries, for example, *Venezuela, España, Cuba* and others.

There was omission of a **tilde** over (é) *México*. It must be clarified that **tilde** in Spanish is the accent placed over a stressed vowel (á, é, í, ó or ú in words such as *mamá, café, alelí, cantó, Lulú*). The letter Ñ, ñ, (eñe) has its own unique grapheme represented as: Ñ, ñ.

It was encouraging to find the following responses among the candidates' scripts:

Lo que más me gusta es la amabilidad de todas las personas.

Me gusta mucho el ardor de la gente.

Me chiflan los rascacielos

Less encouraging responses were:

*Me gusta Mejico (Mexico) es *bonita y *simpática.* (Incorrect agreement: noun /adjective) . it should be : *Méjico es bonito y simpático.*

*Me gusta México es *tranquillo *y interesante.*

Correct: Me gusta México/ Méjico es tranquilo e interesante.

Situation 3

You send a card to your brother who is about to write an important exam. What do you write? (Function: expressing good wishes/ encouragement).

This situation required the candidate to express good wishes, encouragement to his/her brother on an examination.

The candidates performed well. The most popular response was: *Buena suerte* which was misspelled thus:

* *Buenas *suertes*

* *Buenos *suertes*

Other good responses given by the candidates were:

Que te vaya bien / Dios te bendiga / Estoy orando por ti / No te preocupes.

-Candidates also misspelled the word *examen*: **examine*, **exemin*, * *examinación*.

There was misuse of possessive adjectives: *tu/ tus*, *sus/ sus*.

*Espero que hagas bien en *su examen.... (Que salgas bien en tu examen)*

Buenoo suerte mi hermaño..... (Buena, suerte hermano)

Situation 4

You are designing your own invitation for your birthday party. What do you write? (Function: inviting)

Many candidates gave lengthy answers, thus decreasing their opportunity to score full marks. This situation brought to the forefront several challenges experienced by the candidates. Among these challenges were:

(a) The candidates showed difficulty when writing the date in Spanish, as seen by these responses:

**Mi fiesta cumpleaños tendrá lugar en ocho de Julio a mi casa* instead of

Mi fiesta de cumpleaños tendrá lugar el ocho de Julio en mi casa.

**Quiero que asistas mi fiesta en viernes porque será muy estupendo* instead of:
Quiero que asistas a mi fiesta el viernes porque será estupenda.

- (b) Candidates did not demonstrate understanding of the correct placement of object pronouns, for example, **Invito tú* instead of : *Te invito*
- (c) Challenges with the use of *ser* and *estar*
 - * *Eres invitado* instead of: *Estás invitado*
 - * *Tu invitaste*
- (d) Some candidates used *Bienvenidos* inappropriately as in: “*Bienvenido a mi feliz cumpleaños.*”
- (e) Omission of the personal **a** was also noticed, not only in the answering of this question, but in the paper in general.

Situation 5

You are chatting online with friends and they asked you to do something. Explain why it is inappropriate. (Function: expressing opinion)

This situation was open to various interpretations and the candidates generally performed well, explaining why they could not do a particular activity. Candidates confused the use of the adjective *malo* and the adverb *mal*. Candidates also confused the use of *por qué* and *porque*.

There was incorrect use and omission of prepositions *in* sentences such as:

“**No voy enviar esa carta a mi profesora*”. It should read: “*No voy a enviar esa carta a mi profesora.*” Errors involving misuse of prepositions featured prominently in this paper.

Other responses given to this situation were:

- “**Yo abajo años.*” Other ways of expressing this idea could be: “*Soy menor de edad*” or “*soy muy joven.*”
- **Porque la cama romperá y mi mamá estará triste.*
- **No puedo fumar porque es malo por buena salud.*
- **No puedo porque mi mamá es aquí en mi cuarto.*

Some appropriate responses were given to this situation for example:

- *No seas tonto, eso es peligroso.*
- *No puedo y no es correcto, pueden regañarme.*
- *Tener sexo es difícil y a mi mamá no le gustaría.*
- *No, eso es para mi noche de boda.*
- *Podemos meternos en un gran lío con la policía.*

Situation 6

You send an e-mail to your aunt who lives abroad informing her of something special you would like to do when you visit her. (Function: expressing desire)

In this situation quite a number of candidates expressed what they like to do: *Me gusta ir a la playa, Voy a la playa*, but failed to use the subjunctive after *cuando*.

Writing about an action that has not yet taken place requires the use of the subjunctive. This escaped quite a number of candidates. Some of the candidates who used the subjunctive failed to use the correct object pronouns. The more common errors were:

- Failure to use the subjunctive after *cuando* for example: *Cuando te *visito*
- Incorrect use of the object pronoun: *Cuando visite *tú. Quiero ir a la playa con ti. Me gusta ir *a al cine cuando vaya a *vistarte*
- The appropriate use of *gustar* continues to offer challenges to the candidates as well as the correct use of “*por*” and “*para*”, for example, *Yo gustaría a comprar un premio *por mi madre.*
- Realizing that *quiero* and *me gusta* are not synonymous.

Among the correct answers given to this situation were the following:

Me gustaría ir de compras cuando te visites.

Me gustaría visitar el museo cuando te visites.

Yo querría visitar a los estudiantes en el hospital para ayudarles.

Situation 7

Your father has left a note reminding you of a task which he would like you to complete. What does the note say? (Function: requesting/instructing)

- Most candidates effectively fulfilled the function of instructing by using a command but failed to use the familiar form correctly, for example: **Lavo los platos, *lavas el perro.*

- A common error was the use of the subjunctive after *querer* in responses such as:

*Quiero tu *lavas los platos vs. Quiero que laves los platos*

Te quiero lavar los platos vs. Quiero que laves los platos

The verb *lavar* was rendered as: **llavar, *llevar*

A few candidates also used: *No olvides...*

Recuerda ...

There were instances of good responses for example:

Favor de lavar los platos cuando te levantes.

Quiero que laves el garaje, por favor. ”

Tienes que darle agua al gato.

Situation 8

A secret admirer is shy and wishes to invite you on a date. Write the note which he/she sends you. (Function: Inviting)

Some candidates focused on how much they admire the person and never got around to ask the person for a date. It seems that some candidates did not know the Spanish word for **date**. Some of the common errors are mentioned below:

- Use of the words **daté* and *fecha* instead of the Spanish word “*cita*”.
- Incorrect use of verbs such as: *encontrarse, tomar, invitar, tomar vs. traer, llevar saber and conocer.*
- The verb “to love” was rendered using “*gustar*” and many of those who used “*amar*” used it incorrectly, for example, **Yo amor tú.*

Other instances of incorrect responses:

* *Me gusta tú ven con mí al cine anoche.*

**Te invito al cena anoche tu viniste.*

**Por favor en domingo a las ocho vengo con mi para cena en el Chino restaurante porque me gusta tú mucho.*

Commendably, there were a couple of romantic responses to this situation such as:

-*Te admiro en la clandestinidad pero quiero invitarte a ir al cine conmigo.*

-*Michael, ¿puedes acompañarme al cine? Tú eres el chico de mis sueños.*

Situation 9

Your cousin has lost a competition and is very upset. Write a note of encouragement that you send to him/her. (Function: Expressing encouragement)

This situation showed some candidates were unable to convey encouragement and in several instances simply responded by saying: “*Lo siento.*”

Some of the common errors were:

- Incorrect spelling of *hacer* in the future tense: *Tú *haceras bien en el futuro.*
- Some candidates misspelt *hacer* as: * *aser* or * *acer.*
- Incorrect use of the negative commands: “*No estas triste.*”
- Use of *ser* instead of *estar* in expressing emotions
- Challenges with the use of adjectives vs. adverbs - *bueno* vs. *bien.*
- The erroneous use of *tiempo* for *vez* and *otra* for *próxima*

Some candidates completely misunderstood the situation and hence their responses applauded the cousin for a job well done; other candidates attempted to cheer up the cousin by extending an invitation to go somewhere; some candidates decided to state how much they loved their cousin. A few candidates used the wrong expressions such as: “**Mi más profundo pésame*” and “**Que te majores pronto*”.

Among the appropriate answers were:

No te des por vencido”/ No te desanimes, en los juegos o ganas o pierdes.

No te preocupes chica, hay otras competencias en que puedes entrar.

Lo siento mucho pero es mejor participar que ganar.

No te preocupes porque puedes ganar la próxima vez.

Situation 10

The security guard at your school has unjustly accused you of something. Write a note to the principal explaining how you feel about it. (Function: Expressing feelings)

In this situation several candidates did not adequately convey how they felt, but explained the situation in detail without even mentioning that they did not do what they have been accused of. Many candidates were able to state that whatever happened was not their fault. They used expressions such as:

- **Estoy dessapointemente;*

- Candidates spoke about not liking the guard: “*no me gusta que dice el guardo”. Many candidates are not aware of the use “lo” as illustrated above. The sentence should read “No me gusta lo que dice el guardia.”

Other errors included:

- Misspelling of words: *enfajado for enojado; *enoja for enojado; *fruroso for furioso .
- Incorrect use of the preterite tense of “hacer”: No hagalo, no hizolo, no hacerlo.
- Incorrect position of negative words: *Estoy no contento instead of: No estoy contento.

Among the correct responses were:

Me siento muy mal al ser acusado de algo que no hice.

Señora, estoy enfadado con el señor Valdez, no salí de la escuela temprano ayer.

No estoy contento porque no hablé en voz alta en la cafetería.

Recommendations when answering this section:

- Candidates should identify the function they are asked to respond to: whether inviting, instructing, expressing feelings, apologizing,
- Candidates must obey the rubric: they must answer **in not more than one sentence**, which fulfils the function required.
- Do not translate from English.

Section II- Letter / Composition

The overall performance of candidates in this section ranged from poor to excellent, with the majority of the candidates performing at a satisfactory level. There were a few excellent scripts. Both options, letter and composition, seemed to have been equally popular among the candidates. Stronger responses showed creativity in their approach while the weaker ones merely answered part of the questions. The format of the letter was generally respected. However, the inability to master basic grammar structures is a cause for great concern.

For the most part, the candidates were able to meet the word length required. Nevertheless, there were weak responses which did not meet the number of words required in the letter nor the composition. Many candidates, in an effort to comply with the rubric which demands 130 to 150 words, used several lines listing names of friends or classmates. There were candidates who also lifted sections from the Reading Comprehension as well as the Contextual Dialogue to use in this section.

It is important to note that candidates experienced problems in writing the date in Spanish. For example, some candidates used the definite article “el” in front of the date when writing the letter, for example,: * *el 6 de mayo*, instead of simply writing *6 de mayo de 2009*. This is a source of interference from the French language, as in French one must use the definite article **le** in front of the date as in: *Le 6 Mai, 2009*.

There were many scripts where similar errors were repeated and other scripts were filled with invented words. Some of the errors are noted below:

1. Poor spelling.
2. Incorrect use of *Ser / Estar* in general.

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

3. Incorrect agreements: subject/predicate and noun-adjective for example: “*Nosotros estábamo *triste y *emocionado*, instead of: “*Nosotros estábamos tristes y emocionados.” The use of “*todo el mundo*” a collective noun in Spanish should be used with the verb in the third person singular: “*Todo el mundo miró*” instead of * “*Todo el mundo miraron*”. Difficulty with gender and number agreement between articles and nouns and adjectives fall into this error category.*
4. Incorrect placement of object pronouns.
5. Incorrect position of negatives eg. “**Es no*” instead of “*No es.*”
6. Confusion with the use of *por qué / porque*.
7. Uncertainty about the use of *mal / malo, sólo / solo, bien / bueno*
8. Incorrect word order.
9. Incorrect use of the subjunctive - this generally was not properly handled except by the “very good” candidates.
10. Omission of personal ‘a’
11. Difficulty using “*para*” and “*por*” correctly within a sentence for example: “*Por mí*” instead of “*para mí*” or vice versa and “*para ahora*” instead of “*por ahora*”. The omission of the preposition “*de*” was also noted after *después de* and *antes de*. Prepositions in general present a challenge to the candidates.
12. Problem in using correctly the conjunction “*y*” → **e** before i / hi in cases such as: “**y interesante, y hicieron*” instead of “*e interesante, e hicieron.*”
13. Disregard for sequence of tenses.
14. Difficulties with the use of reflexive verbs such as: *llamarse, divertirse, enamorarse*, which present a challenge to candidates.
15. Difficulty with the conjugation of verbs in general and in particular in the preterite tense, for example * *fuemos* instead of *fuimos*, *

20. Difficulty expressing possession as in: “**Mi español professor*”, instead of “*Mi profesor de Español*”; “**mi papá carro*” instead of “*el carro de mi papá*”; “* *Nos professor*” instead of “*Nuestro profesor.*”
21. Misuse of accents distorting meaning, especially in the preterite tense.
22. Limited and/or in appropriate use of vocabulary and creation of words.
23. Use of “*su*” instead of “*tu*” to end the letter.
24. Confusion between “*mirar a*” and “*buscar a.*”
25. The usual vocabulary “coinage” of words was frequent for example: “**el tripo*” instead of “*el viaje*”, “**el ticketo*” instead of “*el tiquete*” etc.
26. Handwriting styles also made it difficult to read some scripts

Section III- Contextual Dialogue Contextual Announcement

This section required candidates to choose to write either (i) a contextual announcement or (ii) a contextual dialogue completion. Cues were given in English for both options. The performance of candidates in this section ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory. Though the contextual dialogue was more popular than the announcement there were better responses to the contextual announcement.

The dialogue was well structured, allowing the candidates to be quite flexible in their responses to the cues. The cues

8. The conjugation of irregular verbs in the future tense in the contextual announcement resulted in errors such as: “**tenirán*” for *tendrán*; “* *salirán*” for “*saldrán*” In general, the conjugation of regular and irregular verbs needs more attention in the classrooms.
9. The subjunctive was either omitted or misused, for example, “**quisieramos que darne dinero* or “**quiero que contribuir dinero.*”
10. The use of the pronouns *mi* and *tú* instead of *me* and *te*.
11. The correct use of prepositions presents a challenge to candidates.
12. Poor spelling in items such as: **professor/a* for *profesor/a*, **attention*, **atención* for *atención*, *apreciación* for *apreciación*, **diferente* for “*diferente.*”
13. Wrong placement of accents which, at times, can change the meaning of the words as in *canto* and *cantó* as happens in this case when it means a change of grammatical tense.
14. Some candidates left out the letter “h” in words such as *-hace*, *-hay*, *-hasta*.
15. In general, there is uncertainty when to use prepositions: *por* vs. *para*, *de*, *en* and other prepositions. This aspect always needs revision.

Positive points found in the answers to this section

Candidates made a better attempt at this question and some were able to construct creative dynamic Spanish with a variety of idiomatic expressions and excellent sentence structure such as “ *estamos festejando*”, “ *pasarlo bomba*”, “*no te lo pierdas*”, “*trato hecho*” and other similar expressions.

Recommendations when answering this section

- Greater emphasis must be placed on the need to follow instructions and on the structure demanded by the announcement. It is of vital importance to use the cues given and also to manage time properly.
- While preparing the students for this examination teachers must draw the students’ attention to the fact that they must choose **ONE** of the tasks as it is clearly stated on the question paper: “ Use the cues provided to complete EITHER an announcement OR a dialogue.” This also applies to the letter/composition.

Contextual Dialogue

Candidates failed to read the instructions properly and to use the cues. Generally, candidates demonstrated poor comprehension skills as their responses broke the flow of communication/understanding. In many instances, candidates wrote back the cues or part of them already given in the section. This resulted in incoherent answers which were not conducive to a proper dialogue. Following are some of the challenges experienced by the candidates:

1. Looking at the third cue in the dialogue, many of the candidates failed to mention the length of time they were living in their previous community before they moved out. The connection with the next link was not made.

2. Responses reflected a lack of understanding of the polite idiomatic expression “*El placer es mío*” and misunderstood it to mean “My place...” thus went to say: * *¿Dónde es tu placer?*
3. Candidates used phrases like: * *dos semanas ahora*, * *sobre dos semanas* instead of “*hace dos semanas*”.
4. Candidates experienced challenges conjugating reflexive verbs such as “*mudarse*”. They completed the dialogue by writing **me mudaron* for “*me mudé*.” Some of the candidates did not make the connection with the previous or the next cue. They also experienced challenges using the reflexive pronouns.
5. Responses indicated that candidates have difficulties in using the verb “*gustar*”. Some candidates used *Me/Yo gusto, yo gustar* or *gustaríamos*.
6. The idiomatic expression “*hacer falta*” (To miss somebody or to miss something) was poorly used by candidates. Many candidates wrote: “**hago falta / hacen faltan mis amigos*” in lieu of “*me hacen falta mis amigos*”.
7. Candidates had difficulty understanding that the present participle in English does not function in Spanish as it does in English. Thus they made mistakes such as: *Mis actividades favoritas son *bailando y *cantando* instead of: “*Mis actividades favoritas son bailar y cantar.*”
8. There were challenges with subject /verb agreement when the subject was a collective noun for example: * “*la gente son amables*”, * “*las/los gente son simpáticas*”, “**la gentes son generosos*,” instead of “*la gente es amable*”, “*la gente es simpática*”, “*la gente es generosa*”.
9. Candidates failed to make the necessary connection when filling in Soledad’s part of the dialogue, on her penultimate intervention, when Julio responds to her: *Si, voy a hablar con mis padres...* Soledad’s part could have been for example: “*¡Qué bien! Aquí tienes mi número de teléfono, llámame, por favor.*”

Positive points found in the answers to this section:

1. On a positive note, there were examples of improved use of the subjunctive for example: *quiero que vengas*.
2. Responses showed very good use of commands for example: *llámame, no olvides*.
3. It was encouraging to find expressions such as: “*echar de menos*” and “*extrañar*” being used by candidates.

Recommendations when answering this section

- More time should be spent on practising dialogue.
- Closer attention should be paid to the rubric and use of ALL cues given.

Section IV – Reading Comprehension

Once again, the Reading Comprehension has highlighted candidates' lack of knowledge of **basic** Spanish vocabulary. Hence, this resulted in a misunderstanding of key areas in the passage. However, there were candidates who demonstrated an overall command of the language to the extent that they were able to achieve full marks, or at least in the 15-20 band of marks.

The following were the areas of concern related to grammar in this section:

1. Candidates were confused with regard to the use of a word that can be past participle/adjective. For example, “*organizada*” was taken to mean a person who organizes things or one who is organizing. The same can be said for “*querida*” – taken as loving as opposed to loved, and dearing (not English) as opposed to dear.
2. “*Encontrar parqueadero*” was misunderstood. Candidates thought that it referred to meeting or finding a person without recognizing that such an interpretation needed the personal “*a*”.
3. “*Camino a casa*”, which is a vocabulary item and idiomatic expression was mistaken for the third person singular of the preterite tense with the accent missing.
4. Translation of Spanish vocabulary in the given context; for example:

Maestra- boss, principal, headmistress, lecturer, professor, counsellor, maid, cashier, supervisor, music teacher, model.

Costumbre – costume, design

Quince- five, fifty

Parqueadero – park attendant, parking attendant (or they simply did not know the word).

Pinchazo – pinched, itch, punched, corn, pain, cramp, pimple, stroke, stung, prick, house rat.

Cambiando la llanta – changing her clothes, the weather changed, it rained.

La llanta – key

Las compras – the shoppings, the clothes.

Lugares – luggage, bags.

Me tomé un refresco – she refreshed herself, freshened up.

Me acosté a descansar – interestingly enough “she was laid to rest”.

Taza – glass (or they simply did not know the word and used it in their answer).

Te – tie, juice.

Mantequilla – make-up, tequila, mannequin, mayonnaise, lizard, scorpion, snake, a person's name, a place, stick, cheese, cream, milk, bill, receipt, lard.

Nevera – freezer, cupboard, stove, drawer, butter place, butter pan, butter container.

Cartera – cart, trolley.

Anécdota – antidote

Fin del cuento – end of the bill.

5. Although this is a Spanish examination, in the comprehension segment candidates are expected to answer in English. Across the region, candidates experienced problems with spelling in English.

- “dare” for “dear”
- “Strick” for “strict”
- “punchare, puncher, pungshut” for “puncture”
- “Grusries” for “groceries”
- “sand witch/wish” for “sandwich”
- “botter, bauter, botha” for “butter”
- “bost, bust” for “burst”
- “tired” for “tyre”
- “sonny” for “sunny”

Although this paper tests comprehension skills, teachers are exhorted to insist that students be wary of English spelling as it can contribute to a distortion of the answer given, leading to confusion that may influence the awarding of marks. Here now are the questions with the correct and incorrect answers.

1. Describe the qualities of Doña María Luisa.

Correct – Loved by many, organized and strict.
She was well-liked, organized and as a teacher, she was strict.

Incorrect – She was *organizing (an organizer), well-wanted and *strick.
She was well-known, an organizer, and mighty.

2. What was her profession?

Correct – She was a teacher.

Incorrect – She was a costume designer.
She was a cashier in the supermarket.

3. What was the first difficulty she encountered?

Correct – She waited fifteen minutes to find a parking space.
The first difficulty she experienced, was that she had to wait 15 minutes to find a parking space.

Incorrect – The students laughed at her.
The first difficulty she had was to find an attendant.

4. What difficulty did she experience next?

Correct – The tyre of her car was punctured.
The car had a punctured tyre.

Incorrect – The bank was locked.
She realized that she didn't have a jacket./ She was pinched./She had an itch on walking home.

5. What was the weather like on that day?

Correct – It was a hot day.
It was sweltering/ hot like hell

Incorrect – It was rainy
The weather changed and it was hot
It was snowing.

6. What did she do on her return home?

Correct – She packed her groceries in their respective place, had a soft drink and went to take a rest.
When she returned home, she unpacked all her shopping (groceries) in their respective places, took a soda and slept/relaxed/rested.

Incorrect – When she returned home she freshened up.
On her way home, she went to the stores and got all the respective things she wanted.
On her return home, she allowed Fernando to continue his lesson.

7. What did she do at 3 o'clock?

Correct – She got up to prepare a cup of tea and a sandwich.
At 3 o'clock, she got up and prepared a sandwich and tea.

Incorrect – It was 12 o'clock.
At 3 o'clock she had lessons.
At 3 o'clock she arrived at her destination and set the tea and sandwich table.

8. What surprised María Luisa?

Correct – The butter was not in the fridge but the cell phone was there instead.
The cell phone was in the fridge instead of the butter.

Incorrect – The cell phone was inside of the butter bag.
Someone jumped out and said 'Surprise'.
She got a call from Mantequilla, from a lady she don't know.

9. What was in her handbag?

Correct – The butter was in her handbag.
In her handbag was the butter she was looking for previously.

Incorrect – A lizard was in her hand bag.
A bottle of tequila was in her handbag.
The note from pero was in her handbag.
The end of the bill was in her bag.

10. Why do you think Fernando expected Doña María Luisa to accept his response?

Correct – He expected Doña María to accept his story because she had just told him a similar one. He thought that was reason enough for her to understand.

Incorrect – He expected her to accept his response because he was by her and left it at her house.

I think Fernando expected Doña Luisa to accept his response because it was written and signed by his parents instead of just him going to her and giving her an excuse by mouth.

She liked him because he was her favourite.

Recommendations for answering this section

More emphasis needs to be placed on developing the skill of reading comprehension and vocabulary building within context. Reading comprehension is as much a skill as any of the others and should not be ignored.

Students should be exposed to as many comprehension passages as possible. These can be sourced from many Spanish web sites available on the Internet and any other up-to-date Spanish text. There is also a need to build students' vocabulary and expand their reading skills by exposing them to reading materials with topics that are related to those in the syllabus.

Therefore, teachers should create a classroom that encourages students to avail themselves of as many forms of the language usage as possible, for example, grocery items, instructions manuals, television channels with Spanish features, song lyrics and advertisements.

Paper 03 - Oral Examination

Responses to Situations.

Performance on this section of the examination revealed a range of abilities among the candidates. Several candidates attempted all the situations and were forthcoming with appropriate responses. Some responses were produced with a fair degree of fluency and creativity. Many candidates were spontaneous and precise in their responses. They were able to provide appropriate responses using varied vocabulary and correct grammatical structures.

There are, however, many candidates who are still unable to perform with satisfaction a range of functions: giving directions, descriptions, explanation, suggestions, expressing feelings/opinions... Challenges came in providing relevant vocabulary and idiomatic expressions to effectively express ideas. The quality of language was severely flawed. These candidates produced disjointed and partial responses using sparse vocabulary that contained several grammatical errors.

Some common vocabulary errors included:

bebes for *bebidas*
regresar for *devolver*
la revuelta for *el vuelo*
exitar for *tener éxito*
a tiempo for *a veces*
más bueno for *mejor*

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Areas of grammar that reflected weaknesses were:

- Use of *Ser* vs *Estar*
- Noun/Adjective agreement and placement
- Omission of the personal “a”
- Subject/Verb agreement
- Use of definite and indefinite articles (candidates used a combination of articles, for example, *una la fiesta*)
- *Ir a* + infinitive (candidates used a conjugated verb instead of the infinitive)
- Use of infinitive instead of a conjugated verb (. **yo mirar la televisión*)
- Insufficient knowledge of irregular forms in the future tense
- Improper use of the gerund (**yo no viniendo*)
- Incorrect use of object pronouns; incorrect placement of object pronouns or no use of object pronouns at all, when needed.
- Formation of the Perfect Tense (using *Tener* instead of the auxiliary *Haber*)
- Incorrect usage of the verb *Gustar* (**Yo no me gusta tu camiseta*)

Reading Passages

Generally, candidates’ performance on this section was commendable. Many candidates read with acceptable pronunciation and fluency.

However, for some candidates the reading was punctuated with mispronunciation, incorrect phrasing and grouping of words, thus reflecting a marked lack of comprehension of the passage.

Errors included:

- Incorrect pronunciation of discreet vowel sounds:
fui for *fue*
fondamental for *fundamental*
veriidad or *veriedad* for *variedad*
quiija for *queja*
- The tendency to give cognates an anglicized pronunciation. This was very apparent in the words *socialización*, *región*, *biología*, *generacional*, *integración*, *industria*, *ingredientes*, *cultural*, *base*.
- Incorrect Stress:
jovénes for *jóvenes*
ámable for *amable*
indigéna for *indígena*
próceso for *proceso*
rutinaría for *rutinaria*
lidéres for *líderes*
- Mispronunciation of the consonants *h*, *ll*, *j*, *z* and *c*, and the combination *gu*, *qu* and *cui*. Also the letter “g” before “i” and “e” was often incorrectly articulated in words like *indígena*, *protegidos*, *vegetación* and *region*.
- The tendency to stumble over words with three or more syllables, or the omission of one or more syllables in such words.(*imprescindible*, *mejoramiento*, *crecimiento*, *aladear*).

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

- Generally incorrect pronunciation of words, such as:

bajaje for *bagaje*
ciudado for *cuidado*
frieir/freiar/frerir for *freír*
reyón for *región*
oppertunidad for *oportunidad*
merial/meyoría for *mayoría*
suerje/surgue for *surge*
saquiarla for *saciarla*
chica for *chichi*
atrajé for *atrae*
several variations for *contribuir*.

Students should be exposed to extensive practice in reading aloud. Opportunities should be created to allow students to listen to authentic Spanish in an effort to reduce the deficiencies observed in pronunciation and intonation.

Guided Conversation

Some candidates appeared well prepared for this section, responding spontaneously and providing full responses. Responses were lively, and in some cases, imaginative. These candidates handled the task with confidence and a fair degree of fluency.

For the majority of candidates this was the most challenging aspect of the examination. While all the questions seemed manageable, several candidates paid little attention to the details required. On hearing a familiar word they gave a prepared answer which, in most cases, was irrelevant and inappropriate. It was clear that many questions were generally misunderstood.

Some candidates were unable to differentiate between the interrogatives such as *quién*, *cómo*, *cuánto*, and consequently rendered inappropriate responses. There was little evidence of a wide vocabulary and sufficient command of basic elements of grammar. The lack of oral practice was clearly manifested. Candidates seemed to have little or no knowledge of high frequency words for the themes.

Section A - (Home and Family)

Many candidates did not comprehend the phrase *peor defecto*. *Tarea doméstica* also seemed problematic, and many candidates did not realize that the question was about their mother and not themselves.

Section B - (Sports and Recreation)

Deporte was sometimes interpreted as a place or person and no differentiation was made between *deporte* and *deportista*. The word “*cualidades*” also seemed incomprehensible.

In response to question 3, *¿Que lugar de interés en tu país prefieres visitar?*, many candidates mentioned a foreign country.

Section C - (Daily Routine)

¿Qué tomas al desayuno? was often interpreted as the time, and *¿Con qué te desayunas?* frequently obtained the response *con mi mamá*, or any other relative.

¿Quién hace más tareas domésticas ...? often resulted in a list of chores (*saco la basura, limpio mi dormitorio...*).

Candidates generally had problems responding to the following questions:

¿Cómo se prepara tu plato favorito?
Si pudieras cambiar tu rutina diaria ¿qué cambiarías?

Section D - (Travel)

Candidates seemed to be more comfortable with this section except for *¿Viajan mucho tus amigos?* which was interpreted as *...con tus amigos?*

Cuando viajas, ¿prefieres hospedarte con familia o en un hotel? was often misinterpreted. The word *hospedarte* was problematic.

Recommendations for Paper 03 (Oral Examination)

- Continue the practice of oral activities as the reading of passages, conversation and responses to situations.
- Candidates need to be prepared to expand on their responses, as happens in normal conversation, even when the question posed is a closed question.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

JANUARY 2010

**SPANISH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Candidate entry increased by almost 200 per cent from 2009 to 2010 with the majority being from Trinidad and Tobago. However, almost half of those originally registered did not complete the three papers which comprised the examination. Even so, the actual number of candidates who actually completed the examination was 68 per cent more than in 2009.

Overall performance on the examination compared favourably with previous years. There were the usual high levels of linguistic competence, spontaneity, fluency and accuracy displayed by candidates. Teachers are encouraged to continue being innovative and creative in their teaching strategies, using a variety of activities to make language learning relevant, personal and meaningful to students.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprised two sections, tested the ability of candidates to listen to and understand a number of aural items in the target language and to read and understand a number of written items. Both sections required candidates to have sufficient mastery of essential grammar and vocabulary. The good performance on this paper was comparable to that of previous years.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section I – Directed Situations

In this section candidates were presented with 10 situations to which they were required to provide written responses in Spanish. The situations demanded that the candidates recognize the function they were required to perform, all within the scope of their experience at this level. The candidates were assessed on the appropriateness of their responses and quality of language used. With regard to quality of language, candidates were expected to demonstrate their control of appropriate grammatical structures and knowledge of relevant vocabulary, both expressed in clearly worded concise responses. In assessing appropriateness, each response was categorized as fully or partially appropriate and was awarded marks accordingly. Inappropriate responses were awarded no mark, even if the language of expression was flawless.

In general, candidates' performance on this section was quite good. There were very few candidates who did not attempt this section. While most responses were appropriate, performance by candidates highlighted a number of weaknesses in both grammar and vocabulary. In many cases, the wrong verb form was used, especially if candidates attempted the imperative.

Situation 1

Your mother has written you an e-mail giving you some advice while you are in Caracas. What does your mother write? (Function: Giving Advice)

(Suggested Response: *Debes hablar mucho español./Habla mucho español.*)

Most responses were appropriate. However, some candidates opted to make a wish, *buena suerte*, rather than give advice. Others wrote what the mother hoped for, omitting the use of the subjunctive, for example, *Espero que* trabajes mucho*.

Candidates seemed to have difficulty expressing the Imperative and instead used the Present Tense **estudias bien*. The more capable candidates however exhibited competence with the subjunctive and the command form: *Sugiero que vayas a la biblioteca. Es aconsejable que ahorres...*

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Situation 2

You are spending Christmas holidays in Puerto Rico. You send an e-mail to your best friend expressing your opinion about Christmas in Puerto Rico. What do you write?

(Function: Expressing Opinion)

(Suggested response: *Me gusta/me encanta la Navidad en Puerto Rico.*)

While this was an easy situation for most candidates, there were repeated errors in the agreement of the adjectives describing Christmas, for example, *La Navidad ... es *fantástico*. Few candidates displayed knowledge of the change from *y* to *e* before words beginning with *i/hi*, for instance, *La Navidad es espléndida *y interesante*. Surprisingly, many candidates used *Feliz Navidad* in their translation of Christmas, as opposed to *La Navidad*. This was therefore used as the subject in responses such as **Feliz Navidad en Puerto Rico es interesante*. When *Navidad* was used, many candidates omitted the article before *Navidad*. In a few cases candidates described Puerto Rico instead of giving their opinion on Christmas. The use of *bien* for *buena* was also duplicated by several candidates.

Situation 3

You are applying to a college overseas and must submit a statement expressing the reason you have selected that particular college. What do you write? (Function: Providing Information)

(Suggested Response: *Este colegio ofrece una variedad de cursos/Es un buen colegio.*)

This situation posed little difficulty. Although it was well done by the majority of candidates, most of them who wanted to express the superlative used *en* instead of *de*, for example, *Yo creo que su colegio es el mejor *en el mundo*.

Vocabulary items ‘choose’ and ‘apply’ presented problems for some candidates who attempted to use these terms in their responses. *Selectar* and *aplicar* were used by many candidates, for example, *Selecté esta escuela*. The weaker candidates showed a lack of understanding of the semantics of Spanish and used inappropriate vocabulary such as *el campo* rather than *el país*, or *esta* instead of *que*, and *quieren me* for *como yo*.

Situation 4

You need to see the school’s counsellor. Write an e-mail requesting an appointment to see him/her.

(Function: Requesting)

Suggested Response: *Quisiera hacer una cita con el consejero por favor.*)

There were errors of vocabulary in many responses, especially with the words for “appointment” and “counsellor”. These were often omitted, written in English or with an *a* or *e* added to the English word, or replaced by another word such as *director*, *jefe*, *conserje*. However, many candidates showed their capability by using simple phrasing where the use of the word for “counsellor” was unnecessary and asked for the person by name. In some instances where this was done, candidates omitted the use of the article *el/la* before *señor/señora*.

The expression *por favor* was often misspelt or written as one word while structurally, many candidates opted to use *poder/querer* + infinitive.

Situation 5

Your Spanish class is planning a trip to a Spanish-speaking country. Write the e-mail you send to your teacher stating why you will not be able to go on the trip. (Function: Explaining)

(Suggested Response: *No puedo ir porque mis padres no tienen dinero.*)

This situation was relatively well done with most candidates opting to use the ‘safe’ *estar enfermo* as the excuse. However, some of them omitted to indicate that they could not go and only gave a reason.

Candidates are still having difficulty with the use of *ser* and *estar*, for example, *No puedo ir al viaje porque mi hermana *es muy enferma*. Also, they tended to confuse *mal/malo*, that is, the adjective and the adverb.

Again, there were candidates who failed to make the noun/adjective agreement as seen in *mi mama está *enfermo*. However, some idiomatic expressions were noted in the work of the more capable candidates, for example, *ando mal de dinero/mis padres están sin blancas*.

Situation 6

Your school is participating in an inter-school football competition but your school team is not doing well. A supporter sends an e-mail encouraging the players to do better. What does the message say? (Function: Expressing Encouragement)

(Suggested Response: *No se preocupen, todo saldrá bien.*)

This situation presented a challenge to several candidates, as many had difficulty expressing encouragement. In many instances candidates did not realize that the e-mail was directed to players, and used *tú* instead of *ustedes* to talk to members of the team, for example, *no te preocupes*.

Situation 7

You were very rude to your father this morning and you are now ashamed of your conduct. Write the e-mail you send to his office. (Function: Apologizing)

(Suggested Response: *Siento mi conducta esta mañana.*)

While this situation was handled competently by many candidates, those who chose to expand on *lo siento* encountered problems with the verb *sentir*. *Sentir+ infinitive/Lo siento/sentir que...*

The use of *lo siento por* was often seen.

Situation 8

You take a phone message for your sister about a change of plans for the weekend. What message do you write? (Function: Providing Information)

(Suggested Response: *Marta ha cambiado sus planes./ Juan dijo que no va(n) al cine sino al parque.*)

Candidates found difficulty in writing a message. Many of them offered a response to only a part of the situation and used the first person singular and plural rather than reported speech appropriate for the message taken.

Common errors here were (1) the use of *en* instead of *el* to express on Saturday, *en sábado* (2) use of “cinema” for *cine*, (3) failure to contract *a+el*, *a el cine*, (4) use of *con tú* instead of *contigo* for example, **Susan no puede ir al centro commercial con tú el sábado*.

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Situation 9

You send an e-mail to your aunt who lives overseas reminding her of a promise she made to you last week. What does the e-mail say? (Function: Reminding)

(Suggested Response: *No olvides enviarme el vestido que me gustó.*)

There were several errors in responses to this situation. Candidates had difficulty with the vocabulary item “promise”, rendered as *promisar* (verb) and *tu prometo* (noun).

Many candidates did not use *olvidar* or any of the words for ‘remember’. When used, it was sometimes incorrectly replaced by the adjective *inolvidable* or misspelt, as in *olvidades*, for example, **no olvidades, no olvidable*. Some problems were noted in candidates’ use of the negative command form, for instance, **no olvida/s que tienes que ir al cine conmigo*.

There was also some inconsistency in the way candidates used both *tú* and *usted* in the same response.

Situation 10

You have received your end-of-term report and are disappointed about a particular grade. What do you write in a note to your teacher? (Function: Expressing Disappointment)

(Suggested Response: *¡Qué lástima que saqué/obtuve esa nota!*)

This was one of the more challenging situations. Many candidates were unable to competently perform the function and opted for an apology-*lo siento*. In addition, vocabulary deficiency was evident in substitution of the words such as *nota, punto* by *marco, mark, marques, grado, resulta, gol*.

Recommendations

- Candidates need to read the situations carefully before attempting a response.
- Candidates should familiarize themselves with **all** the functions outlined in the syllabus in preparation for this section.
- Every effort should be made to encourage the use of Spanish in the teaching /learning process. Instructions and comments should be in Spanish.
- Students should be encouraged to interact with the Spanish-speakers in their community.
- Teachers should ensure that students develop an adequate command of essential grammar and wide vocabulary in keeping with the demands of the syllabus.

Section II – Letter/Composition

This section is intended to assess candidates’ ability to produce written language within the parameters set out by the syllabus. In addition to mastery of relevant vocabulary, idiom and language structure, the ability to express ideas clearly and coherently is emphasized. The two options given were the letter and the composition, each of which was marked out of 30.

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Both questions, letter and composition, fell well within the range of the demands of the syllabus as well as within the expected range of skills required of a candidate at this level of examination. The majority of candidates attempted the question, the weaker ones using whatever limited vocabulary or knowledge of grammar they knew to produce an answer of the required length. The questions this year demanded the use of varied tenses, thus testing the ability of the candidates to manipulate such tenses. In addition, the themes of both questions were practical and were ones to which candidates could easily relate. Candidates generally interpreted the questions well and the majority respected rubric and paid attention to format.

Candidates' Strengths

- Most candidates adhered to the format and content of the letter. The opening and closing lines were often well written with language that flowed easily.
- Vocabulary was used appropriately.
- Candidates demonstrated good knowledge of tenses, especially the perfect and future tenses. The more competent candidates used the subjunctive well.
- The better candidates used a wide range of idioms and vocabulary. A few candidates were quite poetic in their use of language.
- The weaker candidates bravely attempted to answer despite their limited scope.

Examples of Good Performance

Subjunctive: *Espero que te halles bien.*
Deseo que todo vaya bien en la fiesta.
Espero que la fiesta quede un secreto.

Good use of tenses: *Hoy he planeado . . .*
Hemos sido amigos . . .
Durante la fiesta bailaremos, comeremos y nos divertiremos . . .
Grité, salté de alegría . . .

Appropriate use of vocabulary and idioms: *Al oír las noticias salté y grité.*
No paré de gritar.
Lo difícil fue ...

Candidates' Weaknesses:

Many candidates continue to write the date for the letter in words. They should use digits (*el 15 de agosto de 2010*):

**El quince de agosto de dos mil diez.*

Also, re dates:

*Barbados el 15 de agosto is **incorrect**. The article should be omitted.*

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

The future tense was required in the composition but often the past tense was used.

**Había muchas personas.
La fiesta *tuvo lugar.*

There was poor use and positioning of object pronouns.

**Dijo me.
*Conoce me.
Espero que tú escribasme.

Poor agreement of adjectives.

**Persona aplicado.*

Poor verb and subject agreement.

**Todo el mundo me abrazaron.
La fiesta *tuve lugar.*

The present participle was used after prepositions.

**En organizando la fiesta.
Gracias por escuchando.

‘Tener’ was used to form the perfect tense.

**Tuve gané.*

The verbs ‘tener’, ‘haber’, and ‘hacer’ were often conjugated incorrectly in the future tense.

**Teneré la fiesta.
Mi madre *hacerá sándwiches.*

Errors with ‘ser’ and ‘estar’.

*La fiesta *estará en mi casa.
Ha estado mi amiga.

Omission of the personal ‘a’.

**Invitaré sus amigos.*

Poor knowledge of the use of the possessive in Spanish.

**En mi padre’s casa.
Ella amigo.

‘Ser’ being used to express age.

*Mi amiga *es doce años.*

Radical changing verbs were spelt incorrectly in the past tense.

**Empiezó*

‘Por’ was used instead of ‘para’

*Una fiesta *por ella.*

‘Conocer’ was used instead of ‘saber’

*Yo *conozco que le gusta.*

‘A’ was omitted with the use of ‘gustar’.

**Mi amiga le gusta bailar.*

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Poor translation of the word 'like'.

**Las comidas gusta arroz, pollo . . .*

**Juegos gusta el ajedrez . . .*

Confusion with similar sounding English words.

'*Precio*' was used to mean 'prize'.

'*Partido*' was used to mean 'party'.

'*A*' was used to translate 'at' a place.

**La fiesta es a mi casa*

**Estaba al colegio*

There was confusion among candidates over the use of:

'*sorpresa*' and '*sorprendida*'

'*que*' and '*esa*'

'*tan*' and '*así que*'

'*amor*' and '*amar*'

'*dólar*' and '*dolor*'

'*cien*' and '*ciento*'

The word 'challenge' in the composition also posed difficulty for some candidates.

Suggestions for Teachers

- Much practice leads to success. Students may understand a concept when it is taught but it is constant practice of the concept that will enable them to render the concept accurately. Review of past papers is recommended.
- Students need practice in writing the date in numerals.
- Repeated errors such as those outlined in the present report need to be reviewed just before the examination.
- Spanish should be spoken more often in the classroom so students can experience the language being used in a natural setting and not just through grammar exercises or through the writing of answers to questions.
- Vocabulary could be introduced and practised through the use of songs, games and puzzles. Students tend to remember words when they are linked to exciting activities.
- Writing practice for this section can be encouraged by incorporating journal writing even from the lower levels.
- Students may need to brainstorm topics before the actual writing.
- Teachers can consider peer correction as a useful learning activity in writing.
- Teachers need to be *au courant* with ways to teach writing — departmental mini workshops is a way to start.
- Wherever possible, trips to Spanish-speaking countries ought to be organized to give students the opportunity to experience the language and culture in a different yet more real setting than that of the classroom.

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Section III – Contextual Announcement /Contextual Dialogue

This section required candidates to choose to write either (i) a contextual announcement or (ii) a contextual dialogue completion. Cues given in English were provided for both options.

Performance on this section clearly revealed that the questions were not beyond the capability of the average candidate. They were relevant to candidates' experiences and allowed for flexibility and manipulation of the Spanish language.

Candidates' responses revealed that many of them understood the requirements and they responded appropriately. They demonstrated the ability to use the different tenses well and displayed a good command of vocabulary and idiomatic structures. Several candidates were able to use the present subjunctive with ease. This was particularly apparent in the contextual dialogue. There was evidence of creativity as many candidates adequately used the cues to develop the contextual announcement.

Performance on the Contextual Announcement

Strengths of Candidates

- In the contextual announcement many candidates used '*se ofrece*' along with good use of the time '*de nueve de la mañana a cuatro de la tarde*'.
- Candidates who produced high standards of work displayed great mastery of the language, often using the subjunctive mood ... '*podemos regalarle un fin de semana a un hotel con su familia para que se relaje...*'.
- Some good phrases included:
 - ▶ *un sueldo de*
 - ▶ *... su solicitud*
 - ▶ *de acuerdo*
 - ▶ *conocimiento de*

Weaknesses of Candidates

Candidates' weaknesses were very evident in the area of grammar. Some candidates often misinterpreted the first cue and did not recognize that a business was making the offer rather than the school.

- There was constant use of English.
- There was regular use of '*ser*' with age: ... **debe ser dieciséis años*.
- Use of incorrect register: **'la oportunidad de tu vida'* and **'manda tu solicitud'*.
- Misuse of adjectives: **'lugares de interesantes'*.
- The adjective 'interested' also proved difficult to express and candidates often used '*interesantes*' instead of '*interesadas*'.

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

- Cue No. 5 — ‘How can one take advantage of this opportunity’ — was misinterpreted by many candidates.
- Words were frequently misspelled and misused, for example, **oportunidad*, **a son las ocho*.

Performance on the Contextual Dialogue

Candidates used large chunks of the dialogue to formulate their answers. They rewrote parts of the teacher’s responses for their own thereby causing the responses to be quite distorted. This practice often caused them to be penalized as their responses made little or no sense.

Noted errors included:

- Omission of personal ‘a’:
 - ▶ **regalar el director*
 - ▶ **invitar los profesores*
 - ▶ **informar los padres*
- Incorrect use of register: use of informal instead of formal when responding to the teacher who was one of the persons in the dialogue.
 - ▶ **no te preocupes*
 - ▶ **¿qué piensas?*

Adjectival as well as subject/verb agreement posed a problem

- ▶ **Tú puedo*
- ▶ **el restaurante favorita*
- ▶ **un baila y cantar competición*
- ▶ **la director*

The third response was often misunderstood and candidates had difficulty formulating a proper response. An adequate response could have been ‘*Es verdad. Pero si se les informa sobre esta actividad de antemano no van a organizar nada para esa noche.*’

Suggestions to Teachers

1. Dedicate more time to and engage in extensive practice on contextual dialogues/ announcements.
2. Enforce basic grammatical and sentence structure.
3. Practise and drill verbs such as ‘*querer*’, ‘*poder*’, ‘*pensar*’ and other irregular verbs.
4. Caution students against regurgitation of structures acquired directly from the cues in the dialogue itself.
5. Encourage students to respect the rubric.

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Section IV – Reading Comprehension

This section tested candidates' ability to read and comprehend a short passage in Spanish and respond in English to 10 questions set on the passage. The marks allocated per question ranged from 1 to 3, based on the demands of the question. The majority of the candidates understood the passage and were able to respond appropriately. The theme was age appropriate and appealing.

Question 1: When did Lucita celebrate her birthday?

(Suggested Response: Day before yesterday.)

This question was correctly answered by most candidates. However, some candidates interpreted '*anteayer*' as 'last year', 'yesterday' or 'today'.

Question 2: How old was Lucita?

(Suggested Response: Seventeen years.)

Although this question posed few problems to candidates, some translated '*diecisiete*' as 'twenty-seven', and a few offered 'sixteen' as the response.

Question 3: What gift did Lucita receive and from whom?

(Suggested Response: A large box of chocolates from her grandmother.)

This question was generally well understood. Nevertheless, some candidates did not mention that it was a box of chocolates that Lucita had received. Some translated/understood '*caja*' as 'bar'. Additionally, some candidates wrote 'grandparents or grandfather' rather than 'grandmother'.

Question 4: Why did Lucita take her gift to school?

(Suggested Response: To share it with her friends)

The answers to this question were commendable. Candidates fully grasped the meaning of *compartir*, although a few translated it as 'to show off' or to 'show' rather than to share.

Question 5: What did Lucita observe at the end of the class?

(Suggested Response: That the chocolates had disappeared.)

For the most part, candidates understood that the chocolates were not where Lucita had left them. It was commendable that the candidates understood the verb '*dejar*' and were able to appropriately express its meaning in this context.

Question 6: How did Lucita react?

(Suggested Response: She became angry and began to cry.)

Most candidates gave a partial response to this question. They understood '*llorar*' — to cry — but did not recognize '*se enfadó*' to mean 'she became angry'. However, appropriate substitutions were made such as 'she became upset'. Also, lack of vocabulary was shown on the part of the candidates as they interpreted '*preguntó*' to mean 'pregnant'. In addition, the candidates tended to look at some words and phrases in isolation and produced their responses, for example: 'Lucita was crying because she was pregnant and told Domingo about it.'

Question 7: What information did Domingo have?

(Suggested Response: That two boys were planning to hide the chocolates.)

The candidates' interpretation of this question varied significantly. The very good candidates correctly translated '*planeando hacerle una broma*' but others were unaware of the expression.

Question 8: Where did Domingo go?

(Suggested Response: To the cafeteria/in search of Lucas and Alkino.)

This question was very well answered by the majority of the candidates although some did not indicate place (where Domingo was going) but the purpose intended (what he was going for).

Question 9: What was Domingo's reaction when he saw Lucas and Alkino?

(Suggested Response: He grabbed the chocolates and ran.)

Familiarity with certain words such as '*correr*' and '*rápidamente*' prompted the candidates to guess the response — although not in its entirety — and therefore made meaningful substitutions. Some responses were a little distorted, for example, 'Domingo became mad/angry and wanted to fight.'

Question 10: Why did the guard react in the way that he did?

(Suggested Response: He thought that Domingo had stolen Lucita's gift.)

Candidates answered this question according to their experience and not to the information in the passage. For example: The guard went to stop a fight / the boys/ bullies were rude and making a lot of noise.

Recommendations

Teachers of Spanish need to expose students to a wide variety of passages for reading comprehension exercises. These exercises will expose the students to a variety of idiomatic expressions and vocabulary. There are many websites where the teachers can find reading passages appropriate to the students' interests. Furthermore, these passages can also be used as listening comprehension exercises in the classroom or language room.

Reading and understanding are skills that must be developed and it is important for teachers to dedicate quality time to this practice.

Paper 03 – Oral Examination

This paper tested candidates' ability to: (1) produce appropriate responses in the target language to a variety of situations which demand specific functions, (2) read aloud a short passage in the target language on topics of general interest to the candidates and (3) carry on a conversation in the target language via answering questions based on topics set out in the syllabus.

In this paper the candidates have the opportunity to highlight their speaking skills, giving the entire examination a balance between receptive and productive skills in the Spanish language.

Section I – Responses to Situations

This section requires the candidates to respond orally in Spanish, to situations and or instructions given in English.

Many candidates were able to provide responses which were appropriate to the situations presented to them. Most of the candidates found something appropriate to say without delving too much into complex grammatical structures. The stronger candidates were not intimidated by the situations which sought the use of the subjunctive mood while others simply manoeuvred around the situations by providing less complicated responses. The candidates were able to improvise when necessary.

Candidates' main weakness in handling this section was in the quality of language used to express their responses. There were several grammatical errors, ranging from the use of incorrect verb forms to poor agreement: noun-adjective, noun-article, subject-verb. There were also problems with regard to the correct placement of the direct and indirect object pronouns. The limited vocabulary and knowledge of sentence structure of some candidates hindered their performance. Some candidates lost marks because they did not attempt to answer both parts of the questions while others gave inappropriate answers.

The candidates' **major strength** was mainly in the good use of basic Spanish. They used it when the situations allowed for it. For example:

Lo siento, Pedro.
El ladrón es ...
Vivo ...

Some of the most salient **shortfalls** were:

- No confidence in the use of the formal and familiar forms “*Usted*” and “*tú*.”
- Confusion in the use of the verbs: *Ser* and *Estar*, for example:
 - **Estoy muy inteligente*, instead of *Soy muy inteligente.*
 - **Mi mamá es en el hospital* instead of *Mi mamá está en el hospital.*
 - **Esté es en la biblioteca.*
- Confusion in the use of *ser* and *tener* as in:
 - **Soy once años* instead of *Tengo once años.*
- Difficulties with noun-adjective agreement:
 - * *Mi hermano enferma* instead of *mi hermano enfermo.*
 - **El otro clase* instead of *la otra clase.*
 - **Cuántos dinero tienen?* instead of *cuánto dinero tienen?*
- Subject–Verb agreement in cases as for example:
 - **Nosotros llega* instead of *nosotros llegamos.*
- Difficulty in using the reflexive verb *llamarse*...
 - **Me llamo es...*, **Soy es...*
- Problems with sentence structure as in: *¿Que llamo?*, *tengo lavar*.
- Difficulty in using the expression *no hay problema* and instead using *no problema*.
- Confusion in the use of *cien* and *ciento*, for example, **tengo ciento dólares* instead of *tengo cien dólares.*
- Use of *Estar* + *past participle* in sentences such as:
 - **Está celebremos mi cumpleaños* instead of *está celebrando mi cumpleaños.*
- Inability to conjugate the verb *querer*.
- Incorrect use of *para* and *por*.

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

- Incorrect use of ordinal adjectives: ‘**es primo día*’ instead of ‘*es el primer día*.’
- ‘*Soy responsabilidad*’ for ‘*soy responsable*.’ This indicates the need for revision of the use of adjectives and the relationship between words or word roots.
- Wrong use of vocabulary items, for example, ‘*zapatos*’ for ‘*calcetines*.’

Recommendations

It is recommended that teachers use situations in every Spanish class. It would be good practice to incorporate this as an activity featuring prominently in the classroom. Sometimes the situations could be transformed into tasks that the students will enjoy doing if a sense of humour is attached to each situation. This practice will give the students the confidence needed to adequately handle the oral examination. This activity can be turned into an acting situation where students can become performers. It can become an enjoyable one in which students would eagerly participate. Furthermore, it affords students an opportunity to expand their vocabulary, and to learn to use idiomatic expressions. These exercises will prepare them not only for the exam but for ordinary everyday life when the candidates may find themselves in similar situations.

Section II – Reading Passages

In this section, the candidates’ ability to read Spanish fluently using correct pronunciation and appropriate intonation was tested. There were four short reading passages (125–130 words) in Spanish of general interest to the candidates.

The reading component of this examination continues to present candidates with great challenges. It must be pointed out that a positive feature in this oral examination was candidates’ ability to self-correct their errors. This is indeed a good sign in the language acquisition process. It indicates that the candidates are so motivated in the acquisition of the Spanish language/pronunciation that they are becoming more aware of the pronunciation errors and are making the effort to correct the errors themselves.

Some candidates’ weaknesses in pronunciation were still apparent and teachers are encouraged to address the following features in their attempt to remedy the situation.

Pronunciation problems which emerged as the candidates encountered the following phonemes:

- There were challenges in the pronunciation of words such as *nostalgia, juguetes, jóvenes, cuchillería, escoger, utilizar, utensilios, distinguir, criollo, buñuelos and fieles*.
- The grapheme /letter h is not pronounced in Spanish. It is a silent h: that is, no phonetic value is attached to it. Candidates nevertheless, pronounced it in words such as: *carbohdratos* and *hojuelas*.
- The English phoneme /z/ was transferred onto Spanish in the word ‘*azúcar*’.
- The letter c was pronounced as K as in ‘*satisfacken*’ instead of ‘*satisfacçen*’.
- The English phoneme /g/ was transferred into Spanish in the word ‘*escoger*’.
- Candidates experienced difficulty pronouncing the word ‘*criollo*’. They rendered the word ‘*criollo*’ as ‘*corolo*’. Again this relates to: (a) the pronunciation of the diphthong [io] which in this case disappeared completely and (b) the pronunciation of the letter ‘l’ which candidates may not have had much practice producing.

- Articulating the Spanish letter /ñ/ in the word *buñuelos* was problematic for some candidates.
- The word ‘*riesgo*’ was pronounced as ‘*resago*’ and ‘*ricocio*’.
- Candidates experienced problems in the pronunciation of diphthongs as in the word *utensilios*. They did not pronounce the diphthong in one syllable as it should be done but instead broke the diphthong into two syllables. The candidates also experienced problems pronouncing the Spanish vowels.
- Challenges relating to the placement of stress made the reading passages in some cases very difficult to follow. Words such as ‘*salían*’ and ‘*vivían*’ were rendered as ‘*salían*’ and *vivián*’.
- Some candidates had problems reading long words such as *preempaquetada*, *instantáneamente* and *desafortunadamente*. This challenge is very closely related to the placement of the stress.
- There was also omission of syllables, for example:

**pertencen*’ instead of ‘*pertenecen*’
 **oportunides*’ instead of ‘*oportunidades*’
 **absolumente*’ instead of ‘*absolutamente*’

Recommendations

Teachers need to incorporate much practice in their lessons of the correct production of the Spanish sounds for **j, g, ñ, z, s** and **c** and the combination of **gue, gui, ge/je and gi** and **ji** as early as possible in the delivery of the Spanish programme. Teaching pronunciation is not an easy task and lots of imagination, use of devices and consistency in the correction of pronunciation errors are needed. This is an integral part of the foreign language teaching/learning process.

The students of Spanish should be taught how to pronounce diphthongs in one syllable. Some repetition drills with words which have diphthongs will help to improve the students’ pronunciation.

Exercises on syllabification will strengthen students’ pronunciation. Using modern songs sung by modern singers will motivate the students to sing in Spanish as they try to imitate these models. Reading poems in Spanish will also help to improve the students’ pronunciation and intonation.

It is important that students of Spanish understand how stress works in the language. The students should be introduced to the rules that govern the placement of stress in Spanish from very early in the language acquisition process so they will improve as they progress in the language. The earlier the students become familiarized with these rules, the easier it will be for them to apply such rules.

Generally, the interference from the students’ native language, (English) in the production of Spanish is hampering the production of the target language. This is a normal situation when two languages enter in contact and foreign language teachers must be very much aware of this. It is recommended that teachers of Spanish equip themselves with Spanish pronunciation exercises (available on the internet). There are many sites on the teaching of Spanish pronunciation and grammar available on the net which can be of tremendous assistance to the teacher as he/she executes the task.

Section III – Guided Conversation

This section of the Oral Paper seeks to assess the ability of candidates to respond appropriately to questions based on certain themes.

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Performance varied in this section. Stronger candidates understood the questions and responded promptly and appropriately, while weaker candidates had problems as a result of lack of comprehension and poor expression. These deficiencies affected the spontaneity, fluency and quality of their responses. These candidates had limited vocabulary and showed great difficulty in producing grammatically sound sentences.

It was heartening to see that the stronger candidates managed to use the subjunctive mood appropriately as in: *'Recomiendo que leas un libro.'*

The guided conversation revealed the following weaknesses in candidates' performance:

- Some candidates did not exhibit comprehension of the questions, some did not make an effort to respond to them, and others gave inappropriate responses.
- Some candidates who initially had problems understanding the longer questions understood after the questions were repeated to them.
- Pronunciation errors as stated in previous Sections I and II of this paper resurfaced.
- Confusion in the use of *'ser'*, *'estar'* and *'tener'* i.e., *'ser ... años'* was evident.
- The correct use of prepositions by the candidates proved challenging, especially with regard to *'por'* and *'para'*.
- Some candidates showed little knowledge of subject-verb agreement; article-noun and noun-adjective agreements, for example: **ella es tranquilo; *mi favorito ingredientes.*
- Candidates experienced problems as they could not identify the reflexive verbs, did not know when to use the reflexive pronouns, nor how to conjugate reflexive verbs, for example, **Me hago los deberes*, **me prefiero*, **no me gusta lavo* and **cepillarse mi pelo*. It is recommended that reflexive verbs and the use of reflexive pronouns be revised so candidates would feel more confident in using them in the future.
- Candidates need to become acquainted with the word order in Spanish so as to avoid errors like **'roja corbata'*. This is an interference feature from English, their native language.
- The verb *'gustar'* in the negative form was used with another conjugated verb for example: *No gustar estudiar.*
- Candidates did not know the difference between *'padres'* and *'parientes'*. The following words were also unfamiliar to them: *divertirse, gustar, instalaciones, actividades, recreativas.*
- Candidates showed difficulties in the conjugation of verbs. The conjugation of the verb *'jugar'* in a response was rendered as *'yo *jugo fútbol.'*

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

- Candidates responded to the questions without paying sufficient attention to them, resulting in responses that did not make sense. From the candidates' performance the examiners doubted whether the candidates understood the question as a whole, or did not recognize the interrogative words. Examples:

¿Con qué frecuencia usas tu teléfono celular?

Response given: 'Mi abuelo llamo.'

¿Con quién te entiendes mejor en tu familia?

Response given: 'Mi papá es pescador.'

These responses are inadequate and signal complete lack of comprehension of the question.

Recommendations

It is advisable that the teachers of Spanish use a communicative approach in the teaching of Spanish. This will help to introduce conversation and interaction between students and teachers.

Teachers of Spanish need to practise guided conversation in Spanish with their students. This activity will allow the students to get acquainted with the interrogative words, and will build their confidence when responding to questions. The interrogative words signal the student towards the response he/she should provide. Role play activities, for example, doing interviews with celebrities, can awaken students' interest in participating in Spanish conversations. The more such activities are done in class the more confident the students will become in responding to questions.

Teachers must also try to conduct as large a percentage of their classes in the target language. This has implications for teachers' own access to practise in speaking.

It will be interesting also to have native speakers of Spanish as a special guest in the classroom. This will motivate the students to try and communicate. Although initially students might be a bit shy, they will eventually try to speak with the native speaker. There are also resources on the internet that teachers should be able to access which will facilitate the listening, comprehension, speaking and writing of the Spanish language.

Here are some of the websites which could be helpful to Spanish teachers:

www.ver-taal.com (audio y videos, reportajes TVE, noticias TVE, canciones de diferentes artistas hispanoamericanos, ejercicios de gramática sobre todos los temas)

www.bbc.co.uk/languages/spanish/mividaloca (serie en video en varios capítulos para aprender español... muy buena!)

www.esaudio.net/recordings (Audio)

www.elearnspanishlanguage.com (Audio e historias)

www.123teachme.com/learn_spanish (Ejercicios para practicar gramática)

www.aprenderespanol.org (Ejercicios de gramática, videos, juegos.)

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2010

**SPANISH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY**

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Candidates' overall performance in the 2010 examination declined when compared with that of 2009. This decline was due mainly to the less than satisfactory execution of Section III, Contextual Announcement and Contextual Dialogue, and Section IV, Reading Comprehension, on Paper 02. Candidates clearly had difficulty in coming to grips with these two sections.

There was generally a wide barrier between the diligent, well-prepared candidates and the ones who clearly struggled. It is difficult to ascertain whether poor performance stemmed from lack of ability, lack of interest or lack of preparation. Cases where the performance was commendable in any way were encouraging.

However, even overall weak candidates showed some capacity for expressing themselves in writing with some capacity of recall of vocabulary, if not grammar. This indicates that all is not lost. It is recommended that teachers, in the first instance, explore activities that build recall, thereby enhancing students' self-confidence. Attention also has to be paid to the types of error correction being utilized in the classroom. Persistence of certain types of errors is an indication that lessons have to be re-designed constantly so as to re-introduce and re-enforce those linguistic elements that detract from potentially good performance.

Generally, students must also be made aware of examination strategies. For this examination, attempting a question is a better option than leaving a blank space. Planning a letter, counting words and matching answers with rubrics are basic requirements in writing an examination. Such fundamentals must not be taken for granted and teachers must provide guidance and practice to enable their students to master them.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprised two sections, tested candidates' ability to (i) listen to and understand a number of items in Spanish and (ii) read and understand a number of written items. The overall paper required that candidates master the essential grammatical structures and vocabulary within the syllabus. Performance on this paper improved slightly over last year's.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section I – Directed Situations

In this section, candidates were presented with ten situations to which they were required to provide written responses in Spanish, complying with the function which the situation demanded (such as expressing an opinion, providing information, making enquiries). Candidates were assessed on the appropriateness of their responses and the quality of language used.

Situation 1

A pen pal from Spain wishes to know what the weather is like in your country during the Christmas season. Respond to his/her e-mail. [Function: Describing weather]

Suggested response: *En diciembre hace fresco/buen tiempo.*

Candidates used *el tiempo* together with the verb *hace* and other weather expressions, offering responses like *el tiempo hace frío*. They also used *tiempo* for *la temporada* or *la estación de Navidad*. Often, the article *la* was left out before *Navidad*. The word *muy* was used instead of *mucho* in expressions like *hace *muy frío* and **el tiempo es muy calor*.

Situation 2

Patricia has sent you an e-mail asking about your plans for the weekend. Respond to her e-mail. [Function: Expressing intention]

Suggested response: *Iré a...*

Candidates experienced difficulty forming the simple future using *ir a + infinitive*. The preposition *a* was often omitted. In cases where candidates expressed plans to visit someone, the personal *a* was often left out. Candidates were unable to come up with the correct expression for weekend — *fin de* la semana* was often utilized, and *en* was used instead of *el* before the days of the week.

Situation 3

Your friend has sent you an e-mail suggesting that you both participate in an activity on the weekend. Respond, indicating an alternative as your preference.

[Function: Expressing preference]

Suggested response: *Prefiero + infinitive/Sería mejor+infinitive*

The interpretation of this situation seemed to be the main problem. Candidates did not understand what was meant by “an alternative as your preference”, so many stated an activity and did not include the element of preference. Those who did understand the question frequently spelt *prefiero* incorrectly.

Situation 4

Send an e-mail to a friend telling him/her of one of the school rules that you do not like.

[Function: Expressing dislike]

Suggested response: *No me gusta ser puntual/ detesto llevar uniforme/no me gusta que estén prohibidos los teléfonos celulares.*

Some candidates did not recognize that they had to do two things — express dislike as well as state the rule. Here the structures with *gustar* were problematic. With respect to stating the rules, candidates failed to use *no* before an infinitive and *ningún(a)* before nouns. The present participle was frequently used instead of the infinitive in expressions such as **no comiendo en la clase*.

Candidates also neglected to use the subjunctive in structures which required it. The vocabulary for “rule” also posed difficulties, with some candidates spelling *regalo* for *regla*. In addition, candidates showed an inability to use *prohibido/se prohíbe/no se permite* followed by the infinitive. Candidates also could not differentiate between the use of *en* for “at a place” and *a* (movement towards), so “at school” was frequently expressed as **a la escuela* instead of *en la escuela*.

Situation 5

You are trying to entice your cousins abroad to come to your country for a holiday. Mention one positive characteristic of the people of your country that you include in a letter to them.

[Function: Describing people]

Suggested response: *La gente es muy amable/ los...son+adjective*

This situation was well understood by the majority of candidates, although some decided to describe the place rather than the people. The following were the main challenges faced by candidates:

- i. the spelling of *gente* (*jente*)
- ii. the pluralization of *gente*
- iii. the use of *son* with *gente*
- iv. the erroneous use of **persona* to denote “the people”
- v. noun/adjective agreement and placement. The adjectives used were frequently misspelt (**sympathetic*, **interestante*, **intelligente*)

Situation 6

You are having a meeting with the Students’ Council to discuss plans for the Graduation Ball. Write one suggestion you would like to make at the meeting. [Function: Suggesting]

Suggested response: *Me gustaría-/ ¿Por qué no....?*

Most candidates did not make appropriate use of the structures for making suggestions. Many failed to make use of the conditional or future tenses, and of those who used the structure *sugiero que...*, many did not use the subjunctive mood. Some good suggestions made by candidates included *sugiero que tengamos mucha comida, recomiendo que vayamos al hotel*.

Situation 7

You thought you had done very well on an exam but, in fact, you failed. Write the note you send to your teacher querying your grade. [Function: Questioning/Inquiring]

Suggested response: *¿Por qué saqué esa nota? /¿Está seguro(a) que no se equivocó?*

Many candidates did not interpret the situation correctly and did not query their grade. Instead, they translated the situation or made statements about the grade, expressing their disbelief, disappointment or the fact that they passed the exam. The main challenge here was the word for “grade”, frequently translated as **grado*. Candidates also failed to use the *usted* form to address the teacher and were unable to produce *revisar*, using *mirar* instead. The term *examen* was frequently misspelt (**examin/examines*) and the expression **otro tiempo más* was used instead of *una vez más*.

Situation 8

Someone has stolen an item from you. Send an e-mail to your friend telling him/her about the incident. [Function: Reporting]

Suggested response: *Estaba caminando cuando me robaron.*

For this item, some candidates attempted to relate the actual incident when the article was stolen while others merely mentioned that an article was lost or missing. Many candidates did not know *robar* and instead used *tomar*, *tocar*, *sacar*, *tener*.

When the preterite tense was used, many times accents were missing. The use of *alguien* was sometimes confused with *algún*, and *salir* was used instead of *dejar* in responses like **salí mi libro en la mesa*.

Situation 9

You are very happy today. Send an e-mail to your friend stating the reason.

[Function: Expressing happiness with reason]

Suggested response: *Estoy muy contento/a porque+verb in the appropriate tense.*

Most candidates attempted to deal with both elements of the situation. Also, many expressed the reason without the expression of happiness. Some candidates stated the opposite — sadness or anger and a reason. Here the vocabulary for “happy” posed a difficulty and the use of *soy* instead of *estoy* was evident. For example, **soy muy contento porque gano un carro*. Quite often, *porque* was separated into two words, while when *por qué* was required, it was rendered as *porque*.

Situation 10

Send an e-mail to a friend telling him/her something interesting you overheard at Linda’s birthday party last night. [Function: Providing information]

Suggested response: Any information, for example, *Mauricio tiene una novia*.

This question provided a wide variety of responses. Candidates heard some extremely interesting bits of information but need to be cautioned about the element of decency, as some of the responses were quite crude. The main challenges here were how to express *en la fiesta de cumpleaños de Linda*. Among the many errors made by candidates were

- (i) the use of the apostrophe, *Linda’s*
- (ii) the absence of *de* to indicate possession
- (iii) the misspelling of *cumpleaños*
- (iv) the use of *a* instead of *en* with *la fiesta*
- (v) the frequent misuse of *oí* which was rendered as *oyó, oyí, oído, oye*
- (vi) the omission of *que* or the use of *eso, ese, este* instead of the relative pronoun.

Other errors made which need to be addressed include:

- (vii) *a+el*
- (viii) gender of nouns like *cine (a la cine)*
- (ix) pluralization of *la ropa*
- (x) the erroneous use of the present participle and the awkward use of the present continuous tense to express the future
- (xi) the inability to say “to go shopping” — rendered as *comprar, ir a compras*
- (xii) the need to use *e* for *y*
- (xiii) spelling errors *an* for *han*, *haser* for *hacer*, *iva* for *iba*
- (xiv) accents: candidates omitted accents when necessary and included accents where they were not necessary
- (xv) the use of *mal* instead of *malo/mala* and *bien* for *bueno/a*
- (xvi) the use of *llegar* for *llevar*, *conocer* for *saber*, *devolver* for *volver/regresar*.

General Comments and Recommendations

While candidates may score marks for attempting to communicate, they need to read the situations more carefully, identify the function that is to be treated and deal with their responses in a precise manner. The importance of paying attention to the quality of language, (vocabulary and grammar) must be emphasised.

*** An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

Section II – Letter/Composition

This section tested candidates' ability to produce a piece of Spanish (a letter or a composition) of about 130 – 150 words based on an outline given in English.

The requirements of this question fell well within the expected range of candidates at this level. Performance ranged, as in past years, from excellent to minimal with many candidates within the good to moderate category. More effort was made to attempt the question. There were fewer scripts than in previous years with no attempt made to respond to the question. There was somewhat of a preference for the letter over the composition but both questions were popular in choice, indicating that the candidates could relate easily to the topics.

Word Length

The majority of candidates complied with the required word limit. Some weaker candidates with limited vocabulary produced very short responses. The short responses of a few more competent candidates addressed the cues using very good language but failed to develop the points.

The excellent candidates who have a feel for the language must be cautioned to avoid writing short stories and to adhere to the required length of the composition or letter. Otherwise, they will lose valuable marks.

Date and Salutations

Many candidates seemed to be unaware of the format of the date for the letter, opting to write the numbers in words instead of figures. A few left out the date entirely. Many spelt the month with a capital letter.

Many candidates used appropriate salutations with fairly good use of the subjunctive. The introductions and endings which were memorized were well presented. However, there were still too many grammatical errors. Some of the errors that were frequently made included:

- *¿Como estas tu y tu familia?
- *Espero te encuentres bien
- *¿Como es tu familia?
- Incorrect spelling of “Querido”.

The ending of the letter was, for the most part, appropriate. Nonetheless, some spelling and grammar errors were made in a few cases, for example,

- *Besos y brazos
- *Su amiga

Strengths

Vocabulary

The more competent candidates produced well organized, developed ideas and wrote fluently. Even some weaker candidates presented good ideas with appropriate vocabulary but were limited by poor grammar. Some candidates made a concerted effort to learn and use idioms.

The excellent scripts exhibited a mastery of the required vocabulary, often using words which added flavour to the response. For example, “*papilla*”, “*foco*”, “*chasco*”. Candidates who were prepared for the topic of a natural disaster performed quite well making use of appropriate vocabulary and structures. For example, *Hicimos muchos preparativos para prepararnos: compramos agua purificada, linternas, pilas y comida enlatada.*

*** An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

Grammar

Many candidates mastered the use of the future tense of regular verbs. Candidates also demonstrated knowledge of the irregular preterite tense. In addition, the subjunctive was sometimes used correctly after the verb “to hope”, for example, *Espero que se recupere*.

Spelling

Candidates with a good command of the written language used appropriate spelling.

Use of Cues

Candidates generally respected the cues given which helped to keep them focused on the content of the response.

Weaknesses

Vocabulary

The following errors of vocabulary were made:

- *mirar* was used instead of *ver*
- *estudies* was used for *estudios*
- *revolver* was used for *volver*
- *grado* was used for *nota*
- *universitario* was used for *universidad*
- *sorpresado* was used for *sorprendido*
- *tener* was used for *haber*
- *bienvenida* was used for *dar la bienvenida*
- The Spanish word for “storm” was often unknown
- *a* was used instead of *en* to indicate at a place
- *salir* was used for *dejar*
- *llegar* was often followed by *en*

Grammar

This area is cause for concern. The following grammatical errors were most evident:

- Spelling of irregular preterite — *dijieron, fueron*
- “*fue*” for “*fui*”
- Agreement of adjectives — *mis amigos estan feliz*
- Verb agreement — *Mi familia estaban/Mis amigos y yo están...*
- The use of the indefinite article after *ser* with professions
- Omission of *a* after *asistir*
- The lack of subjunctive after *cuando* with future — *Cuando regreso en mayo*
- *Pagar para*
- Incorrect positioning of object pronouns
- *Ustedes* used for “they”
- Incorrect use of tenses. The present tense was often used to express the friends’ reaction to the return home.
- Use of capital letters for subjects and months.
- Incorrect use of comparative — *mas bien* for *mejor*
- Failure to use personal *a*
- Incorrect use of *ser* and *estar* — *Mi mama es en el hospital/ soy triste*.
- Incorrect use of *conocer* and *saber*

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

- *Por* versus *para*
- Use of *gustar* — *Me gusta el inglés y el arte.*
- *Continuar* followed by the infinitive rather than the gerund
- Incorrect use of *habían* — *Habían muchas casas destruidas*
- Lack of subjunctive — *Mi mamá quiere que yo voy.*

Spelling

- Improper use of accents especially in the scripts of more competent candidates who are accustomed to speaking or hearing the language. More emphasis needs to be paid to correct spelling.
- Omission of the letter “h” — *abía, ubo*
- Use of ‘s’ instead of “c” — *haser*
- Use of “v” for “b” — “*estava*”
- Use of double letters, *comunidades, professor*

Use of Cues

- The word ‘indefinitely’ was misinterpreted. Some students returned home because of an event.
- Some excellent responses did not address all the cues at the cut off point because they were far too long.

Recommendations

- Constant practice is one of the keys to success. Students need to be introduced to this type of question as early as possible so that they have enough time for adequate and constant revision.
- Daily practice in writing the date and using figures will avoid the errors made in this aspect of the letter. Practice in the use of various salutations and endings is also recommended.
- Students need to be trained in reading the instructions and the questions thoroughly and carefully in order to ensure that the rubric and cues are followed precisely. They must adhere to the word limit.
- Points need to be adequately developed. Students can be guided towards writing a paragraph per cue wherever possible.
- The learning and constant use of idiomatic expressions will greatly enhance the style of the responses.
- Adequate practice in penmanship is recommended. Sometimes a simple change of the writing instrument will improve handwriting.
- Students must be encouraged to write in blue or black ink and not in pencil.
- Many weaknesses in grammar are still evident in responses. Students need to do exercises or other suitable activities which would lead to the learning and practice of grammar.
- Students must be reminded to double check their work in order to avoid careless errors in spelling, grammar and vocabulary.
- Teachers should practise team teaching to enhance their own exposure and learning. Authentic encounters with the target are strongly encouraged for teachers.

Section III – Contextual Announcement/Contextual Dialogue

This section required candidates to choose to complete either (i) a contextual announcement or (ii) a contextual dialogue. Cues were given in English for both options and candidates had to use between 80 and 100 words to complete their responses.

Both the contextual dialogue and the contextual announcement had similar levels of difficulty. The contextual announcement allowed them the freedom of expression whereas the contextual dialogue guided them to utilize certain vocabulary structures. Once again, the lack of accentuation or its overuse, the lack of punctuation marks and a lack of basic vocabulary structures and improper use of the language, continue to hinder candidates’ performance.

*** An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

Contextual Announcement

Candidates who selected the contextual announcement were quite creative in their responses and at times presented it in the format of an advertisement or with incomplete sentences. Many candidates failed to recognize that a command was required and when they did, they failed to use the appropriate polite/familiar or singular/plural forms. The verb *tener* was often used instead of *haber* to form the perfect tense and there was a failure to recognize *encontrar* as a stem-changing verb. There was an omission of the subjunctive mood and many candidates simply used an anglicized version of what they wanted to say. For example, **Quiero tu ayudar mi* to mean I want you to help me or *Espero que *encontras mi perro* for “I hope that you find my dog”. Additionally, many errors were noted where candidates substituted subject pronouns (*ella* and *él*) for the possessive adjective (*su*) and wrote *el/la color* for *su color*. French words and accents were also included.

Although the question did not specify the type of pet that was lost, the majority of the scripts were written on the lost dog. However, it was unfortunate that **pero* was used very often instead of *perro*. Furthermore, candidates handled the cue “details of its disappearance” very poorly. There were several other instances of spelling errors including the failure to use accents or the tendency to use them haphazardly. It must be noted that several candidates used **cinco cientos* instead of *quinientos*, **un mil* rather than *mil*, **dollars/dinero* rather than *dólares*, **viente* instead of *veinte*, **atencion* instead of *atención*, or **un ciento* rather than *ciento*, in their announcements. Candidates also neglected to use *a* after the verb *ayudar*, or misused *ser* and *estar* — *mi perro no *es aqui*. Candidates continued to have difficulty with the preterite and imperfect tenses and the use of *gustar* — **mi pero gusta*. They also misused adjectives — **pequena orejas* or **azules pantalones*.

Other examples of errors in the use of the language are as follows:

- *parche* for *mancha*
- *encantar* for *buscar* and vice versa
- *hora* for *vez*
- *ahora* for *hora*
- *mirar* for *busca*
- *buscar* for *por/para*
- *faltar* for *perder*
- *devolver* for *volver* and vice versa
- *manos* for *patas/pies*
- *dos cien* for *doscientos*
- *asistir* for *ayudar*
- *perder* for *pedir*
- *oyos* for *ojos*
- *ir y* instead of *ir a* + infinitive
- *la veia pasado* for *ha sido ultimo visto*

Many candidates exhibited a lack of basic vocabulary. They did not know the Spanish words for “missing”, “reward”, “pet”, “lost”, or for different types of animals. However, the better candidates manifested fewer errors and there were scripts where the use of relevant idiomatic expressions was evident as well as a sound knowledge of grammatical structures. Some of these are as follows:

- *en un abrir y cerrar de los ojos*
- *orejas lanudas*
- *alejarse de*
- *darse cuenta de*
- *tener miedo*
- *echar de menos*

*** An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

Contextual Dialogue

Candidates were unable to respond appropriately to some cues and this affected the flow of the entire dialogue in most instances resulting in inappropriate responses. Many of them failed to mention their place of employment (for the second response) and this affected the response in the third cue. The question, *Qué clase de trabajo...?* was interpreted for a classroom (*clase*) situation, to which candidates listed subjects which they studied. The question, *Y es verdad lo que dice?* was often not understood, candidates simply rewrote the question as their answers.

It must also be noted that agreement of adjectives was often inaccurate as there were several masculine forms given even though the interviewee, Adriana, was female. Not many candidates made use of idiomatic expressions and the spelling errors were numerous. Many errors also occurred with the conjugation of verbs as several candidates failed to change the subject of the verb in their responses. For example, *Como espera beneficiarse...?* was answered by *Espera beneficiarse...*

There were also instances of misspellings (*inteligente, proffessor*), the incorrect use of *mucho gusto* and the wrong tenses being used in the responses given. Other errors included *gracias para, gracias por teniendo, me llamo es, estoy dieciocho anos, soy veinte anos, e inteligente, estoy interesante en, pagar por mi, me gusta cantando, estoy contento ser aquí* and *yo amor música*. Some examples of errors in the use of the language (tense, verb, syntax, agreement) are as follows:

- *encantar* for *conocer*
- *demasiado* for *también*
- *amar* and *querer* for *gustar* and *encantar*
- *cantanto* for *yo canto*
- the misuse of *hacer* + time
- *atender* for *asistir*
- *numero/nombre* for *número*
- *no problema* for *no hay problema*
- *mi gusto* for *me gusta*
- *bienvenido* for *de nada*
- *interes* for *interesante*
- *soy muy feliz persona*
- *me gustan leer y cantar*
- *espero que yo pueda ganar*
- *puedo cantar* instead of *se cantar*
- misuse of *a* — *trabajo al hospital*

Nevertheless, some candidates produced excellent responses and were able to express themselves in such a manner that demonstrated a sound knowledge of the language. Examples of some of these phrases included:

- *más adelante realizar mi sueño*
- *me siento capaz de ganar este...*
- *en poder darme la oportunidad de...*
- *desde niña mi sueño era ser...*
- *cada oveja con su pareja*

Recommendations

- Dialogues should be practised from as early as Form 1.
- Dialogue completions can be done as group activities.
- The passive voice, future tense and the past participle may be useful tools for the contextual announcement.
- Posting announcements in Spanish around the school should be encouraged.

*** An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

Section IV — Reading Comprehension

In this section, candidates were required to read a passage in Spanish and respond in English to ten questions set on the passage. The marks allocated ranged from one to three based on the demands of the question.

Most candidates did not handle this section well. Although there were those who did well by scoring 15 and over, others scored well below 10. Teachers should be concerned with this since it indicates that many of their charges are lacking in basic comprehension skills.

Vocabulary

Teachers' attention is drawn once more to building vocabulary. Students are being exposed to a wealth of vocabulary via the Internet, cable television and advertisements. Not all of these words, be they in Spanish or English, would be acceptable in meaning or spelling. Teachers need to make themselves aware of what the students are being exposed to, and take steps to ensure that they, the students, are learning and can produce what is acceptable under examination circumstances. For example, via cable television, candidates hear *marca* being used for "label". Though some candidates recognized *etiqueta* in the passage as "label", most did not, and used words such as "brand", "package", "box top", "etiquette", "tag" and "sticker". Although *red* is a synonym in Spanish for *Internet* (borrowed from English), it was not recognized by many candidates who translated it as "in the red", and "cookbook on the wall". *Torta* is another word that posed difficulties, with candidates writing that Manuel baked a pie/tart/tortilla/bread/hamburger.

These are just some examples of items of vocabulary which candidates did not know and which impeded comprehension.

Grammar

Grammar did not present a great problem this year except for the fact that once again, candidates seemed to have forgotten that prepositions in Spanish tend to have more than one meaning, depending on the context in which they are used. For example,

- (i) *enterré la etiqueta en la torta* where *en* was taken as "on" rather than "in".
- (ii) *quisé jugarle una broma a mi hermano* where *a* was taken as "to"/"with" rather than "on".

Below are the questions asked and the suggested responses.

1. What did Manuel feel like doing on Saturday afternoon?
Suggested response: He wanted to surprise his girlfriend.
The majority of candidates responded correctly.
2. What did he want to do for Patricia?
Suggested response: He wanted to bake her a cake/an orange cake.
Again, the majority of candidates responded correctly.
3. How did he find help?
Suggested response: He found the recipe on the Internet.
Many candidates received only partial marks because they did not recognize *red*.
4. What did his brother want to do?
Suggested response: Manuel's brother wanted to play a trick on him.
Many candidates obtained full marks, but there were those candidates who encountered difficulty with "*broma*" and therefore responded incorrectly. (Manuel's brother wanted to play with a broom.)

*** An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

5. What did his brother do?
Suggested response: His brother inserted the label of a *Chefmágico* cake mix in the cake.
Few candidates scored full marks. Most candidates scored one or two marks, depending on the relevant details presented in their responses.
6. What were Manuel and Patricia doing when Manuel's brother returned home?
Suggested response: Manuel and Patricia were having a conversation.
Most candidates responded correctly. Where responses were too distorted, no marks were awarded.
(Manuel and Patricia were conversating = 0 mark)
7. What did he ask Manuel and Patricia?
Suggested response: He asked if they had found the *Chefmágico* label in the cake.
While some candidates had all the elements required to score full marks, many candidates obtained one or two marks, and the candidates who responded by quoting the question directly from the passage scored no mark.
8. What did Manuel's brother assure Patricia about?
Suggested response: He assured her that Manuel had baked the cake.
Many candidates obtained full marks. Where responses were ambiguous (He assured her that he had baked the cake), candidates were partially rewarded.
9. Why was Manuel NOT annoyed with his brother?
Suggested response: Because it was not his brother's fault that the cake did not turn out well.
Very few candidates were able to provide sufficient details to obtain full marks on this question.
10. Why did Patricia believe that Manuel had baked the cake?
Suggested response: Because he used salt instead of sugar.
Most of the candidates offered a partially correct response: "That *Chefmágico* uses sugar in all their cakes". These candidates failed to make the link with what Manuel had done.

Recommendations

The techniques of reading comprehension are important, not only for the development of the other skills in Spanish, but in their application across the curriculum. Teachers, in practising/developing comprehension skills can help candidates to (i) focus on the cues to be obtained from the title and in the phrasing of the questions (ii) understand that often answers are obtained from the beginning of the passage to the end. For example, it is highly unlikely that the answer to question 4 will precede the answer to question 2.

Candidates should be encouraged to **read**. As pressed for time as teachers may be to complete the syllabus, carving out time for reading is imperative, as it can only aid **all** other areas of the Spanish language acquisition.

Paper 03 – Oral Examination

This paper tested candidates' ability to (i) produce appropriate responses in Spanish to a number of situations (ii) read aloud a short passage in Spanish and (iii) respond in Spanish to general questions based on four out of six topics indicated in the syllabus.

Section I

Responses to Situations/Instructions

Candidates were given five situations, described in English, to which they were required to produce an appropriate response, in keeping with the function which the situation demanded. Performance on this section revealed a range of abilities among the candidates. Several of them attempted all the situations and were forthcoming with commendable and appropriate responses, demonstrating creativity and a satisfactory level of proficiency in communicating orally in Spanish. The better candidates seemed well prepared for the examination and handled all the situations competently. Their responses were appropriate and in most cases, presented with no undue hesitation. Such responses also reflected satisfactory control of structures and knowledge of a good range of vocabulary and idioms.

In the case of the weaker candidates, their performance was hampered by limited vocabulary, poor comprehension of the situation described and an inability to manipulate the language correctly. These candidates were less competent, less spontaneous and less precise in their attempt to respond appropriately. On numerous occasions, the very weak candidates either failed to respond or only responded to a part of the situation. In some instances, it was apparent that candidates had difficulty understanding the rubrics indicated in the situation. It was observed that candidates with vocabulary deficiencies in English invariably had trouble in understanding the situations. These candidates were challenged by expressions and words such as “to recruit”, “to reprimand”, “curfew”.

Many candidates had difficulty performing the following functions: “Expressing emotions”, “Refusing/Declining”, “Warning”, “Explaining”, “Expressing opinions”, “Making inquiries”, “Giving instructions”. Consequently, they did not address the requirements of the situation.

In some cases where marks were awarded for appropriateness, candidates failed to obtain marks for accuracy of expression. The sentences which they attempted to construct were fraught with grammatical errors including the following:

- The infinitive was used where a conjugated verb was required (*yo ayudar...*, *yo jugar...*, *la gente comprar*)
- Failure to use the infinitive after a conjugated verb (*puedo tengo...*, *quiero limpio...*, *me gusta voy...*, *puedes vas...*)
- Incorrect use of *gustar* (*yo gusto...*, *mi mamá no le gusta...*, *nos gustamos leer*, *mi familia se gusta...*)
- Omission of verbs, prepositions (*yo bien con mis estudios*, *salgo siete de la noche*, *mi mamá generosa*, *amable*)
- Incorrect expression of the negative (*hay no autobus*)
- Failure to observe the use of simple expressions with *tener* (*estoy miedo*, *soy sueño*, *soy hambre*, *es dieciocho años*)
- Incorrect use of tenses appropriate to the situation
- Confusion with *ser* and *estar* (*yo soy muy disappoinatamente*, *era ocupado*, *era enferma*,
- Difficulty with *por* and *para*, *son las* and *a las*.

Vocabulary errors included

salir for *dejar*

regesar for *devolver*

mirar for *parecerse a*

asistir for *ayudar*

It was surprising to note that many candidates had difficulty with very basic vocabulary items like *dinero*, *película*, *regalo*, *interesante*.

*** An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

Teachers are encouraged to consult the syllabus and expose students to the range of functions outlined therein. Practice in situational responses is recommended from very early in the teaching/learning process, so that students would be better equipped to handle this section of the examination.

Section II

Reading Passage

Candidates were required to read a passage in Spanish (125 – 130 words), demonstrating in the process, knowledge of pronunciation of discrete sounds, correct intonation and general fluency.

Performance on this section ranged from very good to poor. The stronger candidates understood the passages, had a good idea of the sound system, showed familiarity with the rule of accentuation and stress, and therefore performed well. In some centres, however, performance was described as extremely mediocre with candidates not having a clue as to what the passages were about, thus producing very disjointed reading. Some candidates adopted a predictable pattern of reading three to four words in cluster, ignoring punctuation and the obvious groupings such as nouns and verbs, or verbs and adjectives, clearly implying that they did not comprehend what was being read.

The reading was punctuated with mispronunciation. The inability to handle the Spanish “g” was conspicuous, no matter where it was placed. The following words were constantly mispronounced:

estrategias, surgió, orígenes, auge, originario, dirigir, exigencia.

Many candidates had problems distinguishing between the vowel sounds “e” and “i” and in rendering correctly the vowel diphthongs in words like *auge, ajiaco, ciudadano*. There was also the perennial anglicizing of words which bore any resemblance to English. Examples include *cultiva, social, radio, tension, negro, identidad, hipertension, dieta, china, base*. Further to this, there was constant interference of English when candidates attempted to produce the “u” sound in words like *cubana, cultura, comunidad, inculca, estimula, continuamente*.

Stress was placed randomly on many of the multisyllabic words and even when accents were used on specialist words, candidates failed to pronounce them correctly. The multisyllabic words were almost always severely mispronounced with candidates omitting one or more syllables in their utterances.

Words that were particularly difficult for many candidates include *personaje, pequeñuelos, ajiaco, árabe, pesqueras, cómicas, guerra, homenaje, indudablemente, difundido, aprendizaje, enseñanza*.

The Spanish “h” was not duly recognized in words like *hada, alcohol, almohada*.

Further examples of candidates' errors are listed below:

origuinario for *originario*
mezcala for *mezcla*
serguio for *surgió*
ateques for *ataques*
canautor for *cantautor*
concios for *consejos*
dairia for *diaria*
seguyendo for *siguiendo*
trayas/tieras for *tiras*
hieramenta for *herramienta*
proyictos for *proyectos*
guyaba for *guayaba*
aceptización for *aceptación*
inglesa for *iglesia*
bale for *baile*
enería/energergia for *energía*
promuve for *promueve*
aidentida for *identidad*
extrantajero for *extranjero*
anomidad for *anonimidad*
meriscos for *mariscos*
coquina for *cocina*
suentan for *cuentan*
diriguir for *dirigir*
surguió for *surgió*

Again, the recommendation is to expose students to extensive practice in reading aloud. Emphasis should be placed on the importance of correct pronunciation of all sounds, especially those that are different/do not exist in their native language. Teachers should create opportunities that allow students to listen to authentic Spanish in an effort to reduce the deficiencies observed in pronunciation and intonation. The importance of teachers' use of the target language in the classroom cannot be overstated, as well as teachers' immersion in the target language to enable such use.

Section III

Guided Conversation

In this section, candidates were required to engage in conversation on four topics. The topics presented this year were *Home and Family*, *Daily Routine*, *School and Career* and *Sports and Recreation*. Candidates were asked four questions on each of the topics and were assessed on comprehension and spontaneity, fluency and expression.

While performance was generally satisfactory, this section of the examination continues to be the most challenging for the majority of candidates. Some questions were handled competently, with candidates responding spontaneously, providing sufficient details that lent depth to their responses, thus allowing them to score maximum marks.

In many cases, candidates misunderstood the questions asked or kept the responses very minimal. On several occasions, responses were inappropriate and irrelevant. Very often, candidates requested repetition of the question or were quick to respond once they heard a familiar word or expression, without paying attention to what the question was asking or the interrogative word. Many of the questions which inquired about others were personalized, with candidates responding from their experience.

*** An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

Candidates' performance was further hindered by a limited range of vocabulary and lack of mastery of basic elements of grammar. This clearly affected their fluency and quality of response. They lacked the vocabulary for high frequency words like *deporte, regla, carrera, oficio, tiempo libre*.

Candidates' flaws in grammar include the following:

- Incorrect conjugation of verbs or failure to conjugate verbs
- Failure to make noun and adjective agreement
- Incorrect position of adjectives
- Incorrect use of possessive adjectives
- Incorrect use of *gustar*

Candidates made many errors in constructing sentences, especially when they attempted to respond in a complete sentence. For example, *los ingredientes necesitas son es...*

mi escuela recomendación es bueno

mi familia actividades favoritas ir a la playa

no frecuencia visita sus abuelos.

Specific questions in the four topic areas which posed tremendous difficulties to many candidates were:

Home and Family

¿Qué tienes en común con esta persona?

Menciona una regla familiar que no te guste obedecer.

Limited vocabulary was obvious when candidates communicated their difficulty with *en común, regla, obedecer*.

Daily Routine

¿Con qué te desayunas todos los días?

Far too many candidates offered an inappropriate response like *solo, a las siete, con mi mamá y mi papá*.

¿Cómo ayuda tu papá en la cocina?

Some candidates said how they help or what the father does around the house and not in the kitchen.

¿Cuál sería tu rutina ideal?

Many candidates chose to elaborate on their daily routine — *me levanto..., me cepillo los dientes...etc.*

School and Career

¿Cómo son los monitores de tu escuela?

¿Cuál es la regla menos popular...?

¿Qué instalaciones tiene tu escuela?

¿Qué instalaciones tiene tu escuela?

¿Qué carrera quieres seguir...?

The main difficulty here was related vocabulary. Candidates were not familiar with the words *monitores, regla, instalaciones, carrera*.

Sports and Recreation

¿Cuál es el deporte favorito de tu país?

This question was frequently misinterpreted, with candidates responding *no tengo un deporte favorito, me encanta el fútbol, mi deporte favorito es...*

Some candidates mentioned a sportsperson.

¿Qué espectáculos públicos te gustan?

Very few candidates understood this question. *Espectáculos* was a difficult vocabulary item for many.

¿Cómo pasa la gente un día de fiesta en tu país?

This question was rarely handled competently; vocabulary and comprehension were the major setbacks.

The observation is that too many candidates are still experiencing difficulty in responding to questions on topics with which, at this level, they should be comfortable.

Recommendations

There is an obvious need for students to be more involved in the Spanish language, to interact more with native speakers in the community, to engage in discussions in Spanish within and outside of the classroom setting. Teachers should, as much as possible, conduct classes in Spanish and give instructions or explanations in the target language. Extensive use of Spanish in the classroom will not only strengthen students' listening and speaking skills, but will also increase their confidence when communicating in Spanish.

In preparing candidates for the oral exams, they should be reminded that they should listen carefully to the entire question before offering a response.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

JANUARY 2011

**SPANISH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2011 January examination was written by 627 candidates, compared with 633 in 2010. However, the percentage of candidates achieving acceptable grades (I–III) declined from 69 per cent in 2010 to 60 per cent in 2011. Although some candidates displayed the usual level of linguistic competence, spontaneity, fluency and accuracy, there was an increased number who demonstrated poor grammatical and vocabulary skills. This was especially apparent in Paper 02 and to a lesser extent, in Paper 01.

Teachers are encouraged to continue being innovative and creative in their teaching strategies, using a variety of activities to make learning relevant, personal and meaningful to students.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprises two sections, assesses the ability of candidates to listen to and understand a number of aural items in the target language and to read and understand a number of written items. Both sections required candidates to have sufficient mastery of essential grammar and vocabulary. There was a decline in the percentage of candidates achieving the top grades on this paper.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section I – Directed Situations

In this section, candidates were presented with ten situations to which they were required to provide written responses in Spanish. The situations demanded that candidates recognize the function they were required to perform, all within the scope of their experience at this level. Candidates were assessed on the appropriateness of their responses and quality of language used. With regard to quality of language, candidates were expected to demonstrate their control of appropriate grammatical structures and knowledge of relevant vocabulary, both expressed in clearly worded concise responses. In assessing appropriateness, each response was categorized as fully or partially appropriate and was awarded marks accordingly. Inappropriate responses were awarded no mark, even if the language of expression was flawless.

Demands of the Section

The questions suited the level of the examination so the majority of candidates made a fairly good attempt at answering them. The questions demanded vocabulary and structures of an everyday nature that candidates should be familiar with.

Candidates' Performance

Candidates performed creditably on this section. It was evident that the situations were very straightforward and did not present any misunderstandings or vastly different perspectives from the point of view of the candidates. The majority of candidates were able to score passing grades. The poor performers showed difficulty with basic vocabulary and grammar. Some distortion occurred in expression owing to incorrect word order in cases where candidates expressed themselves in the same way they would in English. Frequently, candidates put *no* after the verb, for example, *mi mamá estaba no bien* and *el teléfono es no funciona*.

Candidates' Strength

Candidates showed particular strength in the knowledge of vocabulary demanded by the questions although there were spelling errors.

Candidates' Weakness

General weakness was noted mainly in grammar — use of verbs and tense, correct form of the command and spelling.

The following are some examples of errors made with respect to grammar.

- Differentiating between *porque* and *a causa de*.
**Está porque de mío* instead of *es a causa de mí*.
- Use of the infinitive after *poder/querer*.
**Yo puedo voy...*
- Difficulty in using *bañar* as a transitive verb; many candidates wrote *Báñate el perro* et cetera.
- Errors of vocabulary, for example:

<i>Anoche</i>	instead of	<i>esta noche</i>
<i>Viaje</i>	instead of	<i>excursión</i>
<i>Salir</i>	instead of	<i>dejar</i>
<i>Llamas</i>	instead of	<i>llamadas</i>
<i>Trabajar</i>	instead of	<i>funcionar</i>
<i>Soy a</i>	instead of	<i>estoy en</i>
<i>La cine</i>	instead of	<i>el cine</i>
<i>Tener + inf</i>	instead of	<i>tener que + inf</i>
<i>Ser with enfermo</i>		
<i>Es no + gerund</i>		

* An asterisk (*) indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

- Errors of spelling

There was a high incidence of the following words being misspelt:

**Commercial*

**projecto*

Comments on Individual Situations

Situation 1

You are alone at your friend's home in Caracas and need to leave the house. Write the note you leave telling your friend about your whereabouts.

(Function – providing information)

Suggested response: *Fui a... Estoy en ...*

Candidates had no problem finding an appropriate response. Errors occurred in misspelling *mercado* and the use of *a* after *estar* rather than *en*, for example, *Estoy *al supermercado*. In addition, some candidates did not indicate their whereabouts. When *salir* was used *de* was often omitted when a place was mentioned. Other errors included *a el, al* for *en* to indicate where they were. *Fue* was frequently used for *fui*.

Situation 2

Your neighbour wants to sell his car and requests your help to make a sign. What does the sign say? (Function – providing information)

Suggested response: *Se vende/ para la venta/ carro para vender...*

This question generated some creative responses and was managed adequately by most candidates. However, it was poorly done by some candidates for whom vocabulary for the word 'sale' proved difficult. Instead of *venta* they wrote *sale*, * *carro por sale*.

In addition, too many candidates used *por* in instances where they should have used *para*.

Situation 3

Your school has embarked on a Spanish awareness campaign. Write one important school rule which you can post on the notice board.

(Function – providing information)

Suggested response: *No se permite.../ Deber.../ Affirmative command.*

Some candidates seemed to have read only the first part of the situation; therefore, they wrote a response which had no reference to a school rule. However, those candidates who responded well displayed a good grasp of the command form, for example, *No se permite fumar/ Mantengan limpia la escuela*.

*** An asterisk (*) indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

Some candidates interpreted the question to mean that the school rule should relate to the learning of Spanish or a language and wrote for example, *El español es importante*. Weaker candidates were unable to produce the imperative, especially the negative form.

Situation 4

Anita has invited you to the movies but you would prefer to do something else. Respond to her email, suggesting an alternative activity.
(Function – suggesting an alternative)

Suggested response: *Mejor vamos a .../ ¿Por qué no ...?*

Candidates responded well to this question. Many of them used the verb *prefiero* reflexively, for example, *Me prefiero ir al ...* or used *salir* in place of *ir*, for example, *prefiero salir en el parque*.

Situation 5

Your aunt is going away for a weekend and you promised to look after her dog. She has left you a note to remind you of something you must do. What does the note say?
(Function – giving instructions)

Suggested response: *Imperative/No olvides + infinitive/Recuerda + infinitive/tienes que + infinitive/Debes + infinitive*.

Many candidates simply used the verb *mirar* instead of *cuidar* and responded with a translation of the cue rather than a reminder of what they must do.

A common error was the use of the reflexive second person to refer to the dog; for example, **Báñate cada día*. The verb *bañar* was frequently used whether appropriately as *baña el perro* or inappropriately as in **te bañar...* Candidates even used *lavar* as a synonym for *bañar*. *Comer* was also frequently used instead of *dar de comer/ alimentar*.

Some responses were not specific to the care of the dog. The expression ‘to walk the dog’ was rendered by *andar el perro*. Finally, *perro* was often misspelt as *pero*.

Situation 6

You need your father’s permission to go somewhere but he’s away. Write him an email requesting his approval. (Function – requesting permission)

Suggested response: *¿Puedo ir a + place?/Hay una fiesta el sábado; me das permiso par ir?*

*** An asterisk (*) indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

This situation was fairly well done. In many responses candidates omitted the request for approval. Most of them simply stated what they wanted or where they wanted to go without requesting permission. *Quiero ir a la fiesta. Me gustaría ir...*

Two common errors made by candidates were the failure to use the infinitive after *puedo*, and *en sábado* being used instead of *el sábado*.

Situation 7

There is a problem with your new cellular phone and you have taken it back to the store. Provide a written explanation to the salesperson.

(Function – Expressing a complaint)

Suggested response: ... *no funciona/no puedo hacer llamadas etc.*

Perennial errors occurred in this question. There were many instances where *trabajar* was used by candidates instead of *funcionar*, or where they anglicized *funcionar* to read **funcionar* and the misspelling of **cellular*. *Teléfono* was frequently misspelt as **telephono/fone/fono*. This question also highlighted the habit of translating word for word, for example, **es no funcionando*.

Situation 8

You send an email to your teacher explaining why your group project is not finished. What reason do you give? (Function – Providing an explanation)

Suggested response: *Nuestro proyecto no esta listo porque estaba enfermo/estoy enfermo.*

Many candidates used the French verb *finir* in this question, but yet again *grupo* and *proyecto* were often misspelt. Some candidates lost marks for simply saying that the task was unfinished, without giving a reason as required by the question.

Situation 9

You would like to interview a celebrity who is visiting your city. Write him/her an email explaining why you need to interview him/her.

(Function – Making a request/explaining reasons)

Suggested response: *Necesito hacerle una entrevista para la revista de mi escuela.*

Most candidates were guilty of using the familiar form in this question and very often simply gave a reason for the interview without a request. Candidates frequently used the English word interview instead of *entrevista*. *Pedir* was also often used instead of *preguntar* or *hacer preguntas*.

*** An asterisk (*) indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

Situation 10

You have disappointed your best friend. Write an email apologizing for what you have done. (Function – Providing an apology)

Suggested response: *Siento haber.../Siento...*

In this question the majority of candidates were able to give an apology but many seemed to have disregarded the second aspect, saying what they had done. The structure *sentir + inf/ sentir que...* presented great difficulty for the candidates who wrote *lo siento que...*

Recommendations

- Teachers should consider compiling the various structures that are common in the directed situations section and give regular practice to students. Alternatives to the command form should comprise part of the preparation for this section.
- It is highly recommended that candidates read the situations carefully before attempting a response.
- Teachers should ensure that students develop an adequate command of essential grammar and wide vocabulary to enable them to handle this section of the examination with greater competence.

Section II – Letter/Composition

This section is intended to assess candidates' ability to produce written language within the parameters set out in the syllabus. In addition to mastery of relevant vocabulary, idiom, and language structure, the ability to express ideas clearly and coherently is emphasized. The two options given were the letter and the composition, each of which was marked out of 30.

Demands of the Section

Both questions catered to all range of abilities. Most candidates attempted to answer one of the questions. They were given the opportunity to use a wide range of tenses and the more competent candidates used their tenses appropriately. However, the composition posed some ambivalence for some candidates as they misinterpreted whether they were to use the present, past or future tenses. Both the letter and the composition were popular among the candidates.

Candidates' Performance

Most candidates attempted to answer all four elements of the questions. Performance ranged from very limited to excellent. The general performance was within average to above average. However, few candidates were in the excellent category. Most candidates tried to stay within the word limit.

Candidates' Strengths

Most candidates followed the rubric for both questions. Several used the correct format for the letter, thus ensuring the use of appropriate expressions for the opening and closing, expressions which appeared well learnt. Tenses were fairly well known in addition to the appropriate vocabulary. The more competent candidates used a wide range of vocabulary and idioms. A few included the element of 'suspense' with the identification of the visitor in the composition.

Examples of Good Performance

Candidates with sound knowledge of grammar and vocabulary performed creditably. Examples of expressions used included the following:

Espero que te vayas bien.
Espero que tengas buena salud.
Perdona que no te haya escrito.
En un abrir y cerrar de los ojos.

Tenses were well used at times:

Mi hermana limpiará los dormitorios.
Decidí trabajar.
Con mi primer salario quisiera comprar ropa.

Less competent candidates were able to use simple vocabulary plus the verb *ser* in their description of the visitor; for example, *Mi tía es alta y muy bonita.*

Candidates' weaknesses with examples of errors

Several weaknesses were evident in scripts, examples of which are shown below.

- A few candidates wrote the date in words:
 * *El doce de abril de dos mil once* instead of *12 de abril de 2011.*
- At times the address was too long when all that was necessary was the city.

*** An asterisk (*) indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

- Errors of vocabulary
 - There were literal translations:
 - **Ella ha mirado bonita.*
 - **Dónde haces trabajar?*
 - **Ella boca iba gusta agua.*
- The literal translations showed a lack of the appropriate vocabulary and difficulty in constructing a sentence in Spanish.
- Other errors of vocabulary included:
 - **tenía mucho divertido* to mean ‘I had fun’.
 - pedir* and *preguntar* were used inappropriately to mean ‘to ask’.
 - querer* and *amar* to mean ‘to love’. They were often used with things and not people.
 - **emocionante* to mean ‘excited’
 - **la trabaja* to mean ‘work’
 - Use of false friends; for example, *asistir* to mean ‘to assist’
 - The word for salary was frequently unknown – **salaria, mis dineros*
 - **primo, premio* to mean ‘first’, instead of *primero*
 - **el visitor* rather than *el visitante* to mean ‘visitor’
 - **estaba mirando para* to mean ‘to look for’
 - **estaba alegría* to mean ‘happy’
 - **¡como interesante!* to mean “How” in an expression
 - The unnecessary use of a preposition – *buscando* * *por*

Errors of grammar

Expression suffered due to grammatical incorrectness. Examples follow:

- Failure to recognize the use of subjunctive in constructions such as –
 - **cuando recibo mi primer salario compraré....*
- Clumsy expressions such as
 - **mi trabajo es en la tienda* instead of *trabajo en la tienda*
- Frequent use of *a* for ‘at a place’ instead of *en*
 - **compro ropa a la tienda*
- The verb *decidir* was often followed by *a*
 - decido* **a trabajar*
- Candidates were doubtful as to the use of *por* and *para*
- The personal *a* was often omitted –
 - visita* **mi familia*
- The contraction *a+el = al* was sometimes unknown

* An asterisk (*) indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

- Sometimes the incorrect gender was given, for example, *a la hotel, a la hospital*
- The word ‘on’ was translated in dates – *en el viernes*
- Fundamental errors – *Se llama es/ es treinta años/ ser un veterinario*
- Errors were made with verbs and tenses:
*Mi madre *dijome*
*Yo *aplicado*
*Yo *miró*
*Estaba *veniendo*
- Verb and adjective agreement
**los viejos papel / mi tía es alto*
- The use of the definite and indefinite articles together
**una la tele*

Recommendations

- Continuous, productive practice is needed to ensure success. Grammatical concepts and structures need to be reinforced consistently. Students ought to be exposed to the grammatical rules, not just in grammatical exercises, but in context when given practice papers.
- Although a translation is no longer a question in the CXC examination, teachers ought to recognize its effectiveness as a teaching tool. Translation from one’s native tongue to the foreign language teaches students the nuances of both languages and gives them a greater understanding of how to apply the grammatical rules. This will help them to understand the structure of expressions which they have learnt and not just repeat them from memory.
- A thorough preparation of students for the oral examination, coupled of course with adequate study on the part of the students, will also help to bring forth success in the written component. Some of what is learnt for the oral examination can be used in the written examination as well.
- Greater exposure to the language through reading, writing, listening, and speaking is recommended. This can be done not just through the use of past papers. Other useful means of learning are games, interesting classroom activities, projects, overseas trips. In addition, the Internet ought to be explored in order to find useful websites which can be recommended to students for enhancement of their learning.

*** An asterisk (*) indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

Section III – Contextual Announcement/Contextual Dialogue

This section required candidates to choose to write either (i) a contextual announcement or (ii) a contextual dialogue completion. Cues in English were provided for both options.

Performance on this section clearly revealed that the questions were not beyond the capability of the average candidate.

Demands of the Section

Both the contextual announcement and contextual dialogue were within the scope of candidates' ability. The questions were adequate and reasonable for candidates at this level and within their active vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. The structure of the questions was quite simple and straightforward. Questions were relevant to candidates' experiences and allowed for flexibility and manipulation of the Spanish language.

Candidates' Performance on the Contextual Announcement

While fewer candidates attempted this question compared to the contextual dialogue, their responses in terms of content were lengthier and showcased greater creativity regarding their ideas and general expression. Some candidates who attempted this question used the word **clubo* for club. Several candidates showed the need for more practice in the use and formation of the imperative. The word 'advantage' also seemed unknown to most candidates who wrote **advantage* instead of *ventaja* most of the time.

Candidates' Performance on the Contextual Dialogue

Most candidates attempted this question but for the most part their responses, in terms of content, were inadequate. The first question posed, *¿Con quién hablo?* proved to be problematic as candidates found great difficulty in translating 'it's me' into Spanish. Some responses provided included **es mí*, or **es yo*.

In addition, many candidates missed the cue in which they were supposed to set an alternative date. At times they repeated certain parts of the printed dialogue. For example, they repeated *tenía tantas ganas de salir contigo* and used *no puedes* instead of *no puedes*.

Responses by candidates were limited due to poor vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure, for example, **no voy con tu*. At other times responses were disjointed or were made up of English or French words. Some responses were mere repetitions of the cues since some candidates concentrated more on looking for words and expressions than on answering in a coherent manner.

*** An asterisk (*) indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

Candidates' Strengths

- Most candidates understood what was required of them in terms of the rubrics and hardly any of the scripts were formatted differently. They wrote the announcement/dialogue with the relevant content according to the requirements.
- For the most part, candidates were able to use the cues well, especially in the announcement.

Examples of Good Performance

While there were not many outstanding scripts, some candidates were able to write correct Spanish. Correct and greater use of the subjunctive was seen in the better scripts. Samples of these are:

- *Mis padres quieren que venga con ellos a la casa de mis abuelos.*
- *Es lástima que no puedas ir a la fiesta.*
- *Mi mamá quiere que yo me quede...*
- Impersonal expressions such as *'es posible que...'* *'es importante que...'* were used.

There was also an improvement in simple expressions such as *'por seguro'*, *'lo más pronto posible'*, *'favor de'*, *'¿qué te parece?'*, *'tener que'*, *'asistir a'*.

Other examples of good performance include:

Te prometo que todo será diferente.
No puedo acompañarte al concierto el sábado.
¿Tienes otro compromiso el próximo viernes?
Tengo que asistir a la boda de mi prima.
.....el próximo viernes en vez de hoy.

Correct use of a variety of tenses (present, future, past) was seen:

Voy a estar/quedar en contacto contigo siempre.
Mi madre murió...
Por eso te llamo.
Soy yo.

Candidates' Weaknesses

Some candidates could not follow the flow of the dialogue. Responses were therefore not given accurately in the appropriate places and some important cues were not responded to. For example, there was a lack of response to the cue *'no tengo nada para esta fecha'*.

At times there was a problem with the word limit, especially in the dialogue where candidates fell below the required number of words. Additionally, there was incorrect use of subject-verb agreement, although candidates would have the correct verb and tense for example, *la reunión *tendrás lugar.*

*** An asterisk (*) indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

On several occasions candidates failed to use the infinitive after *tener que*, omitted the preposition after the verb *ayudar* and misused *ser* and *estar*. Distinguishing between polite and familiar forms of address also proved difficult for some candidates who used the polite form to address their friends.

Examples of errors

The following were among the more common errors made by candidates:

**En sábado* instead of *el sábado*

Gracias para instead of *gracias por*

Anoche instead of *esta noche*

Estoy instead of *soy Isabella*; also **es mi, Carlos*

Confusion of *fecha* for *cita*

Frequent use of **puedemos* instead of *podemos*

*Puedo *voy* instead of *puedo ir*

**Con tú* instead of *contigo*

*Mi abuela *es en el hospital* instead of *está* or *mi mamá *es mal* instead of *está*

Misuse of *por* and *para*, for example, *tengo un regalo *por tu* instead of *tengo un regalo para ti*

**Estoy muy siento* instead of *lo siento mucho*

**A la cine* instead of *al cine*

Recommendations

Teachers need to reemphasize the importance of following the rubric especially for the dialogue with respect to length. Teachers also need to reinforce the finer grammatical points such as:

- use of prepositions after verbs
- no stem changes in the future tense
- use of the infinitive after *poder, querer, ir a*

Candidates need more practice with

- *ser/estar*
- Using definite/indefinite articles, for example, ‘*ser **un** miembro*’
- idiomatic expressions
- the order of adjectives and nouns in sentences
- the use of *por* and *para*

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Section IV – Reading Comprehension

This section assessed candidates' ability to read and comprehend a short passage in Spanish and respond in English to ten questions set on the passage. The marks allocated ranged from one to three.

Demands of the Section

Generally, questions were well within the range of candidates at this level and responses should have been much better done than they were.

Candidates' Performance

Overall performance on this section was less than satisfactory, which was surprising, based on the straightforward nature of the questions that were asked.

Candidates' Strengths

Candidates answered Question 10, the analytical question, better than most of the recall questions.

Candidates' Weaknesses

Lack of knowledge of vocabulary led candidates to arrive at a different interpretation of the story. Some were very creative at writing answers that bore no relationship with the passage. For example, *debajo de* was interpreted as 'behind'; *desmayado* was interpreted as 'dismayed' and *valor* was interpreted as 'value'. Candidates also showed unfamiliarity with the word *Nochevieja*. Many confused a walk in the park as being the main event as opposed to the walk through the woods. Many candidates stated that Manuel was hiding rather than stretched out or lying or had fainted.

There was also little attention paid to the tenses used in the passage.

Candidates did not place emphasis on understanding the demands of each question by paying attention to the mark scheme as an indication of the amount of information needed to answer questions. In addition, many responses did not fit the question asked.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1: How was Manuel viewed in his town?

Suggested response: Manuel was strong.

This question was well done generally.

Question 2: What about him encouraged this view?

Suggested response: He showed a lot of courage and strength.

Generally, candidates responded correctly to this question. The candidates who made mistakes had difficulty with vocabulary, equating *valor* for ‘value’ and *fuera* for ‘force’.

Question 3: With whom was Manuel impatient?

Suggested response: With young people who seemed weak.

This question was generally well done.

Question 4: What special occasion was approaching?

Suggested response: New Year’s Eve

This question proved difficult for candidates since they either focused on the walk as the occasion and not New Year’s Eve; some candidates did not understand the meaning of *Nochevieja* or rewrote the Spanish word.

Question 5: What would last three hours?

Suggested response: A walk in the woods.

This question was not well done. Some candidates simply wrote ‘walk’ rather than ‘walk in the woods’. Those unsure of *paseo* wrote journey, trip, travel, party, announcement, fireworks display.

Question 6: How did Manuel view this activity?

Suggested response: Like a simple walk in the park.

This question presented problems for some candidates whose answers varied and were unrelated to the passage.

Question 7: How did his friends’ view differ from his?

Suggested response: They were afraid because they had heard stories of strange things seen in the woods.

This was one of the more difficult questions for the candidates as many did not know the English translation for *dar miedo*, *cuentos*, *extraño*, among others. Some candidates mentioned that their views differed but did not state how.

Question 8: How are the sights described in the passage?

Suggested response: Scary.

This question presented little difficulty.

Question 9: What was a surprising sight?

Suggested response: Manuel lying under a tree.

This question was one of the more difficult ones for the candidates since they were unfamiliar with the words *estirado* and *desmayado*. Many candidates offered the response “Manuel hiding behind a tree.”

Question 10: In what way would Manuel’s reputation be affected?

Suggested response: He was not as brave as he appeared to be.

This question was generally well done, with even the weaker candidates managing to earn marks.

Recommendations

Emphasis needs to be placed on candidates’ understanding of the demands of questions; they need to pay attention to the marks allotted as an indication of the amount of information needed to answer questions.

Responses should make sense, be logical and show some fit with the question asked.

Paper 03 – Oral Examination

This paper assessed candidates’ ability to: (1) produce appropriate responses in Spanish to a number of situations requiring specific functions, (2) read aloud a short passage in Spanish and (3) converse in Spanish by responding to questions based on four out of six topics set out in the syllabus, namely, School and Career, Sports and Recreation, Home and Family, and Daily Routine.

Section I – Responses to Situations/Instructions

This section required candidates to produce appropriate responses in Spanish to situations/instructions described in English.

Candidates demonstrated a range of abilities in the way they handled the responses. Some candidates performed very well in this section, producing responses which were not only appropriate but which were expressed correctly, exhibiting a good range of vocabulary couched in sound grammatical structures. These candidates were able to deliver with spontaneity, confidence and a high degree of fluency.

On the other side of the performance spectrum, many candidates struggled with this section. They were bridled with restrictive vocabulary, poor knowledge of basic grammatical structures and an almost total ignorance of idioms. Many of these candidates attempted to give a response but because of the limitations stated above, many times their responses merely consisted of words carelessly flung together. Their responses lacked fluency and were characterized by long pauses, hesitancy and lack of confidence in terms of oral delivery.

The following is a sample of the more common grammatical errors:

- Subject–verb agreement
* *Yo no quiere ese vestido*
- Noun–adjective agreement
* *La chica es alto y delgado*
- Ser and Estar
* *¿Cómo estaba tu viaje?*
- Por and Para
* *¿Cuánto dinero para un billete?*
- Omission of the reflexive pronoun when conjugating reflexive verbs
* *... levantaba muy tarde*
- Difficulty in using commands
* *No anda por esta calle*
- Conjugating the verb when the infinitive is needed
* *Yo prometo limpio mi dormitorio.*
- Difficulty with object pronouns
* *El director llamó me*

Vocabulary errors included:

infierno for *enfermo*

bebe for *bebida*

salir for *dejar*

The Spanish word for ‘fork’ was generally not known.

Recommendations

Candidates need to be acquainted with the list of functions that they are expected to know, as contained in the syllabus. Teachers are encouraged to develop exercises to practise these functions orally. Constant practice, beginning in the lower forms, will build students’ confidence in expressing themselves orally.

*** An asterisk (*) indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

Section II – Reading Passages

This section assessed candidates' ability to read a passage (125–130 words), demonstrating correct pronunciation of discrete sounds, good intonation and fluency. Candidates' performance ranged from very good in some cases to weak in others. Those who read well exhibited a working knowledge of the Spanish sound system, observed the rules of accentuation and stress and were fluent in their reading. It was evident that these candidates were adequately prepared and were given sufficient practice in reading aloud.

For many candidates the reading component of the oral examination was a formidable challenge. These candidates obviously only had a fleeting knowledge of how the Spanish sound system works. Their pronunciation was faulty and very anglicized in many cases. They read mechanically and it was painfully clear that they understood little or nothing of the passage they read.

The following are some of the problems which candidates presented:

- The pronunciation of the 'g' was particularly disturbing. Candidates failed to recognize the changes in pronunciation of 'g' before the vowels 'a', 'o' and 'u' and before 'e' and 'i'. This resulted in the following words being wrongly pronounced: *prestigio, Argentina, escogen, regimen*.
- Many candidates seemed not to grasp the basic pronunciation of the Spanish vowels 'e' and 'i'. This was obvious when they attempted to pronounce *educativo, importante, ingresos, familiar*.

Diphthongs were generally mispronounced. Many candidates broke up the diphthongs into two syllables, not expressing them as a single unit. This was clearly seen in the following words: *aula, mutuo, nuevos, consigue*.

- The anglicizing of cognates: *situación, diálogo, principal, opción, base, autoridad*.
- Articulation of 'ñ' in words such as *niñez, navideño*.
- Ignorance of the placement of stress generally and particularly in the case of words with accents.
- Words that were difficult for candidates include *aprendizaje, aguinaldos, predilección, habichuelas, crustáceos*.

Recommendations

The reading disabilities outlined above are clearly indicative of a lack of or inadequate preparation and practice in reading aloud. Candidates need to be exposed to authentic Spanish material to truly understand Spanish pronunciation and intonation. Teachers need to be constantly using Spanish in the classroom and to provide opportunities for students to produce the language as often as possible.

Section III – Guided Conversation

This section of the oral examination assesses the ability of candidates to respond to a number of questions based on four topics. This year candidates were tested on School and Career, Sports and Recreation, Home and Family, and Daily Routine. Using the criteria of comprehension and spontaneity, fluency and expression, candidates were assessed on their responses to four questions on each of the four topics.

The Guided Conversation continues to be the section which is most challenging for candidates. Some candidates demonstrated competence in conversing easily and accurately. These candidates were spontaneous in their answers which tended to be extended, demonstrating a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical accuracy. The majority of candidates struggled with this section, clear evidence that they were woefully ill-prepared. The main problem was the lack of comprehension of many of the questions. This resulted in the constant request that questions be repeated. Even when the questions were understood, candidates struggled to express themselves, constrained by their limited vocabulary and deficiency in the knowledge of basic grammatical structures.

Among the weaknesses revealed in this section were:

- Very limited vocabulary. Words like *asignaturas*, *vestirse*, *instalaciones*, *barrio*, *saliste*, *dirías*, *ocupada* were widely not known.
- Problems with noun–adjective agreement, as well as word order.
mi casa es rojo; *mi vida es aburrido*; *favorito pasatiempo*.
- Subject–verb agreement
Los estudiantes es...
Mi escuela ofrécen...
Los deportes es...
Mi hermano limpio...
- Conjugation of verbs. In addition to using the wrong person of the verb, verbs were often not conjugated.
Yo practicar el fútbol.
Mis amigos escuchar la música.

- Problems with reflexive verbs (Omission and wrong reflexive pronoun)
Levanto a las siete
Te levanto temprano
Me estudio...
- The use of *Ser* and *Estar*
El deporte popular está...
Mi casa es en...

Recommendations

Students must be encouraged from very early to produce the language orally. If they practise ten oral questions per term from Year One, they would have mastered 150 questions by the end of the fifth year. Too often teachers wait until the final year to begin to consider the importance of the oral examination.

Teachers should seize every opportunity to speak the language in the classroom, as well as to encourage students to respond orally in Spanish. This will serve to free students of the inhibition they experience in producing the foreign language.

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2011

SPANISH

GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

GENERAL COMMENTS

Candidates' overall performance in the 2011 examination was better than that of 2010. This was due mainly to an improvement in performance on Paper 02, especially in Section IV, Reading Comprehension. Performance on both Paper 01 and Paper 03 was comparable with what obtained in 2010.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 — Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprised two sections, assessed candidates' ability to (i) listen to and understand a number of items in the target language and (ii) read and understand a number of written items. Both sections required candidates to have a mastery of essential grammar as prescribed in the CSEC syllabus and vocabulary appropriate to this level of competence. The good performance here was comparable with that of previous years.

Paper 02 — Free Response

Section I — Directed Situations

In this section, candidates were presented with ten situations to which they were required to provide written responses in Spanish. The situations demanded that candidates recognize the function they were required to perform, using vocabulary and structures expected of candidates who have undergone five years of study. Candidates were assessed on the appropriateness of their responses and the quality of language used. Inappropriate responses were awarded no mark, even if the quality of language was perfect.

Situation 1

Your teacher has asked the students in your class to write one sentence indicating why they have chosen to study Spanish. Write your sentence. (Function: Providing information)

Suggested response: *Es fácil e interesante.*

This question posed little difficulty and most candidates provided an appropriate response. Errors in spelling were the most apparent. Many candidates misspelt *interesante* and failed to change *y* to *e* before *interesante*.

Situation 2

You have just received some sad news. Send an email to a friend sharing this information. (Function: Providing information)

Suggested response: *Mi amiga está en el hospital.*

Most candidates were able to respond appropriately, but with several grammatical errors. There was a clear indication that candidates had difficulty with the preterite of the verb *morir*. Many candidates also used the definite article *la* with *hospital*.

Situation 3

You have won a large sum of money as a prize. Send an email to your cousin telling her of two things that you plan to do with the money. (Function: Expressing intention)

Suggested response: *Voy a comprar una casa y viajaré a...*

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure. Two asterisks (**) indicate an omission.*

Many candidates failed to obtain full marks for appropriateness on this question because they did not mention two things or did not use the verb in the correct tense to indicate 'intention'.

Situation 4

Your sister wants to go to the beach on the weekend but you don't. Send an email suggesting an alternative. (Function: Suggesting an alternative)

Suggested response: *Sería mejor ir al cine.*

Most candidates mentioned an activity, for example, *ir al cine*, or simply mentioned one verb in the infinitive, for example, *bailar*. These were considered partial responses as the function was not fully performed.

Situation 5

You have been assigned a roommate for your school trip but you are not happy about this arrangement. Write a short message to your teacher indicating why. (Function: Giving reason/Explaining)

Suggested response: *Esta persona es muy ruidosa/No quiero compartir mi cuarto.*

This question posed some difficulty for the majority of candidates. They lacked the vocabulary for 'roommate' and were unable to manipulate the language for a suitable substitute. Some candidates seemed confused by the word 'arrangement' and proceeded to explain the problems with the room rather than with the roommate. Some candidates seemed to have difficulty differentiating between *bien* and *bueno*. Some wrote *Ese muchacho no es bien** or failed to make the noun-adjective agreement in the response *No es una persona bueno**.

Situation 6

You are unable to attend a school outing next weekend and you are very disappointed. Write an email to your teacher making a special request. (Function: Making a request)

Suggested response: *Podríamos tener la salida/excursión otro día?*

Many candidates were not able to score full marks for appropriateness because their responses lacked the information that the function required. Several candidates offered an apology for not attending the outing, explained their absence from the trip and wished the teacher to have a good trip instead of making a request related to their being unable to go.

Situation 7

You wish to inform your Spanish teacher of something that happened in class during her absence. Write the note you leave on the teacher's desk. (Function: Reporting an incident)

Suggested response: *Los estudiantes no hicieron el trabajo.*

Although most candidates were able to mention an incident, there were several errors with regard to the tense used. The situation required an incident narrated in the past progressive or preterite tense. However, candidates showed a general weakness in the use and formation of tenses. There were also many instances where candidates used the familiar *tú* to address the teacher. When they attempted to use *usted*, the verb was conjugated incorrectly, for example, *cuando usted estuve ausente.** Vocabulary was somewhat challenging for the weaker candidates who were unable to say *ausente* or *ausencia*. (*Profesora durante tu absence dos muchachos comer en la clase.**)

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Situation 8

Write a note of apology to your mother giving a reason for your misbehaviour.
(Function: Apologizing + Reason)

Suggested response: *Lo siento mamá, estaba muy enfadado/a.*

Few candidates scored full marks for appropriateness on this question because their responses lacked the two elements which they were required to provide. They merely apologized and described the misbehaviour; for example, *mama lo siento por mi attitude mal.** Candidates tended to omit accents and were consequently penalized for incorrect spelling. The use of *lo siento* and *siento* continued to pose difficulty for many candidates.

Situation 9

You are completing an application for a university and you are required to write one sentence indicating an activity in which you would like to participate. What do you write? (Function: Expressing desire)

Suggested response: *Me gustaría estar en el equipo de.../Deseo...*

For this situation there was an attempt by many candidates to express a desire to participate in something, almost all wanting to participate in a sporting activity. There were many candidates who wrote responses that were not extracurricular activities such as studying mathematics or physics. However, the responses lacked accuracy with respect to either grammar or vocabulary. It was disappointing to see vocabulary for well-known sports rendered incorrectly and that candidates were using *playa** for *jugar*. Simply mentioning an activity without the expression of desire was accepted as a partial response.

Situation 10

You planned an activity with your friends but you had to cancel. Write the email you send informing them about it and explain the reason why. (Function: Providing information with a reason)

Suggested response: *Tengo que cancelar porque...*

All candidates were able to respond either fully or partially to this situation. Common errors were mainly related to the element of apology that some candidates offered, again highlighting difficulty with *lo siento* and *siento*. Also, some candidates were unaware of the difference in the use of *por qué*, *porque* and *a causa de*. It was obvious from some of the responses that candidates have not grasped the use of *ser* and *estar* and so used them interchangeably.

Further Comments and Recommendations

The situations were well within the reach of the majority of candidates. However, many candidates did not focus on the functions inherent in the situations and provided responses that were appropriate but lacking in relevant content. Some of the situations brought out the imagination of the candidates and the better candidates displayed a mastery of vocabulary and content that was refreshing.

It must also be noted that some candidates are thinking too literally. Their word for word translation led to them using nouns and pronouns as verbs, illustrating their inability to differentiate between expressions from their dialect and Standard English, their lack of knowledge of parts of speech and the function of words in a sentence. Some of the weaker candidates produced structures that were incomprehensible to native speakers of Spanish, for example, *yo reloj* la televisión*. Teachers are again reminded to ensure that students are familiar with all the functions outlined in the syllabus and to make extensive use of Spanish in the classroom.

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It must be noted that some responses reflected a lack of taste as to what is acceptable content for responses in an examination. The use of obscenities should be strictly forbidden as it shows absolute contempt for the examiners and the examination board.

Section II — Letter/Composition

This section assessed candidates' ability to produce a piece of Spanish of about 130–150 words based on an outline given in English. Candidates had the choice of producing either a letter or a composition. The demands of this question were within the requirements laid out by the syllabus and in the range of ability expected for candidates at this level.

The more popular choice was the letter which seemed more manageable for the majority of candidates. The topics for both questions were familiar to the students and were ones with which they could easily relate. The questions demanded the use of more than one tense as well as the use of high frequency vocabulary items, thus testing the ability of candidates to be creative in their expression while using language which they would have practised over the years.

Strengths of Candidates

The majority of candidates attempted the questions and interpreted the questions well. There were fewer limited or very limited responses this year than in previous years, as the weaker candidates made brave efforts to answer despite their limitations. They used the vocabulary and knowledge of grammar that they possessed to produce a response. Most candidates respected the rubric and format, and it was pleasing to observe an improvement in the opening and closing lines of the letter where the subjunctive was appropriately used. Generally, vocabulary and idioms were known and the more competent candidates produced excellent work with a language of coherence, clarity of expression and a wide range of vocabulary and idioms.

Some examples of good performance included:

- Appropriate use of vocabulary of current words: *hacer de canguro; teléfono celular; navegar la red; faena, echar de menos*
- Good use of tenses: *mis padres decidiero; me encargué de mis hermanos; como recompensa me van a dar; me habían dejado con*
- Subjunctive: *Espero que estés bien; si cuidara bien de mis hermanos me recompensarían; quiero que me escribas pronto.*

Weaknesses of Candidates

Many candidates wrote the date for the letter in words — **Cinco de mayo de dos mil once*. In addition, candidates failed to recognize that the word *el* is not required when writing the date in isolation.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary errors continued to diminish the quality of work that candidates produced. Some common errors of vocabulary included the following:

- *salir* used instead of *dejar*
- *llavar* used instead of *lavar*
- *mirar* used instead of *cuidar*
- *que día* used instead of *ese día*
- *ustedes* used instead of *ellos*
- *por qué* used instead of *porque*
- *mejores* used instead of *menores*

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- *porque de* used instead of *a causa de*
- *bien* used instead of *bueno*
- *hospedarse* used instead of *quedarse*
- *parientes* used instead of *padres*
- *asistir* used instead of *ayudar*
- *tiempo* used instead of *rato* or *vez*

Grammar

Several grammatical inaccuracies were noted. Some of these included

- The use of *Ser* and *Estar* (*Mi hermana es enferma*)
- Subject and verb agreement. (*Mis hermanos y yo fueron al cine, la gente deben ayudar*)
- Spelling of the preterite (*Mis padres fueron, Ellos dijeron*)
- Inappropriate use of the gerund (*Tuve que hacer tareas como fregando los platos*)
- Imperfect versus preterite (*Mis hermanos miraron la televisión mientras yo cociné*)
- The verb *gustar* (*Yo me gustaría, Mis hermanos les gustan jugar al fútbol*)
- Possession (*Mi mamá's cumpleaños*)
- Personal 'a' (*Fueron a visitar* los abuelos*)
- Lack of the appropriate prepositions after the verb (*Les ayudé* limpiar, Salieron* la casa*)
- The inappropriate use of the reflexive verb (*Tuve que bañarse a los niños*)
- Unnecessary use of the preposition (*Miré después mis hermanos*)
- Position of object pronouns (*Mis padres dejaron me en casa*)
- Agreement of adjectives (*Los jóvenes no son revoltoso*)
-

Further Comments and Recommendations

While there was a general improvement in the number of candidates who attempted the question and who used all the cues, there is still concern about the quality of language.

Teachers are encouraged to dedicate time to stress the importance of grammatical accuracy in communication and to ensure that students develop competencies in that area. Focus on correction of frequent grammatical and vocabulary errors is recommended. Students must be encouraged to read over their work to avoid serious errors. Enough time is allotted in the examination for this.

Practice in letter/composition writing is essential for success. Students need to be reminded that when they are writing the date in isolation, the word *el* is not required. It is placed when giving the date in context. For example, *Mi cumpleaños es el 5 de mayo. Hoy es el 2 de agosto.*

Frequent exposure to the language through oral communication in the classroom, games, entertaining activities and appropriate websites should be encouraged.

Section III — Contextual Announcement/Contextual Dialogue

This section required candidates to choose to complete either (i) a contextual announcement or (ii) a contextual dialogue. Cues were given in English for both options and candidates were to use between 80 and 100 words to complete their responses.

Both the contextual announcement and the contextual dialogue had similar levels of difficulty. However, the contextual announcement allowed candidates the freedom of expression whereas the contextual dialogue guided them to utilize certain vocabulary structures.

Contextual Announcement

Candidates who selected the contextual announcement once again showed creativity in their responses. There was a greater attempt by candidates this year to present the announcement as such and not like an advertisement as some candidates did in previous years. Those who performed well were able to write the verbs in the correct tense and form, express the time of the activity correctly and use the appropriate form of command/language/expression for the invitation. However, weaker candidates were severely hampered by their inability to use the language correctly. They encountered difficulty maintaining the correct register throughout the announcement and alternated between the familiar and polite forms. For example, **Ven a nuestro restaurant*, **llame(n) el número...* The weaker candidates also struggled with expressions such as *a las diez* *en la mañana*, and **en lunes*.

While candidates generally made attempts to effectively communicate their ideas, the quality of expression was affected by spelling and other grammatical errors. The language was sometimes so distorted that it was difficult to comprehend. Some common errors included:

- *un grande fiesta/un grande restaurante*
- *porque* instead of *a causa de*
- *abriendo* instead of *apertura*
- *tiempo* instead of *hora*
- *yo no conoce* instead of *yo no sé*
- *libres* instead of *gratis*
- *de el* instead of *del*
- *con mi* instead of *conmigo*
- *atender* instead of *asistir*
- *bebes* instead of *bebidas*
- *todos en la munda* instead of *todo el mundo*

Contextual Dialogue

Candidates were able to respond well to the question since the level of vocabulary and expressions expected from the cues were well within their scope of experience.

The stronger candidates correctly interpreted all of the cues and provided appropriate responses using sound grammar and varied vocabulary. Many candidates managed to respond to the first four questions quite well, but misinterpreted the fifth, *¿Qué te dijo el Director ayer a su despacho?* They indicated what they said to the Principal. One such response was *Yo le dije que no me gustan las matemáticas*.

At times there was no agreement of adjectives and/or articles and general sentence structure. There was also incorrect positioning of *no* to make a sentence or phrase negative. For example, *el profesor* was referred to

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as *la profesora*, and there were phrases such as *el profesor es *estricta*, *el director es *no simpatico*, and *él *hace no enseña nosotros bien*.

There was notable improvement in the use of idiomatic expressions and this contributed to the performances of the very good candidates. Some of the structures that were quite pleasing included:

- *poner las pilas*
- *me siento deprimido*
- *estar hasta el gorro*
- *sin más ni más*
- *¡Qué asco!*
- *estar hecho pedazos*
- *El profesor quiere que yo aprenda rápido como los demás*
- *sabía que podría contar contigo*

However, there were also instances of misspellings (*matematicas*, *professor*, *officina*, *viente-uno*, *cuidad*), the incorrect use of *gustar* (*el profesor no le gusta me*), the omission of the reflexive pronoun (*siento mal*) and the wrong tense being used in some responses (*yo voy a la oficina del director ayer*). Enough care was not taken with accentuation even with simple words like *sí*, *también* and *más*.

Other errors included:

- *la problema*
- *no soy bien*
- *fayar* for *fallar*
- *fraciones* for *fracciones*
- *gracias para tu ayudar*
- *no problema*
- *no hace mi deber* for *no hice mi deber*
- *las matemáticas es difícil*

Further Comments and Recommendations

While there were a few excellent scripts, a significant number of candidates performed poorly. Once again, the lack of accentuation or its overuse, the lack of punctuation marks and a lack of basic vocabulary structures and improper use of the language, continued to hinder candidates' performances. There is need to develop a facility with all tenses, but more strikingly here with the future tense (including the irregular forms for example, *habrá*). This would avoid errors like *no poderé asistir a la graduación*, *que haré mejor*, *mis padres decirán*.

Candidates are urged to observe the rubric, especially as it relates to length. There are penalties for responses that are too long or too short.

Section IV — Reading Comprehension

This section assessed candidates' ability to read and comprehend a short passage in Spanish and respond in English to ten questions set on the passage. The marks allocated ranged from one to three. The questions asked and the suggested responses are given below.

Question 1

Describe Marisa's personality.

Suggested response: She was a nice and happy woman. (Any synonym for nice and happy was accepted.)

Most candidates responded correctly. There were few candidates who described her physical appearance instead of personality.

Question 2

What did people admire about her?

Suggested response: Her figure/body.

The majority of candidates responded correctly. Some incorrect responses given were *her positivity, her face, her hair*.

Question 3

With whom did she go out?

Suggested response: A colleague/co-worker whom she liked.

Many candidates offered a partial response to this question, omitting that the colleague was someone that Marisa liked. Some others distorted the response by indicating that she went out with someone who liked her. The weaker candidates, who clearly had a difficulty with basic vocabulary, offered the response *She went out with Bebieron and Charlaron*.

Question 4

Describe Marisa's outfit.

Suggested response: She wore a brightly coloured swimsuit.

Some candidates responded correctly, but there were also a few incorrect responses, for example, *a colored vest; dress; beachwear and a vest; a black bath dress*.

Question 5

Mention three things that Marisa and her companion did on the beach.

Suggested response: They sat on the sand, chatted and drank juice.

While many candidates were able to obtain marks on this question, they failed to supply sufficient details to be awarded full marks. (This question was worth three marks, requiring three elements). There were many candidates who were not familiar with the word *arena* and thought that Marisa sat in the arena.

Question 6

Why did they decide to go for a swim?

Suggested response: The water looked inviting.

Many candidates responded correctly.

Question 7

What happened when Marisa dived into the water?

Suggested response: Something black was seen floating on the water./Her wig was floating.

A variety of responses were given here. Candidates thought that *Marisa saw something/she almost drowned/an article of clothing came off*.

Question 8

What was her companion's immediate reaction?

Suggested response: He was surprised and told her that her wig/hair was floating.

Again, a wide range of responses was given. Many candidates did not seem to grasp the details relevant to this question. Incorrect responses given included: *Her companion tried to save her/ Her companion shouted Marisa look out, a shark, a black horse is floating./Her companion said OMG.*

Question 9

How did Marisa react to her companion's comment?

Suggested response: She was embarrassed and ran out of the water.

Many candidates responded correctly, although some candidates missed the second part of the answer or thought that she left the beach.

Question 10

Explain why she reacted in that way.

Suggested response: Her companion, whom she was trying to impress, found out that she was wearing a wig. (This question was worth three marks and required three relevant elements.)

Many candidates obtained full marks; others were awarded partial marks based on the relevant information that was supplied. Responses that were totally distorted were not awarded marks. For example, *She reacted this way because she had seen it in a movie; She reacted this way because she was naked.*

Further Comments and Recommendations

On the whole, there was general improvement in the way candidates handled the comprehension question. There were more candidates who gained full marks, compared with previous years. However, too many candidates, being unsure of the meaning of words, either placed an additional word in brackets or an alternative word. Candidates should note that they should not give more than one meaning of a word.

Candidates must read the instructions clearly before attempting each section and they must be reminded that the responses in this section must be in standard English and not Spanish.

It is important that teachers teach comprehension skills, cognates, and that special attention be paid to words that are easily confused and the derivatives of words.

Class time should be dedicated to reading for comprehension purposes. This activity is vital to candidates' successful performance and therefore teachers are encouraged to allocate the time for this activity to take place.

Paper 03 — Oral Examination

This paper assessed candidates' ability to (i) produce appropriate responses in Spanish to a number of situations requiring specific functions, (ii) read aloud a short passage in Spanish and (ii) converse in Spanish by responding to questions based on four out of six topics set out in the syllabus.

Section I

Responses to Situations/Instructions

This section required candidates to produce appropriate responses in Spanish to situations/instructions described in English in keeping with the function specific to the situation. Candidates presented a range of competencies in the way they handled the responses. Some candidates performed very well in this section, demonstrating a wide range of vocabulary, ample use of idioms, sound grammatical structures and the ability to respond without undue hesitation. These upper-end performers delivered their responses with confidence and a high degree of fluency.

At the other end of the performance scale, many candidates had great difficulty in producing responses which were appropriate and expressed with grammatical accuracy. Their responses were characterized by limited vocabulary, ignorance of rudimentary grammatical structures and little or no knowledge of idioms. Many candidates gave one-word responses and in several instances no response was given. The weaker candidates exhibited much hesitancy and lack of confidence in their oral delivery.

Among the more common grammatical errors were:

- Incorrect use of verb tenses
¿Por qué no va a la escuela hoy? (when asking about a past action)
- Incorrect subject-verb agreement
Tú es muy estúpido.
- Ser and Estar
¿Dónde es el dentista?
Soy en el banco.
- Incorrect adjective-noun agreement
La película es muy aburrido.
- Inability to use Object Pronouns
Yo puedo ayudar tú
- Incorrect use of *tú* and *usted*
Dónde quieres ir (when speaking to a visitor)
- Inability to use the Imperative
Cambiar el vestido

Vocabulary errors included:
ticketos instead of *entradas*
promeso instead of *prometo*
llevar instead of *lavar*
regresar instead of *devolver*

Recommendations

The syllabus provides a list of functions which students are supposed to be able to use. The teacher should incorporate these functions in classroom activities and exercises. Lower forms need to be introduced very early to this type of question and constant practice helps tremendously to build students' confidence in responding orally to situations.

Section II

Reading Passage

This section assessed the ability of candidates to read a passage in Spanish (125–130 words), exhibiting correct pronunciation of discrete sounds, good intonation and fluency. Performance on this section ranged
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from very good to extremely limited. Very good readers demonstrated a firm grasp of the Spanish sound system, showed familiarity with the rules of accentuation and stress and executed their delivery with fluency. Adequate preparation and constant practice in reading out loudly contributed to the outstanding performance of candidates who scored very well in this section.

For many other candidates, the reading component continued to prove itself a formidable and daunting exercise. These low-performing candidates barely understood the Spanish sound system and presented pronunciation which was faulty and very anglicized in many cases. Their production of the language was disjointed and there was little or no evidence that they understood what they were reading.

The following are some of the pronunciation problems which candidates encountered:

- Vocalization of the silent *h* in words such as *histórico, huele, hoteles, habilidad*.
- Mispronunciation of the Spanish vowels, particularly *e* and *i*. This was apparent when candidates read words like *recibimos, individuo, acontecimiento, insinuaciones, empobrecido*.
- The pronunciation of *g* continued to pose difficulties. Many candidates failed to differentiate between *g* before *a, o* and *u* and *g* before *e* and *i*. Consequently, words like *regional, nostalgia, gente, generalmente* were often mispronounced.
- Diphthongs were generally mispronounced: *ciudadano, seguir, dieta, incluir* were some examples.
- The anglicizing of cognates: *nacional, productos, formación, volumen*.
- Articulation of *ñ* in words such as *campaña, caribeña, dueño*.
- Ignorance of the placement of stress generally and particularly in the case of words with accents.

Words that were difficult for candidates included, *nostalgia, exigido, acontecimiento, apropiadamente, supervivencia, arraigada*.

Recommendations

Students must be exposed to the practice of reading aloud on an extensive basis. It is highly unlikely that students will grasp the nuances of Spanish pronunciation and intonation without being exposed to authentic Spanish material. The teacher should constantly use Spanish in the classroom and introduce activities which would confront students with the written word and induce them to read in Spanish.

Section III

Guided Conversation

This section of the oral examination assessed the ability of candidates to respond to a number of questions based on four topics. The topics examined were *Home and Family, School and Career, Shopping and Travel*. Candidates were asked four questions on each topic and were assessed using the criteria of comprehension and spontaneity, fluency and expression.

The Guided Conversation again proved to be the most challenging for candidates. Few candidates demonstrated the ability to respond to the questions with facility and accuracy. They were spontaneous in their answers and delivered them with extensive use of appropriate vocabulary and grammatical accuracy. The majority of candidates struggled with the section, handicapped by a limited vocabulary range and ignorance of basic grammatical structures. There was limited comprehension of the questions asked as evidenced by constant requests by candidates for questions to be repeated. In many instances, questions were completely misunderstood as candidates were only able to pick up one cue from the question asked and then proceeded to answer their own question.

The grammatical errors encountered in this section were much the same as those mentioned for Section I and included:

- Incorrect conjugation of verbs and a general weakness in using Spanish verbs
- Lack of agreement between noun/adjective and subject/verb
- Incorrect use of *ser/estar*, *por/para*
- Ignorance of the use of object pronouns

The following are some specific problems as they relate to some of the questions asked.

Home and Family

- The word *nenes* was generally unknown. Many candidates responded by interpreting *nenes* as *personas* and provided answers such as *hay cinco, mis padres, mis dos hermanos y yo*.
- In response to the question *¿Por qué el domingo es diferente en tu familia?* many candidates described their activities on Sunday, not showing how Sunday is different.
- The question *¿Qué es lo que más te gusta de tu familia?* was often interpreted as who is the family member you like best.
- *Pariente* was taken for *parent*.

School and Career

- *¿Cuál es la profesión que te parece más atractiva?* Some candidates proceeded to identify their most attractive teacher.
- Problems were encountered with the word *materias*. Candidates seemed to be more familiar with *asignaturas*.
- *¿Cuáles son las características de un buen estudiante?* Many responses dealt with the physical description of a schoolmate.

Shopping

- *¿En qué temporada del año haces más compras y por qué?* Candidates were not familiar with the word *temporada*.
- *¿Cómo obtienes tu dinero para hacer compras?* Candidates were unable to use the word *obtengo*.

Travel

- The word *embotellamientos* was generally not known.
- Many candidates were unfamiliar with the word *metro*.
- *Un país latinoamericano* was often given as *España, Miami, Canadá, etc*.

Recommendations

Teachers need to adopt a more communicative approach to the teaching of Spanish. The language should be used as much as possible as the language of instruction, thus exposing students to sufficient Spanish in the classroom. Students would then become accustomed to hearing the spoken word and become comfortable with same. In the process, teachers are encouraged to expose students to a wide range of vocabulary, synonyms and various interrogative forms.

In the examination year in particular, teachers need to conduct mock oral examinations with students. It is very clear that for a large percentage of students, this CSEC examination was their first encounter with this type of one-on-one testing.

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CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

JANUARY 2012

**SPANISH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2012 January examination was written by 531 candidates compared with 627 in January 2011. There was an improvement in overall candidate performance with 69 per cent achieving acceptable grades (I–III) compared with 60 per cent in 2011. Candidates' performance was better on Paper 02 and Paper 03 in 2012 than in 2011, while on Paper 01 performance was similar to what obtained in 2011.

Teachers are encouraged to continue their creative teaching strategies to get their students to perform to the best of their ability.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprised two sections, assessed the ability of candidates to listen to and understand a number of aural items in the target language and to read and understand a number of written items. Both sections required candidates to have sufficient mastery of essential grammar and vocabulary. Performance in 2012 was comparable to that of 2011.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section I (Question 1) – Directed Situations

In this section, candidates were presented with ten situations to which they were required to provide written responses in Spanish. The situations demanded that candidates recognize the function they were required to perform, all within the scope of their experience at this level. Candidates were assessed on the appropriateness of their responses and quality of language used. With regard to the quality of language, candidates were expected to demonstrate their control of appropriate grammatical structures and knowledge of relevant vocabulary, both expressed in clearly worded, concise responses. In assessing appropriateness, each response was categorized as fully or partially appropriate and was awarded marks accordingly. Inappropriate responses were awarded no mark even if the language of expression was flawless.

Demands of the Section

The questions suited the level of the examination so the majority of candidates made a fairly good attempt at answering them. The questions demanded vocabulary and structures of an everyday nature that candidates should be familiar with.

Candidates' Performance

Candidates performed creditably on this section. It was evident that the situations were straightforward and well within the experience of each candidate. The majority of candidates gained passing grades. Poor performance generally resulted from incorrect grammar and lack of vocabulary.

Candidates' Strengths

Candidates showed particular strength in their knowledge of vocabulary required in responding to the situations. Responses were not too lengthy and candidates provided generally correct responses, despite errors, and used subjunctives where appropriate.

However, some errors recurred in this area, for example, using *disturbar* to mean disturbed. There was also overuse of *simpático and interesante*.

Candidates' Weaknesses

General weakness was noted in areas of grammar especially in agreement of subject and verb, agreement of adjectives with noun, production of commands and spelling. There was also the absence of prepositions or wrong prepositions being used after verbs and incorrect pronouns after prepositions.

The following are examples of errors in grammar.

- *I* before *hi* or *i* — *y interesante* being frequently used
- Incorrect use of *gustar* — *nosotros gustamos/yo gusto*
- Difference in use of *porque* and *a causa de/bueno* and *bien/asistir* and *ayudar*
- Errors in spelling *receptionista* for *repcionista*, *servico* for *servicio*
- General misuse of *bueno* and *bien*, for example, *es bien/canta bueno*
- *Y* before *i* — *y interesante*
- *Una otra* for *otra*
- *Busces* for *busques*
- *Buscar para* for *busca*
- *Simpático* used to describe animals and places
- *Ser* and *estar*
- *Yo estudiando* for *yo estoy estudiando*

Comments on Individual Situations

Situation (a)

You report to the police that your valuable pet dog has been stolen. Write two descriptive features of the dog that you submit to the police. (Function — describing)

Suggested response: *Mi perro es grande y peludo.*

Candidates managed this question quite well providing the two elements of the description required. Descriptions provided were limited to colour and size. Candidates were not creative enough to use words like *peludo* or *juguetón*. Errors were made in the spelling of *perro*. In some instances where they may have been deficient in vocabulary candidates used *azul* or *rojo*. Errors in agreement and position of adjectives were also evident in some descriptions, for example, *Tiene ojos azul/ pequeño orejas*.

Situation (b)

You participated in a karaoke competition and the judges wrote two reasons why they enjoyed your performance. What did the judges write? (Function — narrating)

Suggested response: *Cantaste/cantas muy bien y el público apreció mucho tu canción.*

Candidates did not perform as well on this question as they did on the previous question opting to comment on the performer's looks rather than the performance. Few candidates who attempted to use the word "performance" knew it and so resorted to the use of an anglicized version, *performancia*. Others also wrote comments in the first person — *Yo canté y bailé bien*. They did not adapt their answer to report

what the judges said. This is an indication that candidates need more practice in how to answer this question. Vocabulary deficiency was evident in candidates' attempts at translating 'sing a song' in Spanish. There was also poor use of *gustar*, for example, *nosotros gustamos...*

Situation (c)

You are not feeling well and go to visit the doctor. He recommends two things you ought to do. What does he recommend? (Function — giving instructions)

Suggested response: *Debes tomar una píldora por la noche y beber mucha agua.*

Many candidates used the verb '*recomendar*' but omitted to use the subjunctive after it. Most preferred to use the infinitive for giving instructions, '*beber y comer*'. Some candidates also used the incorrect gender for *agua* — *mucho agua*.

Situation (d)

Your school football/netball team lost the game yesterday. Write your brother/sister an email giving two reasons why the team lost the game. (Function — narrating)

Suggested response: *Los jugadores no jugaron bien y el mejor jugador fue lastimado.*

In this response many candidates used the present tense when the past tense was required. They did not know how to express 'to lose' in Spanish and made up words like '*loosamos*'. There was also a lack of agreement of the verb with *equipo* — many candidates used the verb in the plural. Candidates used *equipe/grupo/escuela* to express the word 'team'.

Situation (e)

Your teacher asks you to write down two details you will always remember about your Spanish class after you have left school. What do you write? (Function — providing information)

Suggested response: *La clase siempre era interesante y nos reíamos mucho.*

To express the Spanish class/teacher, some candidates wrote *la español clase* and *el español profesor*. Agreement of adjective was lacking, as seen in *la clase era divertido*. Candidates also misspelt *interesante*, frequently rendering it as *interesante*. *Profesor* was also very often spelt with a double 's'. Some candidates provided vague/incomplete answers — just saying that they liked the teacher and the class.

Situation (f)

You are having a party and need help with the preparations. Send an email to your friend requesting assistance with a particular activity. (Function — seeking assistance)

Suggested response: *¿Puedes ayudarme a decorar la sala?*

Vocabulary weakness was evident in instances where candidates used *asistir*, *attender* instead of *ayudar*. When *ayudar* was used the 'a' was omitted after the verb, or in some instances it was spelt *ayudar*. Some candidates did not respond to both elements of the situation and only stated that they needed help but did not mention the activity and vice versa.

Situation (g)

You have been admitted to a new school. As you fill out the registration form you are required to state two reasons why you selected that school. What do you write? (Function — providing information)

Suggested response: *Esta escuela tiene buenos resultados y la disciplina es excelente.*

The responses were good. *Profesor* and *escuela* were often misspelt in this item. ‘Because of’ was rendered *porque de la educación* and *a causa de yo estudiando*. On occasions when candidates attempted to describe a feature of the school, they failed to make the noun/adjective agreement, for example, *moderno/nuevo escuela*. *Cercano a* was used in many instances instead of ‘*cerca de*’. Answers given were limited to *grande, excelente, buenos profesores, vive cerca*.

Situation (h)

You were very disappointed with the service you received from the receptionist at a hotel. Write a note to the manager stating how you feel about the incident. (Function — expressing feeling)

Suggested response: *Estoy enojado.*

Expression in this item was poor and an effort to give a reason proved difficult for candidates. Some candidates referred to the service rather than how they felt. There were many instances of incorrect spelling of ‘*repcionista*’ where candidates replaced the ‘c’ by a ‘t’, and of ‘*servicio*’ which was rendered *servico*. *Secretaria, mesonero, camarero* were all used as substitutes for *repcionista*.

Situation (i)

You are in your bedroom and do not wish to be disturbed. Write a note to hang on the door including the reason. (Function — giving instructions)

Suggested response: *Favor de no molestar porque estoy estudiando.*

Weakness in producing negative commands was noted — *No molestame. Disturbar* and *no disturba* were coined to mean disturb. ‘*Soy studio/estudiando*’ was produced to express what the individual was doing. In many cases candidates did not fulfil the requirements of the item by providing the reason.

Situation (j)

You have won a trip to a Spanish-speaking country of your choice. Send an email to a friend indicating your choice and two reasons for your selection. (Function—giving reasons)

Suggested response: *Prefiero ir a Cuba porque tiene una historia interesante y muchos lugares de interés para visitar.*

This item was fairly well done. However, some candidates used the English rather than the Spanish name for the country. *Quiero ir a Spain...*

Recommendations

- Candidates need to follow the rubric which emphasizes that only one sentence is required for their answer. They need to provide the two elements required in one answer rather than supply two separate sentences.
- Candidates need to avoid using descriptors which mean the same thing in their answers.
- The need to produce the actual note, email or message must be stressed so that candidates will not attempt to translate the question or produce reported speech, or introduce the responses by restating the situation.
- Candidates must focus on the function required in their response before attempting to write their response.
- There is need to focus on the tense required by each situation.
- Writing of commands and alternative ways of giving instructions should be practised in preparation for this question.

Section II (Question 2/Question 3) – Letter/Composition

This section is intended to assess candidates' ability to produce written language within the parameters set out in the syllabus. In addition to mastery of relevant vocabulary, idiom and language structure, the ability to express ideas clearly and coherently is emphasized. The two options given were the letter and the composition, each of which was marked out of 30.

Demands of the Section

Both questions fulfilled the demands of the syllabus and catered to all range of abilities. Both questions were popular with most candidates and the majority attempted to answer. Candidates were able to explore a wide range of tenses and the more competent ones used the subjunctive comfortably.

Candidates' Performance

Performance ranged from average to below average. Few candidates were in the excellent category. All four elements of the question were attempted by most candidates.

Candidates' Strengths

The majority of candidates followed the rubric for both questions. Appropriate expressions for the format for the letter, especially the ones requiring the subjunctive, were well learnt. Tenses were fairly well known. Less competent candidates were able to use simple descriptors with the verb '*ser*'. The more competent candidates used a wide range of vocabulary and idioms.

Examples of Good Performance

Good use of idioms and vocabulary:

Me quedé boquiabierto

¡Qué guay!

En un dos por tres

Te extraño

Te echo de menos

Appropriate usage of tenses

¿Cómo te ha ido en Colombia?

Fui al cine, fui al museo y a la playa.

Gané una beca/premio/viaje

Participé en un concurso de ...

Appropriate use of the subjunctive:

Cuando regreses

Espero que estés bien

Espero que vuelvas lo más pronto posible

Quiero que me escribas

Candidates' Weaknesses with Examples of Errors

Several weaknesses were identified in scripts. Examples follow:

- In the letter, the date was sometimes written incorrectly:
In words — *el trece de enero de dos mil doce* instead of *13 de enero de 2012*. Candidates need to note that the word 'el' is not required if the date is written in isolation.
On some occasions the date was written as *13th de enero*
- Addresses were too long. The simple name of the city will suffice.
- Incorrect rendition of salutation. Omission of *querido*.
- Inclusion of language and abbreviations used in SMS texting, for example, *LOL*.
- Errors in negation:
Tengo no amigos
Estás no aquí
- Incorrect use of possessive and demonstrative adjectives:
Que besa fue el mejor
Mis cumpleaños
- Weaknesses in English Grammar were transferred:
Están muchos chicos en mi escuela
Hay Argentina, República Dominicana, Cuba...
- Incorrect rendition of the time:
La graduación es a son las dos
Para son las siete
- Confusion with past participle and preterite:
Yo recibido
- Vocabulary errors:
Emocionante instead of *emocionado*
Mirar instead of *ver*
Mirar instead of *parecer*
Muy instead of *mucho*

- Amo* instead of *me encanta*
Devolver instead of *revolver*
Extrañar instead of *perder*
- Agreement and placement of adjectives:
La gente son muy simpática
Blanco zapato
 - Use of possessive pronoun instead of the adjective:
¿Cómo es tuyo trabajo?
 - Omission of personal ‘a’
 - Omission of accents:
Estas instead of *ésta/estás*
 - Failure to use the subjunctive:
Cuando vuelves
Espero que vienes
Lo siento no estás (the ‘lo’ is also not required here)
 - Incorrect use and position of subject pronoun:
Perdió tú
 - *Por* instead of *para*:
Escribí una carta por mi directora
Una fiesta por el año que viene
 - Poor spelling:
Querido — *quierdo, queridido, quierido, quierda*
 - Poor knowledge of vocabulary:
 Work was rendered as *trabaje, trabajado, trabaja*
 Ceremony was written as *el ceremonio*
 - Incorrect translations:
 I miss you — *Yo miss tu/Mi es mismo tu mucho/Yo perdidia tu mucho/yo pierdo tu*
 To go shopping — *ir a comprar/fui comprando*
 I met Lionel — *encuenté Lionel*
 Cousin — *primero/primera*
 Girlfriend — *chica amiga*
 Too — *Mis padres es bien a/quieren a ver tu a*
 The party was enjoyable — *la fiesta fue divertirse*

Recommendations

- Grammatical structures and vocabulary need to be reinforced through consistent practice. Practice must be meaningful and in context.
- Translation is an effective teaching tool to reinforce idiomatic expressions, tenses and vocabulary and exposes candidates to the nuances of both languages.
- Teaching and learning can be enhanced through the use of varied classroom activities, games overseas trips and the use of the Internet.

Section III (Question 4/Question 5) – Contextual Announcement/Contextual Dialogue

This section required candidates to choose to write either a contextual announcement or a contextual dialogue completion. Cues in English were provided for both options.

Demands of the Section

The contextual announcement and the contextual dialogue were not beyond what was outlined in the syllabus and therefore were within the scope of candidates' ability. However, it seemed that candidates were more comfortable with the subject matter of the contextual dialogue as this was the more popular choice. Many of the candidates who attempted the contextual announcement seemed to have difficulty with the relevant vocabulary to expand on cue iii, the concept of utilities.

Candidates' Performance on the Contextual Announcement

Fewer candidates attempted this question and those who did showed limited knowledge of the following:

- a) Relevant vocabulary as many candidates were unable to express
 - *compañero de habitación/ cuarto,*
 - *buscar*
 - *compartir*
 - *instalaciones*
 - *alquiler/ alquilar*
 - *el costo*
 - *el apartamento*
- b) Grammatical Structures. Some errors included
 - *estoy/soy mirando por/ para*
 - *yo soy miro*
 - *tiene/allí es baños en la habitación*
 - *ha la luz y Internet*
 - numbers — *un mil dólares/cinco ciento*
 - subjunctive — *estoy buscando una persona que quiere vivir conmigo*
 - *ser* and *estar* — *el apartamento es situado en la ciudad*
- c) Agreement of Adjectives—*dormitorio larga,* and *apartamento blanca*
- d) There was some use of English where candidates lacked the relevant vocabulary item. Some examples include 'electricity' and 'roommate'.

Candidates' Performance on the Contextual Dialogue

The majority of candidates attempted this question, but in many cases failed to master:

- a) Vocabulary skills. For example:
 - *estoy emocionante*
 - *la universidad es simpática*
- b) Grammatical Skills. For example:
 - *Ser* and *estar* — *la universidad es en la ciudad*
soy ir/soy viajar/soy preparando mis maletas, soy muy contento/feliz,
estoy yendo, soy aquí decirte que salgo para la universidad
 - Incorrect use of the indefinite article — *quiero ser un médico*
 - *estoy volver*

- *compré mis ropas*
- *...y interesante*
- *'salir' de mi familia*
- *Siento feliz*
- Subjunctive — *te veré cuando llego/vuelvo*
- *Tener que* — *tengo algo decirte/tengo a decir*
- The use of 'y' and 'e' — *los profesores son simpáticos y interesantes estudio español y historia*
- Spelling — *mis profesores/England/mathematica*
- *Después de* + infinitive — *después graduar después graduación después yo graduarte*

The cue which dealt with obtaining a visa was often overlooked. Many candidates anticipated the cues and therefore responded prematurely.

Candidates' Strengths

Most candidates followed the rubric in terms of using the required number of words and choosing only one of the two questions.

Examples of Good Performance

- *Pónganse en contacto*
- *Favor de contactaros*
- *Te echaré de menos*
- *Voy al extranjero*
- *Desde las ocho hasta las cinco*

Recommendations for Teachers

Students should be given more practice in both question types. Every attempt must be made in the teaching/learning process to ensure that students develop a solid command of essential elements of grammar to ensure accuracy in expression. The importance of idiomatic expressions should not be overlooked. Below is an indication of the areas which need immediate attention to help strengthen candidates' proficiency in the language.

- *Ser* and *estar*
- Correct usage of definite and indefinite articles
- Use of idiomatic expressions
- The order of adjectives and nouns in sentences
- Noun and adjective agreement
- The use of *por* and *para*
- Correct verb conjugation

Section IV (Question 6) – Reading Comprehension

This section assessed candidates' ability to read a passage in Spanish and then demonstrate comprehension skills by responding in English to questions posed in English based on the passage read.

Demands of the Section

This passage contained vocabulary and grammar that were pitched at a level that candidates who have completed five years of Spanish should be able to handle.

Candidates' Performance

Overall, candidates seemed not to have read the passage as carefully as they should have. A lack of vocabulary, especially related to countries and capitals, parts of the body and personal traits led to incorrect responses where such information was required. Given that the situation in the passage related to a theme that candidates would have encountered in Form 3, this question was not handled as well as it should have been.

Candidates' Strengths

Questions (a), (f), (h) and the first part of (j) were handled relatively well.

Candidates' Weaknesses

Those questions that required either considerable information or required candidates to draw conclusions from the context (questions (b), (c), (d), (e), (g), (i) and (j)) presented some challenges for the candidates.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question (a): Where did the incident take place?

Suggested response: On board a plane.

Incorrect response: On board a boat.

Generally this question was well done, except where candidates did not recognize that *vuelo* referred to travel by air. Some candidates wrote that Pedro Sarmiento also travelled by boat or bus.

Question (b): Where was Mr Sarmiento going?

Suggested response: He was going to Caracas or from Madrid to Caracas.

Incorrect response: He was going to Madrid in Caracas/Caracas in Madrid.

This question highlighted candidates' lack of knowledge of countries and capitals and/or their inability to distinguish between countries and capitals.

Question (c): At the outset, what emotion did Mr Sarmiento display, and what prompted it?

Suggested response: He was very annoyed because of the person sitting next to his seat.

Incorrect response: He was unhappy because a passenger which he didn't like was sitting in his seat.

This question spotlighted candidates' lack of comprehension. Although many candidates understood what his emotion was, they did not understand the sentence that would tell them what prompted the reaction — '*La pasajera al lado de él tenía una pierna fracturada y su asiento estaba sobre el pasillo...*'. There were a few candidates who assumed that either Pedro or the passenger was molested — '*Cuando encontré...se molestó.*'

Question (d): Describe the person in the seat next to Mr Sarmiento.

Suggested response: The passenger was a lady with a fractured leg.

Incorrect response: The person with the fractured hip.

Two items here confused the candidates — '*la pasajera*' and '*la pierna*'. *La pasajera* was not recognized as the feminine form of *el pasajero*, so candidates opted to write 'person' instead of 'lady'. Some candidates seemed not to know that *pierna* is 'leg', so they used other limbs although they understood that *fracturada* meant 'fractured'.

Question (e): How did Mr Sarmiento justify his reaction to the person sitting next to him?

Suggested response: It would be a long flight. He would be uncomfortable and would have difficulty crossing over the passenger to go to the bathroom.

Incorrect response: He justified his reaction by shouting that he wanted to go to the bathroom.

Most candidates said that it would be uncomfortable and earned the first mark for the question. They omitted to mention how long the flight was going to be and the difficulty with going to the bathroom.

Question (f): What did Mr Sarmiento request?

Suggested response: He demanded a change of seat.

Incorrect response: Mr Sarmiento requested to speak to the captain./ He requested that she be moved. This question was generally well done. However, some candidates saw *me cambie* as an 'exchange' of seats.

Question (g): What did the persons around him think of Mr Sarmiento?

Suggested response: They thought Mr Sarmiento was selfish and inconsiderate.

Incorrect response: They thought he was ignorant and 'disconsiderate'.

While candidates understood what the question was asking, they did not know the English meanings of those particular traits. For example, 'inconsiderate' became 'unconsiderable' and 'disconsiderable'.

Question (h): How did Miss Aldana respond to Mr Sarmiento's request?

Suggested response: Miss Aldana explained to him that she needed to speak to the captain first.

Incorrect response: She responded by moving him.

This question was generally well done when attempted by candidates.

Question (i): How was the problem resolved?

Suggested response: The captain told her to move the lady to a first class seat and to leave Mr Sarmiento in his original seat.

Incorrect response: Mr Sarmiento was moved to first class.

Some candidates became a little confused about who was moving to first class, hence they said that Miss Aldana or Mr Sarmiento was moving to first class instead of the injured passenger.

Question (j): How did the other people respond to the instructions given to Miss Aldana and why do you think they responded in that way?

Suggested response: They applauded because it was the lady with the fractured leg who was upgraded to first class instead of Mr Sarmiento.

Incorrect response: They applauded because they thought that the conflict was over.

Most candidates, if not all, answered the first part of this question correctly. It was, however, difficult for them to infer that the lady was treated well and Mr Sarmiento deserved what he got.

Remarks and Recommendations

Candidates are commended for their ability to equate the amount of information needed to answer the questions with the amount of marks awarded for each. It must be emphasized that *vocabulary* is a key element of reading comprehension. Teachers should take steps to find creative ways of getting their students to learn vocabulary, and then reinforcing it, particularly in the areas of word formation and word building. Incorporating crossword puzzles, word searches and other such activities can lend an element of fun to the classroom while achieving these objectives. The Internet and the television can serve as useful resources where some programmes can be adapted to the classroom situations, while fostering in students a sense of competitive spirit, team work and fun. Teachers can come up with their own version of LINGO (as seen on the Game Show Network), Wheel of Fortune and Jeopardy.

Finally, it is recommended that students be taught to read the passage a minimum of three times to ensure maximum understanding; that is, first reading to get the sense, followed by reading the questions; then the second reading which could lead to finding the answers, and then answering the questions; finally, reading a third time to ensure that the questions have been answered appropriately and fully.

Paper 03 – Oral Examination

The oral examination assessed the ability of candidates to: (i) respond appropriately in Spanish to a number of situations testing specific functions, (ii) read aloud a short passage in Spanish and (iii) converse in Spanish by responding to questions based on four out of six topics set out in the syllabus, namely, Daily Routine, School and Career, Sports and Recreation, and Shopping.

Section I – Responses to Situations/Instructions

This section required candidates to produce appropriate responses in Spanish to situations/instructions described in English in keeping with the function specific to the situation.

Candidates' responses demonstrated a range of abilities. The candidates who performed very well in this section produced responses which were not only appropriate but which were expressed correctly, demonstrating sound grammatical structures, an ample range of vocabulary and the liberal use of idioms. These candidates delivered their responses without undue hesitation, in fact with spontaneity and self-confidence.

On the other hand, many candidates performed poorly in this section. In many instances the weaknesses in grammar and vocabulary resulted in long delays in producing the responses, many of which were characterized by short, one-word answers. Candidates who fell in this category showed an inability to use idiomatic expressions.

The more common grammatical errors included the following:

- Subject–verb agreement
* *Yo prefiere ir a Venezuela*
- Noun–adjective agreement
* *La sopa no es bueno*
- Incorrect verb tense
* *Tenía que ir a una fiesta la semana próxima.*
- *Ser* and *Estar*
* *No sé donde es el libro*
- Conjugating the verb when the infinitive is needed.
* *Prometo saco la basura cada día.*

Vocabulary errors included:

Promeso for *prometo*

Curso for *curso*

Silla for *asiento*

Ropa for *uniforme*

Recommendations

Students and teachers need to acquaint themselves with the functions as listed in the syllabus. These functions must be practised in a variety of situations/instructions with students being encouraged to respond orally. A few functions should be practised each term from the lower forms and right up to the examination year.

***An asterisk (*) indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

Section II – Reading Passages

In this section, candidates were assessed on their ability to read a passage (125–130 words). Candidates were expected to correctly pronounce the discrete sounds of the language, to exhibit good intonation and read in a fluent manner. Performance on this section ranged from very good to very weak. Candidates who performed very well demonstrated a good knowledge of the Spanish sound system, showed facility in applying the rules of accentuation and stress and were fluent in their delivery. Those in this superior category were obviously well prepared and were given adequate practice in reading out loud.

Unfortunately, for far too many candidates the reading component of the oral examination proved to be a daunting challenge. It was indeed disheartening to hear so many candidates struggle with Spanish pronunciation which they had been exposed to for at least five years. Production of the discrete sounds of the language, particularly the vowel sounds, was a painful experience to these lower performing candidates. It was obvious that they understood little or nothing of what they were reading.

Among the pronunciation errors which were presented were:

- The pronunciation of the ‘g’ sound in Spanish. Weaker candidates displayed no distinction between hard and soft ‘g’ in words like *Magia, tecnología, magos*.
- Diphthongs were generally mispronounced. *Pudieron, videojuego, realidad, europeos*.
- The anglicizing of cognates *Urbana, personal, identidad, adictos*
- A disregard for the placement of stress particularly in words with accents *Rápida, jóvenes, época, interés*
- Words that were difficult for candidates included *Consumidores, exitazo, angloparlantes, hispanohablantes*

Recommendations

Pronunciation, intonation and fluency can only be mastered by constantly practising the reading aloud of the language. As often as possible the teacher must use Spanish in the classroom so that students will be exposed to the auditory nuances of the language. Where possible, students should be exposed to native speakers or recorded material of an authentic nature.

Section III – Guided Conversation

This section of the oral examination assessed the ability of candidates to respond to a number of questions based on four topics specified in the syllabus. For this examination the topics chosen were Daily Routine, School and Career, Sports/Recreation and Shopping. Candidates were asked four questions on each topic and were assessed using the criteria of comprehension and spontaneity, fluency and correctness of expression.

This section continues to be the most challenging part of the oral examination. Only a small percentage of candidates demonstrated competence in conversing easily and accurately. These candidates were spontaneous in their answers which tended to be extended and exhibited a wide range of vocabulary, idiom and sound grammatical structures. For these candidates, it was evident that much time had been spent in honing their conversational skills through constant drills and mock oral exercises.

Most candidates struggled with this conversation component of the examination. Very often they did not understand the question asked and even if they did, they were handicapped by their limited vocabulary and restricted grammatical competence. Requests that questions be repeated were frequent and very often no response was forthcoming.

The weaknesses revealed in this section were not dissimilar to the ones in Section I. Fundamental grammatical structures like verb tenses, agreement, *ser* and *estar*, *por* and *para*, object pronouns were frequently not known.

The following are some specific problems as they relate to some of the questions asked:

Daily Routine

¿Cómo vas a la escuela ...?

Some candidates proceeded to give a description of the school.

¿Qué vas a hacer cuando regreses a casa?

The word *regreses* was not widely known.

¿Qué hiciste ayer en la escuela?

Candidates did not recognize *hiciste* as coming from *hacer*.

School and Career

¿Qué profesión quieres seguir?

The indefinite article was often used before the profession.

Describe a tu profesor/a favorito/a.

Many candidates simply gave the name of the teacher.

Sports/Recreation

Some candidates were not familiar with the word 'Reggaeton'.

¿Qué piensas de los concursos de belleza?

Most candidates did not know *concursos de belleza*.

Shopping

¿Que te gusta comprar?

Very often the response was *Si*.

¿Cuál es tu talla ...?

The word *talla* was not known generally.

Recommendations

The weak performance of the candidates in this section was reflective of a lack of preparation. Opportunities must be created in the classroom for students to hear and to produce the language. It was apparent that for many candidates they had little or no practice in this type of testing. There is a need for mock oral examinations to be conducted with frequency particularly in the year of examination.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE[®] EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2012

SPANISH

GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Candidates' overall performance in the 2012 examination was similar to that of 2011. The performance on the three papers and on the profiles closely resembled what obtained in the previous year.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 — Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprised two sections, assessed candidates' ability to (i) listen to and understand a number of items in the target language and (ii) read and understand a number of written items. Both sections required candidates to demonstrate a mastery of essential elements of grammar as prescribed in the CSEC syllabus and to use vocabulary appropriate to this level of competence. The performance on this paper was comparable with that of previous years.

Paper 02 — Free Response

Section I (Question 1) — Directed Situations

In this section, candidates were presented with ten situations, in English, to which they were required to provide written responses in Spanish. The situations demanded that candidates recognize the function they were required to perform, using vocabulary and structures expected of candidates who have undergone five years of study. Candidates were assessed on the appropriateness of their responses and the quality of language used. Inappropriate responses were awarded no mark, even if the quality of language was perfect.

Situation (a)

You have been asked to nominate a class prefect. Give two reasons why you have nominated him/her. (Function: Giving reasons)

Suggested response: *Porque es organizada y responsable.*

Most candidates were able to respond appropriately. The following were noted:

- Errors in spelling especially of *inteligente, responsable, simpático, atractivo*.
- Candidates failed to change *y* to *e* before *inteligente*.
- Use of *está* instead of *es* with adjectives of personality.
- Absence of personal *a* — *he nominado *Andre*.
- Spelling of *porque* as *por qué*.
- Errors in subject/adjective agreement — *ella es muy simpático*.
- Use of *Yo* with *me gusta*.
- Incorrect placement of adjectives and omission of indefinite article — *Ella es *muy interesante persona*.

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure. Two asterisks (**) indicate an omission.*

Situation (b)

You have just finished reading a book. Write two things you like about this book. (Function: Expressing reason)

Suggested response: *Me gustó el libro porque es interesante y el escritor escribe muy bien.*

Many candidates responded appropriately. Noted were:

- Errors of spelling especially of *interesante* rendered frequently as *interestante/interessante*.
- *Bien* used instead of *bueno* and *bajo* used instead of *corto*.
- Use of adjectives inappropriate for a book which led to marks being awarded for a partial response, for example, *es simpático*.
- Candidates failed to change *y* to *e* before *interesante* or *informativo*.
- Many candidates did not know the word for “novel”, thus *libre* was used instead of *libro*.

Situation (c)

Your Mexican friend is impressed with the quality of your Spanish. Inform him/her in an email of two things that you do to improve your skills in Spanish. (Function: Providing information)

Suggested response: *Charlo por Internet y leo muchas revistas en español.*

This question posed little difficulty and was attempted by the majority of candidates. Noted were:

- Use of the infinitive with *yo* to denote the present tense — **yo leer/*yo ver*.
- Errors in the spelling of *leo* rendered frequently as *leyo*.
- Lack of agreement and incorrect placement of adjectives — *español libros/español cine*.
- Incorrect expression — *música de español*.
- Use of *me* instead of *yo* — *me estudio y practico mucho*.
- *La cuenta* used to mean “story”.
- Use of the preposition *a* after *práctico* to introduce an infinitive.
- Incorrect spelling of *español* and *programas*.
- Incorrect use of *a* with the following expressions — *escucho a música/miro a televisión*.
- Use of *más* to mean *mucho* — *leo más libros*.

Situation (d)

You are compiling a booklet with rules and regulations for your Spanish club. Write two rules which members must follow. (Function: Giving instructions)

Suggested response: *(Hay que) asistir a todas las reuniones y firmar el registro.*

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure. Two asterisks (**) indicate an omission.*

For many candidates this situation proved to be challenging and many made errors because of their inability to express commands. Most outstanding errors were:

- Use of the gerund for the imperative — *No hablando en inglés. No comiendo y bebiendo.*
- Use of positive form of the imperative to express negative commands — *No habla inglés.*
- Club was spelt as *clube/clubo.*
- Incorrect use of *deber de* + infinitive to mean “one must do something”.

Situation (e)

You were invited to a classmate’s party but unfortunately you cannot attend. Write an email to your classmate explaining this and giving a reason. (Function: Giving an explanation and a reason)

Suggested response: *Lo siento/No puedo asistir porque estoy enfermo.*

This suggested response proved to be a popular one, with most candidates scoring full marks. Some failed to explain and only gave a reason while other weaker candidates explained or apologized without giving a reason, thus scoring partial marks. Errors noted were:

- Incorrect spelling of *asistir/atender*. Omission of *a* after *asistir*.
- Use of *partido* for “party” instead of *fiesta*.
- Inappropriate use of *es* instead of *está* to express illness.
- Incorrect expression — *No puede* to mean “I can’t”.
- Noun/adjective agreement — *Mi mamá está enfermo.*
- Failure to place accents on *esta* and *mama*.
- Incorrect use of *lo siento* followed by *por/que*
- Incorrect use of *pero* to mean *porque*.

Situation (f)

You are unable to write an examination today. Write a note to your teacher seeking permission to make another arrangement to write the examination.

(Function: Seeking permission and making an arrangement)

Suggested response: *Profesor, ¿sera posible presentarme al examen el 30 de junio?*

Many candidates ignored the element of seeking permission and informed the teacher of another arrangement, thus obtaining partial marks. Others apologized and gave reasons for being unable to do the exam. Most common errors noted were:

- Inability to express examination — *examinación* was quite popular.

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- Incorrect spelling of *examen* as *examine*.
- Incorrect spelling of *profesor/profesora* and *acer* for *hacer*.
- Incorrect expressions — *¿puedo escribo el examen mañana por favor?/Yo escribe ...*
- Use of *pasado* to mean *próximo*.
- Incorrect use of *el/un* before *otro día*
- Use of *en* with days of the week.

Situation (g)

You are at a wedding that your friend could not attend. Send him/her a text message describing something that attracted your attention at the wedding.

(Function: Mentioning and describing something)

Suggested response: *El vestido de la novia es/era muy bonito.*

Many candidates were not able to score full marks because they mentioned what attracted their attention without describing it. For others, vocabulary seemed to be quite challenging as they could not express bride/groom or items of clothing correctly. The following errors were noted:

- Noun/adjective agreement — *el vestido es bonita/La torta es bonito.*
- Incorrect article — *los flores*. Spelling of *flores* as *floras*.
- Incorrect vocabulary — *vestida* to mean “dress”.
- Inability to express possession. Use of the English structure and *s* instead of using *de*.
- Incorrect spelling of *iglesia*.
- Incorrect use of *a* instead of ‘*en*’ — *a la boda*.

Situation (h)

You are planning to go out with your best friend and your mother is not at home. Write the note you leave for her letting her know of your intention and the reason for going out.

(Function: Expressing intention and reason)

Suggested response: *Voy/Fui/Iré al cine porque quiero ver esa película.*

Most candidates were able to state where they went, but did not give a reason and thus only scored partial marks. For the better candidates this situation posed little difficulty. Errors noted were:

- Inability to form the tenses of the verb *ir* correctly — *soy voy/soy irando/soy yendo/mi amigo y yo fuemos/Mi y mi amigo fueron*.
- Omission of *que* with *tener* to express “to have to do something”.
- Incorrect expression *a el* — *Voy a el cine con Joy...*

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- Incorrect article — *la cine/la hospital/el playa*
- Use of *lo* as a subject pronoun and *ella* as a possessive adjective — *porque lo es ella cumpleaños*.
- Omission of personal *a* with *visitar* and a person and the use of *a* with *visitar* and a place.
- Incorrect spelling of *centro comercial*.

Situation (i)

Someone has prepared you for your English examination and you did very well on it. Send a thank you note to him/her, mentioning one thing that was of help to you.

(Function: Expressing gratitude for something)

Suggested response: *Muchas gracias por la práctica con los ensayos.*

Many candidates were not able to score full marks because they left out the element of the one thing that was of help. Others were unable to express themselves in Spanish so English was used — the preterite tense. Other errors noted were:

- Incorrect spelling of *gracias*.
- Incorrect use of *para* instead of *por* after *gracias*.
- Incorrect use of the gerund instead of the infinitive to express “helping me” — *por ayudándome*.
- Incorrect placement of the object pronoun *me* with *ayudar* — *las palabras ayudenme/El vocabulario ayudame*.
- Incorrect use of the familiar form to address the teacher — *Señor, tu vocabulario me ayuda*.
- Omission of *a* after *ayudar* with an infinitive.

Situation (j)

You are having difficulty studying and have visited the school’s counsellor for advice. Write two things that he/she suggests that you do. (Function: Suggesting /advising)

Suggested response: *Debes tomar un descanso después de la escuela y tratar de estudiar con un amigo a veces.*

This situation proved to be a bit challenging for those candidates who were unable to express suggestions/make recommendations or give commands. Errors noted were:

- Incorrect use of *deber* followed by *de* with the infinitive.
- Incorrect formation of the commands — present tense was used for both positive and negative commands. Infinitives were also used here.
- Inability to produce a suggestion using the subjunctive – *Sugiero que estudias/comes ...*

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- Literal translations showing great influence of the mother tongue and lack of appropriate vocabulary —*Hacer a estudiar tiempo mesa/Tomar romper todos ahora.*

Further Comments and Recommendations

The situations were straightforward and did not leave much room for the candidates to misinterpret or stray from the point. Generally, the majority of candidates interpreted the questions correctly. The grammatical structures and vocabulary required were well within the reach of the majority of the candidates. However, candidates must pay closer attention to spelling, especially with regard to the use of accents. The omission of accents on key words resulted in a loss of marks. Some notable omissions were on the following — *mama, papa, mas, tu, esta, espanol, manana, senor, senorita*. Also, more attention needs to be paid to the use of accents with the verb tenses which differentiate between present and preterite tenses.

It is also important that candidates recognize that double “s”, “t”, “m” among others, are not used in Spanish. There were too many instances where well known words such as *clase, profesor, atender, comercial* were rendered incorrectly.

Some weaker candidates continued to translate very literally, thus showing their lack of knowledge of parts of speech and the way words function in a sentence, producing some responses which are practically unintelligible to a native speaker. Some examples follow:

- *Lo siento mucho pero *me no attendir course mi mama se no.*
- **No uno es beber aquí.*
- **Hacer un mesa de estudiar hora.*

Teachers should advise students to look for the distinct functions/notions required of them in the Directed Situations. Candidates should provide responses that address the full requirements of the question in order to access the full range of marks.

Section II (Question 2/Question 3) — Letter/Composition

This section assessed candidates’ ability to produce a piece of Spanish of about 130–150 words based on an outline given in English. Candidates had the choice of producing either a letter or a composition. The demands of this question were within the requirements laid out by the syllabus and in the range of ability expected for candidates at this level.

While both questions were based on experiences familiar to students, most candidates opted to attempt the letter. Both questions demanded the use of more than one tense as well as the use of high frequency vocabulary items, thus testing the ability of candidates to be creative in their expression while using language which they would have practised over the years. The content of most letters and essays was related to zoos, parks, the beach, birthday parties, mountains and botanical gardens.

Strengths of Candidates

The majority of candidates attempted the questions and interpreted them well. There were fewer candidates who provided no response or very limited responses, and this may be attributed to practice in writing using a variety of past topics.

Most of the candidates who attempted the letter provided appropriate expressions for the format, especially the expressions which required the subjunctive, although it was quite clear that some

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candidates had learnt set pieces by heart. Some examples of the very good introductory lines of the letter included:

- *Espero que tengas buena salud*
- *Espero que estés bien*
- *Gracias por la carta y el regalo que tú me mandaste*
- *Tanto tiempo que no te veo*
- *Estoy escribiendo para decirte...*

Many candidates displayed very creative approaches to the questions and used a good and wide range of vocabulary and idiom. Some examples of outstanding expression included:

- *Ir al grano*
- *Estar de luto*
- *Díos mediante*
- *En un dos por tres*
- *Prender el fuego*
- *Espero que la justicia tome medidas para resolver...*
- *Espero que la muerte de mi hermana no quede impune*
- *Convertir en trizas*
- *Acaparar mi atención*
- *Desaparecer de la faz de la tierra*
- *No pude dar crédito a los ojos*

Weaknesses of Candidates

There were many candidates who did not address all the points as required in the rubric. Also, some candidates disregarded the instructions for the number of words by writing too long or too short a response. Several candidates attempted to circumvent the maximum amount of words required by expressing their final thought(s) in an extremely long final sentence. On the other hand, the weaker candidates seemed to list words extensively, perhaps in an effort to reach the minimum number of words.

Although some candidates were commended for the superb openings and endings of the letter, the quality of Spanish degenerated as the writing continued. Some common errors in grammar noted included the following:

- *en* preceding *el* to express the date or prior to a day of the week; for example, *Era *en el 10 de marzo, en sábado*
- Inclusion of *el* to express date in isolation
- Incorrect use of the subjunctive or the failure to use it

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- *Gente, familia, toda la clase* accompanied by plural verbs/adjectives
- Pluralizing of words such as *gente, ropa*
- Failure to contract *a + el* and *de + el*
- Incorrect positioning of object pronouns
- Omission of the personal *a*
- Incorrect use of the verb *gustar* as seen in the preponderance of *yo gusto, yo guste/gustaba*
- *Ir en un viaje* instead of *ir de viaje*; for example, *Yo fui en un viaje*
- *A* instead of *en* when referring to location; for example, *estaba a la fiesta/a la playa/al centro comercial*
- Problems with *ser* and *estar* — *estaba un gran día, ese día estaba excelente, estuvo el ocho de febrero, estaba la mejor experiencia de mi vida*
- Incorrect adjective used with *estar*, thus causing an unintentional change in meaning
- Use of *por* and *para* — *fui para dos días, gracias para tu regalo*
- Use of *nos* as a prepositional pronoun; for example, *para nos*
- Failure to use the subjunctive; for example, *Espero que te diviertaste*
- Preterite vs Imperfect Tenses

Vocabulary errors included:

- *Aprender* used instead of *Enseñar*
- *Tocar* used instead of *Tomar*
- *Saber* used instead of *Conocer*
- *Emocionado* used instead of *Emocionante*
- *Muy* used instead of *Mucho*
- *Sorprendido* used instead of *Sorprendiente*
- *Poder* used instead of *Saber*
- *Divertido* used instead of *Diversión*
- *Amar* used instead of *Encantar* or *Gustar*
- *Mirar* used instead of *Cuidar a*
- *Parientes* used instead of *Padres*
- *Tener un buen tiempo* used instead of *Divertirse/disfrutar de*
- *Pagar atención* used instead of *prestar atención*
- *Tiempo* used instead of *Vez /Hora*

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In addition to the several errors in grammar and vocabulary, there was a prevalence of spelling errors. Examples included:

- *Apprender (aprender)*
- *Famila (familia)*
- *Quierdo/a (querido/a)*
- *Interestante (interesante)*
- *Classe (clase)*
- *Occurrir (ocurrir)*
- *Immediatamente (inmediatamente)*
- *Experencia (experiencia)*
- *Major (mayor)*
- *Luego (luego)*
- *Intelligente (inteligente)*

Further Comments and Recommendations

Inaccurate grammar and vocabulary continued to diminish the quality of work that candidates produced. Again teachers are urged to dedicate time to expose students to authentic material, to ensure that students acquire a solid command of the essential elements of grammar through constant practice, drills, and a variety of exercises like puzzles, games requiring grammar and vocabulary recognition. Students should be exposed to interesting topics and activities. This may mean that teachers will have to be innovative in their approach to teaching, and create their own resources or source them via the Internet and or “youtube”. There are useful websites that teachers/students could visit to aid in teaching and learning. These include www.quia.com.

Candidates are again reminded of the importance of observing the rubric. They must focus on the topic outline and address all the points given when developing the letter or composition.

Candidates should never underestimate the importance of accents. Failure to place an accent where required, may change the meaning of a word, and carries a penalty. Candidates could also enhance the quality of their work produced by using proper punctuation.

Candidates should desist from lifting sections from the comprehension passage and reproducing these as their response. There are penalties for plagiarism and this practice should be stopped. Also, candidates must discontinue the practice of using obscenities or offensive language in their responses.

Section III (Question 4/Question 5) — Contextual Announcement/Contextual Dialogue

This section required candidates to choose to complete either (i) a contextual announcement or (ii) a contextual dialogue. Cues were given in English for both options and candidates were to write between 80 and 100 words to complete their responses.

Both the contextual announcement and the contextual dialogue had similar levels of difficulty. However, the contextual announcement allowed candidates the freedom of expression whereas the contextual dialogue guided them to utilize certain vocabulary and structures.

It was observed that most candidates selected the contextual dialogue which presented a more realistic life experience for the candidate considering it dealt with a common school situation — being sick and unable to attend school and it offered cues in Spanish that could help guide responses.

Development of Ideas and Responses:

This was generally satisfactory. Some candidates showed creativity in their responses and there was a greater attempt to develop the cues into an announcement, rather than an advertisement/ poster presented in point form. There were, however, a few instances where the responses were isolated, or reflected a different topic which seemed to have been learnt previously.

The overall performance of the candidates fell within the categories; Fairly Good and Good. The majority who completed the contextual dialogue, displayed wider knowledge of the vocabulary and structures that were required to successfully complete this question. As such, the scores were higher than those of the contextual announcement.

Contextual Announcement

Candidates who selected the contextual announcement showed much less creativity in their responses than in previous years. This was primarily due to a lack of vocabulary. Some used *carta* for *ensayo*; *letras* or *wordos* for *palabras*; *competición*, *competencia*, *contesta* for *concurso*; *entrar* for *participar* and *la línea de muerto* for *límite de tiempo*. Fewer candidates attempted this question and there were generally no exceptionally good responses. There was poor use of correct tense and form, definite and indefinite articles, poor expression of time, poor knowledge of agreement and spelling of numbers, and weakness in writing the date.

Generally, there was improvement in the formation of commands/ the use of the Imperative. However, there was inconsistency in its correct register, and many candidates alternated between the familiar and polite; singular and plural. This difficulty was also noted when candidates attempted to use the correct form of address. For example, they started the announcement using the familiar form, *¿Quieres participar en una competencia?* but at the end the instructions were given in the polite form, *No lo pierdan* or *Vengan todos*.

Furthermore, candidates had difficulty finding the expressions to state the title of the essay and give information on the types of prizes to be won (Cues 2 and 5).

Other common grammatical errors included the following:

- *una competición de escribiendo* instead of *un concurso de escribir*
- *por estudiantes* instead of *para estudiantes*
- *el tópico* instead of *el tema*
- *estudiantes deben ser 16 años* instead of *los estudiantes deben tener 16 años*
- *submitir* or *dar en* instead of *entregar*
- *lugar* instead of *puesto*

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- *muy* instead of *más*
- *más que* instead of *más de*
- *ese/eso* instead of *que*
- *regalos/prizos/precios* instead of *premios*
- use of *primero* before a masculine singular noun
- *dos ciento palabras* instead of *doscientas palabras*
- *cinco cientos dólares* instead of *quinientos dólares*
- *un mil dólares* instead of *mil dólares*
- *attender* instead of *asistir*
- *por más información* instead of *para más información*
- *por el 3 Junio* instead of *para el 3 de junio*
- *todos estudiantes* instead of *todos los estudiantes*
- *interesantes* instead of *interesados*
- *Estudiantes deben* for *Los estudiantes deben*
- *Solo* instead of *sólo*
- *en el 16 de julio* instead of *el 16 de julio*

However, many candidates also displayed examples of very good writing/vocabulary. Some of these included:

- *basado en el siguiente tema*
- *los ganadores serán anunciados el doce de abril*
- *los que pueden participar son*
- *concurstantes*
- *alardear*
- *ganadores*

Contextual Dialogue

Candidates responded fairly well to the question since the level of vocabulary and expressions expected from the cues given were within their scope.

The stronger candidates correctly responded to most of the cues and the information provided was appropriate. The cue which was poorly used was the recommendation of the doctor. Many candidates also erred in expressing the nature of the illness as stomach pains — probably through their interpretation of *gripe* as a stomach ailment. In the case where Roberto expressed the wish that his friend would return to school soon, many candidates were unable to write a suitable response which would lead into Roberto's next statement.

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There was excellent usage of grammatical structure and vocabulary. Many candidates managed to respond appropriately to the first three questions although many of them misinterpreted the question, *¿Y qué te dijo?* They indicated what the doctor said to the mother — *No sé mi mamá me llevó.*

In many instances there was no agreement of adjectives/and or articles, and errors in general sentence structure. Some of these instances included *buena amigo* instead of *buen amigo*; *mucha agua/la agua*; *mi cabeza*; *tu es mi amigo mejor*; *Que es muy bien*. Again in this question, candidates used the polite form instead of the familiar form. For example, *¿Puede ayudarme?* Instead of *¿Puedes ayudarme?*

There was greater use of the subjunctive after expressions of future time and in other instances where it was needed. For example, *cuando regrese a la escuela*; *en cuanto que vuelva*; *me dio medicinas para que me mejorara*. There were more attempts at idiomatic use in this question, even though less than in previous years.

The use of idioms added to the improved performances of very good candidates. For example, *¡Qué Dios te escuche!*; *¡Qué guay!*; *¡Qué asco!*; *No aguanto más el dolor.*

The majority of good candidates displayed a greater mastery of the usage of the future and preterite tenses. For example, *Regresaré el lunes*; *estudiaré mis libros*; *el médico me dijo*; *¿Ellos ganaron?*; *Me caí*; *yo fui ayer*; *me lastimé la pierna*. However, candidates did experience difficulty when conjugating the irregular verbs in the future, for example, *hacer* and *tener* posed problems – *haceré* and *teneré* were very evident. In some instances candidates wrote *sabo* instead of *sé*.

There were also instances of misspellings (*bein, hugo, asiendo, imajino, cabesa, ejercicios, se* (I know), *trabajando* for *trabajo*). There was frequent omission of the reflexive pronoun *me* from *siento*. Accentuation and pronunciation were problematic and often neglected in even the better scripts.

The following are other examples of errors.

- *Mi duele* instead of *me duele*
- *Frio* instead of *resfriado*
- *Conocer* instead of *saber*
- *Que* instead of *eso*
- *Medico/medicacion /medicando* instead of *medicamento*
- *¿Qué?* instead of *¿Cómo?*

Candidates should be commended for using the following:

- *Entregar*
- *La tos*
- *Atrasarse*
- *La nariz tapada*
- *Use of body parts la garganta/ el pulmón*

Other examples of very good expressions used were

- *mi cara está hinchada*
- *no quiero ser la única retrasada en las tareas*
- *contar con*
- *en cuanto*
- *me dijo que me descansara*

Further Comments and Recommendations

- Teachers should place greater emphasis on the phonetics of the language at an earlier stage of language learning.
- Candidates should be encouraged to read the statements before and after each blank space of the dialogue before attempting to fill in a response. This approach will allow for a smooth flow of conversation.
- Candidates should be encouraged to write short, precise statements and or sentences and then gradually expand their ideas for explanatory and descriptive writing.
- Candidates should be encouraged to adhere to the rubric. Some stronger candidates have a tendency to exceed the limit.
- Teachers should revise many simple structures such as dates, numbers, time, reflexive verbs and stem-changing verbs.
- Greater effort should be made to stress the difference between the relative pronoun *que* and the demonstrative *esa/ese* etc.
- There is need for use of sentence / structure/substitution drills so candidates would become accustomed to using many expressions in context.
- Regular / Consistent vocabulary and spelling tests — these should be thematic/ contextual. Teachers should use games and puzzles and creative means to get students to increase their vocabulary.
- Reading/writing everyday announcements of activities and advertisements in the target language would help to develop necessary vocabulary in a number of areas which could provide useful practice for contextual announcements.
- Listening dialogue exercises with a missing conversation piece to be provided by students.
- Candidates need to practise more writing of contextual dialogues. These may also include suggested cues in English, to prompt the students' responses in Spanish.
- Students can create their own dialogues for role play which may be written based on cues given by the teacher, or on a general theme/ topic.
- Dialogue arrangement (from jumbled cues/ an entire jumbled dialogue). This not only facilitates critical thinking but also sequence and coherence of ideas.

Section IV (Question 6) — Reading Comprehension

This section assessed candidates' ability to read and comprehend a short passage in Spanish and respond in English to ten questions set on the passage. The marks allocated ranged from one to three. Generally this question was answered well by the majority of the candidates who were able to read and understand most areas of the passage. There also seemed to be a decrease in the number of candidates who ignored the instructions and answered in Spanish. Candidates are reminded that there is a penalty applied for doing this. The questions asked and the suggested responses are given below.

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Question (a)

How does the author describe her childhood?

There were varied interpretations.

Suggested response: The author describes her childhood as happy and full of worries.

Many candidates found difficulty understanding the word *inquietudes* and felt that it was referring to positive qualities like “peaceful”, and words such as “iniquities” and “inequities”.

Incorrect response: — happy and full of obstacles; happy and full of memories

Question (b)

How many siblings did the author have?

Suggested response: She has none as she is an only child.

Some candidates stated that Sonita had nine siblings. This might have been derived from the word *niñez*. Many candidates did not understand the concept of siblings, and included her mother and father and at times, Sonita herself, as siblings.

Incorrect response: The author had two siblings; her mother and father and Sonita had one sibling.

Question (c)

What did the author appreciate most about her parents?

Suggested response: She appreciated the many presents and the lessons they gave her.

Many candidates used everyday living experiences as a basis for answering this question; stating that the parents were caring, they gave her lots of attention. *Regalos* was frequently interpreted as rules (*reglas*).

While candidates may rely on experiences to help them in answering a question, they must not allow this to distort the context of the passage.

Incorrect response: She liked that they gave her a lot of presents, attention and care.

Question (d)

What did the author find difficult?

Suggested response: She found difficulty confronting her problems alone / by herself.

While many candidates understood the verb *confrontar*, some ignored what followed and stated that “she had difficulty confronting her parents”, “confronting boys”. Others took it to mean “confrontations”.

Incorrect response: She had difficulty confronting her parents alone.

Question (e)

With respect to the specific incident, where were her parents going?

Suggested response: They were going to a concert/theatre/to her university.

Many candidates did not specify that the parents were going to her university, but instead they gave the same response for question (f).

Incorrect response: They were going to Sonita's first year of university.

Question (f)

What was the purpose of the parents visit?

Suggested response: They were going to meet her friends and see her perform at a concert.

A frequent response was: They were going to see Sonita in her first year of university.

Incorrect response: The parents were going to visit friends and attend a concert. / They were going to take Sonita and her friends to a concert.

Question (g)

Where did the author meet her parents?

Suggested response: She met them at the entrance of the theatre.

Candidates had difficulty with the preposition *a*. *A la entrada*, "at the entrance", was noted as, by the entrance, outside the entrance, in front of the entrance.

Question (h)

What did the author notice when her parents arrived?

Suggested response: Her father was wearing mismatched shoes/ two different shoes.

The context of the verb *llevar* was misunderstood. Some interpreted it as, carrying, brought and took, as opposed to wearing + the article of clothing.

Question (i)

Explain how the author reacted after she saw her parents.

Suggested response: She was ashamed and she immediately took her father to the shopping centre to buy a new pair of shoes.

Though *avergonzada* was understood by the majority, some candidates still wrote "shocked", "surprised". This is an example of the lack of understanding of certain items of vocabulary in this question.

The use of the pronoun *lo* (*lo llevé*) proved to be a challenge for some candidates. It was interpreted to mean she took her parents, or, she and her friends went, and not, she took him. *Le* (*comprarle*) was not correctly identified as "to buy him" and was even identified as "the shoes".

Fuimos al centro comercial was interpreted to mean, she and her friends, she and her parents. Some candidates had difficulty recognizing the reference to her father.

Incorrect response: She was shocked and horrified and she and her friends went to the commercial centre to buy shoes.

Question (j)

What did the author realize from her experience?

Suggested response: The author realized that if she had a brother, he would have corrected/ fixed her father's mistake.

The imperfect subjunctive was not clearly identified by many candidates who interpreted *ojalá hubiera tenido* to mean she wanted to have or she needed to have

Candidates also had difficulty with vocabulary where this question was concerned. Examples of this include *por lo menos* and *darse cuenta de*, where *menos* indicated for them "a younger brother", and *cuenta* gave candidates the idea of a bill being paid.

Incorrect response: She realized her fathers' error. /She realized that her parents left her brother at home and it was his fault/She realized that her father was given the wrong bill.

Further Comments and Recommendations

- Candidates are urged to write as legibly and as grammatically correct as possible without using local expressions.
- Candidates should skip one line between responses to questions.
- Candidates are asked to identify each question as they answer.
- Teachers should pay special attention to skills that would assist the improvement of literacy. As these strategies are too many to mention here, teachers are strongly advised to visit the suggested websites below for a more detailed description for strategies such as: skimming, scanning, sequencing, deducing meaning in a context.

Suggested websites:

Guidelines for Reading Comprehension

<http://www.tutorvista.com/content/english/english+--ii/reading/reading-comprehension.php#>

Reading – Strategies

<http://www.tutorvista.com/content/english/english-i/reading/reading-strategies.php#>

Paper 03 — Oral Examination

The oral examination assessed the ability of candidates to: (i) produce appropriate responses in Spanish to a number of situations testing specific functions, (ii) read aloud a short passage in Spanish and (iii) carry on a conversation in the target language by responding to questions based on four out of six topics set out in the syllabus, namely, Home and Family, Daily Routine, Sports and Recreation and Travel.

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure. Two asterisks (**) indicate an omission.*

Section I – Responses to Situations/Instructions

This section required the candidates to produce appropriate responses in Spanish to situations/instructions described in English in keeping with the function specific to the situation. Performance on this section demonstrated a range of abilities among the candidates. Some candidates performed very well in this section producing responses which were not only appropriate but which were expressed correctly, exhibiting sound grammatical structures, a wide range of vocabulary and ample use of idioms. These candidates delivered their responses with spontaneity, self-confidence and a high degree of fluency.

At the other side of the performance spectrum, many candidates performed poorly in this section. Because of their general weakness in basic grammar and a very restricted vocabulary range, many candidates manifested long delays in producing responses many of which were characterized by short one or two-word answers. Candidates who fell in this category showed absolute ignorance of the usage of Spanish idioms. In many cases where the response was appropriate, the candidates lost marks for correctness of expression. The specific and more common grammatical deficiencies observed include the following:

- Failure to conjugate the verb when necessary.
— *Yo comprar un libro.*
- Conjugating the verb when the infinitive is needed.
— *Puedo trabajo mucho.*
- Negatives expressed by putting *no* after the verb.
— *Mi nombre es no Juan.*
- Improper use of object pronouns.
— *Por qué no llamaste me?*
- The use of *ser* and *estar*.
— *Mi mamá es enferma.*
- Failure to use the Subjunctive after *sugerir* and *recomendar*.
- Incorrect position of adjectives.
— *Usa la roja camisa.*
- Omission of the personal *a*
— *Puede dar mi hermano el celular.*

Vocabulary errors included:

Revolver instead of *volver*

Haber instead of *tener*

Decir instead of *hablar*

Borrar to mean “to borrow”

It should also be noted that some candidates responded to the situations by using reported speech instead of direct speech as required.

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure. Two asterisks (**) indicate an omission.*

Recommendations

Candidates appear not to be fully aware of the functions they need to know in order to respond to the situations presented. The syllabus is very clear as to the functions which candidates are expected to be able to use to perform well in this section. Teachers are encouraged to develop exercises to adequately afford students the opportunity to practise these functions orally. Practice in responding to situations orally must begin in the early stages in the teaching/learning process and teachers must avoid the tendency to wait until the examination year to expose students to this skill.

Section II - Reading Passages

This section assessed candidates' ability to read a passage in Spanish (approximately 125–130 words), demonstrating correct pronunciation of discrete sounds, good intonation and fluency. Candidates exhibited a wide range of competencies in this section ranging from excellent to dismally weak. Excellent readers exhibited a solid knowledge of the Spanish sound system, were well acquainted with the rules of stress and accentuation and read with admirable fluency.

Weaker candidates continue to be challenged by the reading component of the oral examination. It is indeed a cause for concern that after being exposed to the language for several years many candidates exhibit ignorance of the fundamentals of the Spanish sound system. Their pronunciation was faulty and anglicized in many cases. It was clear that many candidates completely failed to understand what the passages were about, thus producing very disjointed reading.

The following are some of the problems which candidates presented:

- Failure to distinguish between the vowels *i* and *e*. For example *decir* was pronounced as *dicir*, *categorias* was rendered as *catigorias*.
- Rendition of the aspirated *h* in words like *ha*, *hijo*, *hecho* and *habitantes*.
- The pronunciation of *g* continues to pose difficulties. Many candidates failed to differentiate between *g* before *a*, *o*, and *u* and *g* before *e* and *i*.
- Difficulty in rendering *gue* and *gui* in words like *tortuguitas* and *tortuguero*.
- General problems in placing the stress where it belongs on the word.
- The anglicizing of cognates such as *personalidad*, *extraordinario*, *professional*.
- Diphthongs were generally mispronounced. — *mueren*, *hueco*, *sean*

Recommendations

It is clear that the deficiencies in reading as outlined above stem from inadequate preparation and practice. Teachers must ensure that the sound system of the language is understood from very early in the learning process. Spanish must be constantly used in the classroom and opportunities must be created for students to produce the language as often as possible.

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure. Two asterisks (**) indicate an omission.*

Section III – Guided Conversation

This section of the oral examination assessed the ability of the candidates to respond to a number of questions based on four topics. This year the topics on which the candidates were tested were Home and Family, Daily Routine, Sports/Recreation and Travel. Candidates were asked four questions on each of the topics and were assessed on comprehension and spontaneity, fluency and expression.

This section of the oral examination continues to be the most challenging for candidates. Some candidates at the upper end conversed easily and with great accuracy. Their answers to the questions were spontaneous and tended to be extended, demonstrating a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical correctness. However, the vast majority of the candidates struggled with this section, handicapped by a limited vocabulary and poor knowledge of grammatical structures. The constant request by candidates to have the questions repeated was a clear indicator that there was limited comprehension of the questions asked.

The errors in grammar evident in this section were much the same as those mentioned in Section I and included:

- General weakness in the conjugation and appropriate usage of verbs.
- Lack of concord between noun/adjective and subject/verb
- Incorrect use of *ser* and *estar*, *por* and *para*
- Difficulty in using object pronouns

The following are some specific comments on each of the four topics:

Home and Family

While answers to the questions on this topic were generally forthcoming, they lacked detail. For example, when candidates were asked to describe a family member, some candidates were content to offer one short sentence using merely one adjective: *Mi madre es estricta*.

A better response to the same question could have been: *Mi hermana es paciente y tranquila. Tambien es traviesa y comica*.

The question *Dime algo que te gusta/no te gusta de tu familia* was very often misunderstood by candidates who thought that the question was asking about someone.

Daily Routine

Most of the questions on this topic were easily understood. Questions 7 and 8 posed some difficulty. For question 7, *¿Cómo te preparas para la semana escolar?*, many candidates expounded on what they did in the morning before leaving home for school.

For question 8, *¿Dirías que tu horario diario es difícil o no?*, there was some difficulty understanding what this question meant. Even for those who understood, it was difficult for them to expand on the reason (*¿Por qué/Por qué no?*)

Sports and Recreation

It was apparent here that many candidates did not pay attention to the demands of the questions.

¿Conoces a un deportista famoso? very often received the response *Mi deportista favorito es* or *No tengo un deportista favorito.*

In response to the question *¿Cuándo sales con tus amigos?* many candidates did not pay attention to the interrogative *Cuándo?* and proceeded to give answers like *Vamos al cine.* However, there were some commendable answers to Question 8, *¿Por qué es importante que los jóvenes participen en actividades recreacionales?* Some of the answers included: *Necesitan tener un cuerpo saludable/Para no sufrir el estrés.*

Travel

Many candidates found the questions on this topic to be most challenging largely because of a lack of vocabulary. They were not familiar with the verb *Quisieras* in Question 2. In addition, Question 4, *¿Qué clase de transporte se usa para viajar al extranjero?* proved problematic as shown in answers like *Primera clase* and *Yo viajo en economía.*

Recommendations

Teachers must ensure that the communicative approach to language be adopted in the classroom. As far as possible use must be made of the target language in the classroom so that students will become comfortable hearing Spanish around them. Extensive use of Spanish in the classroom will not only strengthen students' listening and speaking skills, but will also increase their confidence when communicating in Spanish.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION**

JANUARY 2013

**SPANISH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2013 January examination was written by 463 candidates compared with 531 in January 2012. Sixty-seven per cent of candidates achieved acceptable grades (Grades I–III) compared with 69 per cent in January 2012. Candidates’ performance on Papers 01 was similar to what obtained in January 2012, performance on Paper 03 in 2013 was improved, while performance on Paper 02 declined.

Teachers are encouraged to continue their strategies to get their students to perform to the best of their ability. Such strategies include providing opportunities to help them strengthen their writing skills, continuing the practice of doing oral exercises (especially interacting with native speakers) and doing reading comprehension.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprised two sections, assessed the ability of candidates to listen to and understand a number of aural items in the target language and to read and understand a number of written items. Both sections required candidates to have sufficient mastery of essential grammar and vocabulary. Performance in 2013 was comparable to that of 2012.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section I (Question 1) – Directed Situations

In this section, candidates were presented with ten situations for which they were required to provide written responses in Spanish. The situations demanded that candidates recognize the function they were required to perform, using vocabulary and structures expected of candidates who have undergone five years of study. Candidates were assessed on the appropriateness of their responses and the quality of language used. Inappropriate responses were awarded no mark, even if the quality of language was perfect.

Demands of the Section

The questions suited the level of the examination so the majority of candidates made a fairly good attempt at answering them. The questions demanded vocabulary and structures of an everyday nature that should be well within the grasp of candidates.

Candidates’ Performance

Candidates performed creditably on this section. The majority of candidates achieved passing grades on this section. Poor performance resulted mainly from candidates’ failure to focus on the elements required by the question, usage of incorrect grammar and lack of vocabulary.

Candidates’ Strengths

Some candidates answered concisely and fulfilled the requirements of the question. These candidates provided generally correct responses, despite a few errors.

Candidates' Weaknesses

General weakness was noted in areas of grammar especially in agreement of subject and verb, position and agreement of adjectives with nouns, spelling and vocabulary.

The following are examples of errors in grammar:

- *y interesante* frequently used instead of *e interesante*
- *Porque* rendered as *por que*
- *Asistir* used instead of *ayudar*
- *Mirar* used for *buscar*
- *Simpático* used to describe a poem
- *En sábado* rather than *el sábado*

Errors in vocabulary included the following:

- *Poema* rendered as *carta/nota/composición/cartita*
- *Sale* used for *venta*
- *Dineros* for *pesos*
- *Promiso* for *prometo*
- *Bajo* for *corto*
- *Las ropas* for *la ropa*
- *Examinación* for *examen*

Errors in spelling included:

- *Viente* for *veinte*
- *Trienta* for *treinta*
- *Dollares* for *dólares*
- *Professor* for *profesor*
- *Pedí* for *perdí*
- *Felizidades* for *felicidades*
- *Libre* for *libro*

Comments on Individual Situations

Possible answers for each situation and errors which occurred in each situation are given below.

Situation (a)

Write an email to your cousin in which you promise to do two things for him/her.
(Function: making a promise)

Suggested response: *Prometo comprarte un libro y llevarte al cine.*

This question was fairly well done. However, there were problems with grammatical structures as well as vocabulary. *Promiso/promesa* were used for *prometo* and the verb was often followed by the preposition *a*. There were also errors with *tu/te/ti* and their usage. *Tu* was often substituted for *te*. *Llavar* was often used for *lavar* and *ropa* was pluralized.

Situation (b)

Your teacher is taking up a new job overseas. Write him/her a farewell note and express your good wishes. (Function: expressing farewell and good wishes)

Suggested response: *Adiós señora, que le vaya bien.*

There were multiple errors in this question. Some of these were:

- Misspelling of *profesor* (spelt with *ss*)
- Misuse of the familiar/polite form — *tú* often used for *usted* to address the teacher
- Use of *trabajado/trabajador* instead of *trabajo*. Candidates did not know the word for ‘job’.

Candidates frequently failed to supply both demands of the question, often giving one reason instead of two. However, when they did, they stuck to stock phrases like *Vaya con Dios/Buena suerte/Que le vaya bien*.

Situation (c)

Your friend is having a party next Sunday and seeks your assistance with the preparations. Respond by email, indicating what you can do to assist and when. (Function: offering assistance.)

Suggested response: *Voy a llevar bebidas el domingo temprano.*

In this question, candidates often forgot to mention the time. When they did, they frequently wrote *en sábado* rather than *el sábado*. In addition, the preposition *a* was almost always forgotten after *ayudar*. The verb *asistir* was often used and misspelt as *assistir*.

Use of ‘*me*’ instead of ‘*yo*’ — *me traigo las bebidas*.

Situation (d)

You send a message to your friend congratulating him/her on a special accomplishment. Write the message mentioning the accomplishment. (Function: congratulating)

Suggested response: *Felicitaciones por haber ganado el maratón.*

Many candidates misspelt *felicitaciones/felicidades/congratulaciones*. They often used *muy bien* to express congratulations. The present participle was often used after *en* for example, *en ganando* to express on winning. When responses referred to passing an exam the word *examine/examinación* was often used instead of *examen*.

Situation (e)

You received a poem from a friend. Write him/her an email giving two reasons why you like the poem. (Function: giving reason)

Suggested response: *El poema es bien escrito y es romántico.*

Here it was evident that many candidates lacked knowledge of vocabulary, even with the word *poema*, and when they did use the correct word the gender was often incorrect. In addition, they frequently used inappropriate adjectives such as *simpático y cariñoso* to describe the poem.

Other errors were:

- *Y interesante* for *e interesante*
- Use of *lo* with *me gusta* and *yo me gusta* to say I like
- *Bajo* instead of *corto* to describe the poem
- Use of *carta/cartita/composición* for *poema*
- *Por que* instead of *porque*

Situation (f)

Your parents did not allow you to go to an event. Send an email to your friend telling him why you were not allowed and how you feel about it. (Function: giving information and expressing feelings)

Suggested response: *Recibí malas notas y estoy triste.*

This item was one of the more challenging for candidates. The past tense was hardly used and they often expressed how they felt physically, rather than how they felt about not being allowed to go to the event. The use of *ser* rather than *estar* with emotions was a recurring error, and candidates often used ‘*soy*’ to translate I am going to ... (*yo soy a ...*)

Situation (g)

You lost a book that you borrowed from your teacher. Write a note of apology and state what you will do about the situation. (Function: apologizing and expressing intention)

Suggested response: *Lo siento señor, voy a comprarle otro.*

Errors in this item included the use of *lo siento/siento que* and the article often used before *otro*. Candidates avoided using the future tense but instead used the present tense to say what they will do. Candidates also incorrectly used the familiar *tú/te/ti* instead of the formal *comprarle* or *para Vd.*, when referring to the teacher.

Situation (h)

You are desperately in need of help for the school concert. Write a message to your best friend requesting assistance with one aspect of the concert. (Function: making a request)

Suggested response: *Anita, ayúdame con las bebidas por favor.*

Several candidates responded in the first person to this item. The word *concierto* was often misspelt and the word *ayudar* was used without the preposition. There was also inconsistency in the use of the formal and informal *usted/tú* and *su/tu*.

Situation (i)

You have an item for sale and wish to inform your school mates about it. Write the message you put on the school's notice board, including the price. (Function: giving information)

Suggested response: *Vendo computadora por trescientos dólares.*

Lack of appropriate vocabulary was evident in this item. Several expressions/words were used for *sale*: *sale/por vender/por vende*. Candidates made errors in expressing the cost/price. They often used *para* instead of *por*, misspelling of numbers, *viente/trienta* even the word for dollars proved problematic as several versions were supplied — *dollars/dolores/dineros*.

Situation (j)

Your father will not be picking you up after school. Write the note he leaves on your bedroom door explaining why. (Function: giving information and a reason)

Suggested response: *No puedo buscarte hoy Felipe porque no tengo carro.*

Candidates were able to use *recoger* and *buscar* in this situation, even though *recoger* was misspelt as *recojer*. Weaker candidates wrote *venir para* instead of *venir por* to express 'to come for'.

The expression 'to have to' was simply translated by *tener*. *Que* was often omitted. **Tengo asistir a una reunión*.

Other errors included *viajar* being used inappropriately, for example, *Tienes que* viajar a casa*.

In the case when the reason was that the car was not working, some candidates used the verb *trabajar* to express this instead of *funcionar*.

Recommendations

- Candidates need to follow the rubric which emphasizes that only one sentence is required for each answer. They need to provide the elements required in each response in a single sentence.
- Before attempting the question, candidates need to focus on the function required in their response before attempting to write their response.
- The need to produce the actual note, email or message must be stressed so that candidates will not attempt to translate the question or produce reported speech, or introduce the responses by restating the situation.
- Teachers should advise students to look for the distinct functions/notions required from them in the Directed Situations. Students should provide responses that address the full requirements of the question in order to access the full range of marks.
- Candidates should use the tense appropriate to the situation.

***An asterisk (*) indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

Further Comments and Recommendations

The situations were straightforward and did not leave much room for candidates to misinterpret or stray from the point. Generally, the majority of candidates interpreted the questions correctly. The grammatical structures and vocabulary required were well within the reach of the majority of the candidates. However, candidates must pay closer attention to spelling, especially with regard to the use of accents. The omission of accents on key words resulted in a loss of marks. Some notable omissions were on the following — *mama, papa, mas, tu, esta, espanol, manana, senior, seniorita*

Attention also needs to be paid to accents being used with the verb tenses which differentiate between present and preterite tenses.

It is also important that candidates recognize that double ‘s’, ‘t’, ‘m’ among others, are not used in Spanish. There were too many instances where well-known words like *profesor, asistir, comercial* were rendered incorrectly.

Section II (Question 2/Question 3) - Letter/Composition

This section presents the candidates with two options: a letter and a composition, each marked out of 30. In addition to assessing candidates’ production of written prose based on the parameters outlined in the syllabus, the section also assesses candidates’ ability to write coherently and clearly, using adequate vocabulary, idiom and grammatical structure.

Letter — Demands of the Section

This question was in keeping with the demands of the syllabus. The majority of candidates who chose the letter attempted to answer fully. Candidates were tested on appropriate tenses outlined in the syllabus.

Candidates’ Performance

Performance ranged from excellent to limited. Few candidates were in the excellent category. The majority of scores fell within the categories of good and moderate. At least three of the elements of the question were attempted by most.

Candidates’ Strengths

The majority of candidates followed the given rubric for this question. Introductory and closing phrases were well learnt. Less competent candidates were able to express like and dislike as well as to describe simply using the verb *ser*. The more competent candidates used a wide range of vocabulary and idiom but some expressed themselves in simple, yet accurate language.

Examples of Good Performance

Some use of idioms:

¡Qué ameno!

En un abrir y cerrar de los ojos

Te echo de menos

Good structure and vocabulary:

Los fondos que recaudaron
El concierto fue/ tuvo lugar
Me encantó cuando

Appropriate use of tenses:

Van a usar el dinero
Fui al concierto
Perdona que no te haya escrito
Estoy escribiendo para decir

Appropriate use of the subjunctive:

Espero que estés bien

Candidates' Weaknesses with Examples of Errors

Some candidates seemed not to be competent in the adequate use of tenses. Others did not follow an appropriate sequence of tenses.

- *Mi familia y yo ir*
- *Mi familia y yo fuemos*
- *El dinero es voy a*
- *Habían muchas personas*
- *Cuando llegábamos al concierto (instead of llegamos)*

The date was written incorrectly:

- *El 16th de abril*. The word 'el' is not required if the date is written in isolation.
- *El seis de noviembre*. Numbers must be written in figures for dates.

Some literal translations were seen:

- *Te perdi*
- *Muy mucho*
- *Con no*

Incorrect rendition of 'querido'

- *Quierdo, quirda, Dear*

Errors with 'ser' and 'estar':

- *Yo era muy contento en el concierto*
- *Fue enojado*
- *La fiesta estuvo bien*

Errors in agreement:

- *Todos las personas*
- *Los gentes*
- *Este carta*

Incorrect translation of 'at' a place:

- *El concierto fue al parque*

Incorrect translation of ‘about’:

- *Quiero decirte a eso del concierto*

Incorrect use or lack of object pronoun:

- *Te escribo para informarle*
- *El dinero se usará*

Incorrect use of ‘gustar’:

- *Yo me gusta*
- *Las personas les gustan*

Limited vocabulary:

- *Cantador* — singer
- *El artiste* — artist
- *El concertó/La concierto* — concert

Incorrect use of preposition:

- *Mi papá decidió a*

Inability to use the correct expression for ‘proceeds’:

- *El dinero que recibimos sería va a para beneficio*

Composition — Demands of the Section

This question was in keeping with the demands of the syllabus and was within the scope of candidates’ ability. The majority of candidates who chose this question attempted to answer fully.

Candidates’ Performance

Few candidates were in the excellent category. The majority of scores fell within the bands of good and moderate. All four of the elements of the question were attempted by most candidates.

Candidates’ Strengths

The majority of candidates followed the given rubric for this question. Some attempts were made to use idioms in order to enhance the essay. Most candidates were able to express time and location.

Examples of Good Performance

Good use of expressions:

- *¡Qué guay!*
- *¡Qué alivio!*
- *¡Qué desastre!*
- *¡Qué gracioso!*

Other good expressions included:

- *El viaje fue extremadamente fascinante*
- *Conocer a gente nueva*
- *En primer lugar*
- *En segundo lugar*

Correct use of tenses:

- *Mi familia y yo decidimos ir*
- *En el futuro ahorraremos*

Candidates' Weaknesses with Examples of Errors

Tenses were rendered incorrectly.

- *Mis padres dijieron*
- *Mis padres volviste*
- *Las vacaciones empezaron*

Negative construction was rendered incorrectly.

- *Fue no limpio*

Omission or incorrect use of pronouns:

- *Yo llevé bien con él*
- *Yo me gusta*
- *Mi hermanas le gustan*
- *Mi y mi familia*
- *Comportaron mal*

Omission or wrong placement of prepositions:

- *Mi papá decidió a*
- *Ir en un vacación*
- *Salimos ir a Puerto Rico*

Clumsy expression:

- *Agosto vacaciones*

Incorrect translation of difficulty:

- *Difficulté*

Recommendations for Questions 2 and 3

- Candidates need to widen their vocabulary base through exposure to written and aural material.
- Candidates need to recognize that the vocabulary and structures learnt can be used in various contexts. For example the 'difficulty' needed in the composition could be an accident, fire, lost property, late flight, illness
- Meaningful and effective practice of questions is needed.
- Learning can be made more interesting through the use of songs, games or movement.

Section III (Question 4/Question 5) – Contextual Announcement/Contextual Dialogue

This section required candidates to choose to write either a contextual announcement or complete a contextual dialogue. Cues in English were provided for both options.

Demands of the Section

The contextual announcement and the contextual dialogue were in keeping with the information outlined in the syllabus and therefore within the scope of candidates' ability. However, most candidates opted to answer the contextual dialogue.

Candidates' Performance on the Contextual Announcement

Candidates' Strengths

Most candidates observed the rubric of the question and attempted to address all of the cues. There was a very good manifestation of sound grammatical competence and good vocabulary, albeit by a small number of candidates. Examples of good usage of language included:

- *Debe tener buenas notas*
- *Por lo menos dos años de experiencia*
- *Tendrá que doblar la ropa*
- *Puede enviar mensajes a*
- *Para información adicional*
- *Favor de contactar a*
- *Visite nuestro sitio web*
- *Para solicitar el trabajo escriba a*

Candidates' Weaknesses

Many candidates who attempted this question failed to show a solid command of grammar and knowledge of relevant vocabulary. Examples of errors included:

Errors in Grammar:

- Omission of the personal *a* (*llame Juan*)
- Inaccurate use of the imperative (*vienes, llamas*)
- Incorrect use of *gustar* (*Nosotros tu gustariamos, gustanlos*)
- Inaccurate use of *necesitar* (*es necesito tener, tu necesita una trabaja*)
- Incorect definite/indefinite articles (*ua trabaja*)
- Lack of proficiency using the impersonal *se*
- Inaccurate use of possessives (*Carlos edificio*)
- *Y inteligente*
- The use of *por* and *para*

Errors in vocabulary:

- *Mirar* instead of *buscar* (*somos mirando para*)
- *Qualificaciones*
- *Poste* for *puesto*

There was also evidence of a lack of vocabulary to describe personal qualities or personality traits. Candidates also seemed to have some vocabulary but were challenged by the correct spelling. Evidence of this was seen in the following:

- *Interessante, interestante* for *interesante*
- *Matieras* for *materias*
- *Responsibilidad* for *responsabilidad*
- *Geographia* for *Geografía*
- *Mathematicas* for *matemáticas*

Other examples of weakness in language proficiency included:

- *Ella voy a recibir un salario*
- *Job vacancia*

Candidates' Performance on the Contextual Dialogue

Candidates' Strengths

Most candidates observed the rubric and attempted to address all the cues. Even when there were challenges to interpretation and comprehension, candidates were able to respond adequately to the demands of the question. Examples of good usage of language included:

- *Pero estarán aquí*
- *Sí, han llegado*
- *Me visitan de vez en cuando*
- *Es la primera vez que me visitan*
- *Normalmente me visitan cada año*
- *Los conocí en los Estados Unidos*
- *Fui a participar en el torneo de fútbol*
- *No hay alojamiento para todos*
- *Es importante que sea*

Candidates' Weaknesses

Although most candidates attempted this question, there was considerable difficulty with the responses that they provided to the questions *¿Dónde y cuándo los conciste?* and *¿Qué estuviste haciendo allá ese verano?* Most candidates wrote either an inappropriate response or simply repeated the question. Candidates did not seem to understand either the verb *conocer* or recognize the preterite form of the verb. Similarly, they did not recognize *estuviste* as the preterite form of the verb *estar*. Other errors specific to grammar included:

- Use of *ser* and *estar* (*yo soy bien*)
- Gender of nouns (*la problema, el dificultad*)
- Incorrect position of object pronouns or failure to use the object pronouns (*ellos visitan me, ellos tu visitan*).

Vocabulary was also an area of concern, as candidates seemed to be unaware of certain expressions like *a menudo* and *gracias*, which many of them were unable to spell.

Recommendations

- Teachers should continue to provide the necessary exposure to these two question types and give students constant practice in developing the contextual announcement and dialogue.
- Students should be exposed to basic vocabulary and expressions related to different types of announcements/advertisements. Some examples of pertinent phrases are: *se busca, se solicita, se vende, se requiere, se ofrece, se presenta, aviso, anuncio, atención, peligro, cuidado, dificultad, favor de, para más información.*
- Students should be engaged in grammar exercises where they are assisted in recognizing their errors as well as that of their peers, and attempt to make the necessary corrections. Special attention must be given to the areas of weakness outlined in this report as well as in those of previous reports so that the repeated errors may be noted and addressed. (Examples: the personal 'a', *ser* and *estar*, subject/verb agreement, noun/adjective agreement, the possessives, expressing possession using 'de').

Section IV (Question 6) – Reading Comprehension

This question assessed candidates' ability to read a passage in Spanish and then demonstrate comprehension skills by responding in English to questions posed in English based on the passage read.

Demands of the Question

This passage was set at a level appropriate for candidates. There were no structures that should have impeded a candidate's ability to read and comprehend. Candidates, however, seemed more comfortable responding to questions that did not require too much information.

Candidates' Performance

Overall, candidates responded satisfactorily to the questions asked and adhered to the rubric of the section. There were not many instances of the use of 'Spanglish', nor of responses in Spanish. However, there were some candidates who did not comprehend the passage, and so their responses bore little likeness to what was presented for their comprehension. Generally, most candidates understood the subject matter.

Candidates' Strengths

Questions (a), (b) and (c) were handled very well. Questions (e) and (h) were handled fairly satisfactorily. These questions required candidates to respond to 'what' and 'how' questions that did not demand advanced thought processes.

Candidates' Weaknesses

Questions (d), (f), (g), (i) and (j) presented some challenges for candidates. These were the questions that probed deeper at the candidates' comprehension skills, calling for them to offer explanations, describe a series of events or draw inferences.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question (a): How is Mr Rojas described?

Suggested response: Mr Rojas was a strong smoker.

Incorrect response: Mr Rojas was a stubborn person.

The responses to this question were quite good except where candidates did not recognize *fuerte* or *fumador*.

Question (b): On what does Mr Rojas spend most of his salary?

Suggested response: Mr Rojas spends most of his salary on cigarettes.

Incorrect response: Mr Rojas spends his salary on clothes.

There were very few incorrect responses. Some candidates substituted ‘cigars’ for ‘cigarettes’.

Question (c): Why does Mr Rojas look forward to his relatives’ visit?

Suggested response: They brought him gifts and cigarettes.

Incorrect response: They were smokers like him and he could smoke with them.

Of the first three questions, this was the most challenging to candidates who saw ‘watches’ and not ‘gifts’, confusing *regalos* with *relojes*.

Question (d): State THREE things that Mr Rojas’ wife complains about.

Suggested response: She complains that their clothes, their furniture and their hair smell of smoke.

Incorrect response: She complains that the horse and Mr Rojas smells.

This question required three things to be named from a possible five. Most candidates understood this. However, some did not grasp the idea that the house and its contents smelled of smoke. There were a few candidates who confused *cabello* with *caballo* and thought that a horse was involved. Full marks would have required the candidates to not only list the correct items, but to be specific about the consequences of his smoking — that everything absorbed the smoke and that she was fed up of hearing the same resolution to stop smoking every year.

Question (e): What is the New Year’s resolution Mr Rojas always makes?

Suggested response: He always says that he would quit smoking.

Incorrect response: He always says that he would smoke less/not so much.

Most candidates offered the correct response. Some however, lost marks for qualifying the answer by adding that ‘he would smoke less’.

Question (f): Why did Mr Rojas put his hand out of the window while he was driving?

Suggested response: He put his hand out of the window to throw away the cigarette (butt).

Incorrect response: He put his hand out so that the car would not smell of smoke.

Too many candidates did not get the correct response here. The word *colillo* seemed not to be known, and so some thought it was a ‘flame’ or ‘ashes’. Others thought that it was to avoid having his wife complain as they thought that she also complained about the smell of smoke in the car. Also *echar* was seen as ‘to drop’ or ‘to put out’ and not ‘to throw out’.

Question (g): What happened immediately after Mr Rojas put his hand out of the window?

Suggested response: The wind blew the cigarette back into the car.

Incorrect response: He lost his hand and had an accident.

While candidates understood that in the series of events he lost control of the car and almost had an accident, they did not understand what happened immediately after — the cigarette was blown back into the car.

Question (h): How did Mrs Rojas react?

Suggested response: She was surprised.

Incorrect response: She responded in a shocking manner.

Although the majority of candidates knew what her reaction was, there were a few who, based on how they answered the previous question, thought that she was scared. Moreover, some candidates confused their pronouns and responded using ‘He’ instead of ‘She’.

Question (i): Why did Mrs Rojas react in this way?

Suggested response: She thought that he had quit smoking but he lied.

Incorrect response: She reacted this way because it was an unexpected incident.

Many candidates lost marks for not realizing that it was his lying to her that caused her reaction. Some candidates, following on from previous answers, thought that she was in the car with him and that they had almost died.

Question (j): What lessons did Mr Rojas learn?

Suggested response: Mr Rojas learned that he should quit smoking because it could cost him his life.

Incorrect response: Mr Rojas learned that he should listen to his wife.

Except for the candidates who did not understand the passage, others gained some marks for recognizing that he realized that he should stop smoking, and what is more, that he could endanger himself.

Further Comments and Recommendations

Candidates are to be commended for adhering to the rubric. However, answering in a complete sentence does not mean that the candidate should supply answers that are not in passage. Neither should they provide answers that are required for other questions (for example, ‘He was a strong smoker who spent his salary on cigarettes’). In practising Reading Comprehension, teachers ought to encourage students to be as precise and concise as possible in their responses, especially where only one mark is awarded. It is hoped that teachers and future candidates will take note of the following recommendations:

- It cannot be stressed how important vocabulary is to comprehension. While going to websites and downloading puzzles and activities is recommended, there is a more accessible way — the cellphone. As technologically aware as young people seem to be, the extent to which the cellphone can be used has not been explored. In the Games application, there is the possibility of downloading Hangman in Spanish. It would serve the dual purpose of expanding vocabulary and general knowledge.

- In the July report, some websites were recommended for improving comprehension skills. Here are some additional ones:
 - spanish4teachers.org
 - teacher.scholastic.com
 - printablereadinggames.com

Paper 03 – Oral Examination

The oral examination assessed the ability of candidates to: (i) respond appropriately in Spanish to a number of situations testing specific functions, (ii) read aloud a short passage in Spanish and (iii) converse in Spanish by responding to questions based on four out of six topics set out in the syllabus, namely, Home and Family, School and Career, Sports and Recreation, and Travel.

Section I – Responses to Situations/Instructions

This section required candidates to produce appropriate responses in Spanish to situations/instructions described in English in keeping with the function specific to the situation.

Candidates' responses demonstrated a range of abilities. Those candidates who performed very well in this section produced responses which were not only appropriate but which were expressed correctly, demonstrating sound, grammatical structures, an ample range of vocabulary and the liberal use of idioms. These candidates delivered their responses without undue hesitation, in fact with spontaneity and self-confidence.

Many candidates performed poorly in this section. In many instances the weaknesses in grammar and vocabulary resulted in long delays in producing the responses, many of which were characterized by short one-word answers. Candidates who fell into this category showed an inability to use idiomatic expressions.

The more common grammatical errors included the following:

- Subject — verb agreement
* *Nosotros no tienen computadores*
- Noun — adjective agreement
* *me gusta el color roja*
- Incorrect verb tense
* *La semana que viene fui al cine.*
- *Ser* and *Estar*
* *Era enfermo*
- Conjugating the verb when the infinitive is needed.
* *Prometo tengo cuidado.*

***An asterisk (*) indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.**

Vocabulary errors included:

Regla instead of *regalo*
Bueno instead of *bien*
Soupa instead of *sopa*
Compentencion instead of *competencia*
Promeso instead of *prometo*
Regresar instead of *devolver*
Golpar instead of *golpear*

Recommendations

Students and teachers need to acquaint themselves with the functions as listed in the syllabus. These functions must be practised in a variety of situations/instructions with students being encouraged to respond orally. A few functions should be practised each term from the lower forms and right up to the examination year.

Section II – Reading Passages

In this section, candidates were assessed on their ability to read a passage (125–130 words). Candidates were expected to correctly pronounce the discrete sounds of the language, to exhibit good intonation and read in a fluent manner. Performance on this section ranged from very good to weak. Candidates who performed very well demonstrated a good knowledge of the Spanish sound system, showed ability in applying the rules of accentuation and stress and were fluent in their delivery. Those in this superior category were obviously well prepared through adequate practice in reading aloud.

Unfortunately, for far too many candidates the reading component of the oral examination proved to be a daunting challenge. It was indeed disheartening to hear so many candidates struggle with Spanish pronunciation to which they should have been exposed for at least five years. Production of the discrete sounds of the language, particularly the vowel sounds, was a painful experience for these lower performing candidates. It was obvious that they understood little or nothing of what they were reading.

Among the pronunciation errors which were presented were the following:

- The pronunciation of the ‘g’ sound in Spanish. Weaker candidates displayed no distinction between hard and soft ‘g’ in words like *Generos, ingeniero, indigenas*.
- The pronunciation of the silent letter ‘h’.
Herencias, hombres, humanidades, hace
- The mispronunciation of the ‘ll’.
Amarilla, bullicio, allí
- The anglicizing of cognates.
Responsabilidades, profesión, carnaval
- A disregard for the placement of stress particularly in words with accents.
Quizás, despertó, mapalé, domésticos

- Words that were difficult for candidates included *hogareño*, *obstaculizaron*, *arraigado*, *representativo*.

Recommendations

Pronunciation, intonation and fluency can only be mastered by constantly practising the reading aloud of the language. As often as possible the teacher must use Spanish in the classroom so that students will be exposed to the auditory nuances of the language. Where possible, students should be exposed to native speakers or recorded material of an authentic nature.

Section III – Guided Conversation

This section of the oral examination assessed the ability of candidates to respond to a number of questions based on four topics specified in the syllabus. For this examination the topics chosen were Home and Family, School and Career, Sports and Recreation, and Travel. Candidates were asked four questions on each topic and were assessed using the criteria of comprehension and spontaneity, fluency and correctness of expression.

This section continues to be the most challenging part of the oral examination. Only a small percentage of candidates demonstrated competence in conversing easily and accurately. Such candidates were spontaneous in their answers which tended to be extended and exhibited a wide range of vocabulary, idiom and sound grammatical structures. It was evident that these candidates had spent much time honing their conversational skills through constant drills and mock oral exercises.

Most candidates struggled with this conversation component of the examination. Very often they did not understand the question asked and even if they did, they were handicapped by their limited vocabulary and restricted grammatical competence. It was obvious that many candidates memorized certain responses which they gave regardless of the question asked. Requests that questions be repeated were frequent and very often no response was forthcoming.

The weaknesses revealed in this section were not dissimilar to those in Section I. Fundamental grammatical structures like verb tenses, agreement, *ser* and *estar*, *por* and *para* and object pronouns were frequently not known.

The following are some specific problems as they relate to some of the questions asked.

Home and Family

¿Quiénes viven en tu casa?

Some candidates proceeded to give a description of where their house is located.

¿Te entiendes bien con tu mamá?

Many candidates did not understand the word *entenderse*.

Common answers were: *Sí, mi mamá entiende bien.*

School and Career

Cuando no recibes buenas notas, ¿qué haces para mejorarlas?

Many candidates started their responses with *hace or hago*.

¿Por qué es importante estudiar idiomas extranjeros?

Many candidates did not have the vocabulary to answer this question.

Sports/Recreation

Some candidates were not familiar with the word 'Reggaeton'.

¿Qué piensas de los concursos de belleza?

Most candidates did not know 'concursos de belleza'.

Travel

¿Cuál es el medio de transporte que usas más?

Many candidates did not understand the word *medio*. Common responses were *Tenemos carros, autobuses...*

¿Qué se puede hacer para evitar los accidentes de tráfico?

Very few candidates were able to give a good response to this question. Most of them were unable to provide an appropriate answer.

Recommendations

The weak performance of candidates was reflective of a lack of preparation for this section. Opportunities must be created in the classroom for students to hear and to produce the language. It was apparent that for many candidates they had little or no practice in this type of testing. There is a need for mock oral examinations to be conducted with frequency particularly in the year of examination.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2013

**SPANISH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Candidates' overall performance in the 2013 examination was almost a replica of that of 2012. Performance on the three papers closely resembled what obtained in 2012.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 — Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprised two sections, assessed candidates' ability to (i) listen to and understand a number of items in the target language and (ii) read and understand a number of written items. Both sections required candidates to demonstrate mastery of essential elements of grammar as prescribed in the CSEC syllabus and to use vocabulary appropriate to this level of competence. The performance on this paper was comparable with that of previous years.

Paper 02 — Free Response

Section 1 (Question 1) — Directed Situations

In this section candidates were presented with ten situations, in English, to which they were required to provide written responses in Spanish. The candidates were expected to recognize the function they were required to perform and hence use the target language being assessed to provide responses that were both appropriate and grammatically correct. Inappropriate responses were awarded no mark even if the quality of language was perfect.

Situation (a)

You will be arriving late for an activity. Send a message to the organizer giving two reasons for your lateness. (Function: Giving reasons)

Suggested response: *Me desperté tarde y hay mucho tráfico.*

The responses to this situation were generally appropriate with the suggested response being one that was popularly used by candidates. The following areas of weakness were noted.

- Some words which were commonly misspelled were *tráfico*, *embotellamiento*, *organizador*, *asistir*.
- Candidates had problems expressing 'to be late' and many used *estar tarde*. *Llegar tarde* and *estar atrasado* are useful expressions that could have been used.
- Some answers were literal translations, for example, *Mi coche no está trabajando* or *Mi coche es no funciona* instead of *Mi coche no funciona*.
- Incorrect verb for 'to be' was used, for example, a number of candidates wrote **Mi mamá es enferma*.
- Incorrect prepositions were used, for example, several candidates used the preposition *a* instead of *en* to express being in a location — *Estoy *a la escuela*.

Situation (b)

Your friend has invited you to her party and has asked for a contribution. Write her a note in which you accept the invitation and indicate your contribution. (Function: Accepting invitation and indicating contribution)

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure. Two asterisks (**) indicate an omission.*

Suggested response: *Iré (Voy a ir) y llevaré una torta.*

The responses to this situation showed that many candidates had difficulties expressing acceptance of an invitation and also in stating their contribution. Some candidates acknowledged receipt of the invitation but did not indicate acceptance. The following are other areas of weakness that were noted.

- These words were misspelt by a number of candidates: *acepto, dólares, invitación, contribución, viniendo, ayudar.*
- Insertion of an accent on the possessive adjective *tu*, for example, *Gracias por tú invitación.* (It must be noted that the accent may change the meaning of a word, and candidates must pay attention to accuracy in spelling.)
- *Contribuir* was rendered as *contributar.*
- *Dinero* was incorrectly used for *dólares, bebes and beberes* for *bebidas, diré* for *daré* and *tomar* for *llevar.*
- Some candidates were unable to correctly express ‘birthday party’, omitting *de*, as seen in the response *Yo vendré a tu fiesta* cumpleaños.*
- *Gracias para* was used instead of *gracias por.*
- *Estoy* iriendo* was used instead of *ir a + infinitive* to express intention.
- *Ayudar a + infinitive* posed a challenge.

Situation (c)

Your sister overseas asks for your opinion on an activity held in your community. Respond to her expressing two things that you liked or disliked about the activity. (Function: Expressing things liked/disliked)

Suggested response: *Los jóvenes bailaron muy bien en las calles y la música fue buena.*

Candidates failed to recognize the importance of the past tense in responding to this situation. They, in many cases, also misinterpreted the ‘or’ in the question and indicated one thing that they liked and one that they disliked instead of stating two things they liked or two things they disliked. Other areas of weakness included:

- Commonly misspelt words — *comunidad, fiesta, aburrido, bailaron, parquet.*
- *Quiero* used for *me gusta.*
- *Tener* used for *hay.*
- Present tense used instead of the preterite tense and the imperfect tense used instead of the preterite tense.
- The verb *gustar* rendered in the singular form instead of plural form; *yo* was used with *gustar.*
- Incorrect articles used with nouns, for example, *el actividad* instead of *la actividad.*

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure. Two asterisks (**) indicate an omission.*

- Incorrect verb for ‘to be’ used, as well as incorrect use of *bien* and *bueno*; for example, *estar bueno* was used instead of *estar bien* and *ser bien* was used instead of *ser bueno*.

Situation (d)

Your cousin plans to meet you after school. Write the message you send indicating a place and time. (Function: Indicating place and time)

Suggested response: *Podemos reunirnos cerca de la iglesia a las tres de la tarde.*

Candidates’ responses were generally appropriate for this situation. However, some candidates failed to score full marks because they only mentioned one of the two elements required. Other areas of weaknesses included:

- Words incorrectly spelled — *biblioteca, comercial, cine, supermercado, restaurant*.
- *Conocer* used instead of *encontrar*
- **Soy voy* used to express ‘I am going’.
- *Son las* used instead of *a las* to indicate the time that the cousins should meet — *Son las tres* instead of *a las tres*.
- *En la tarde/por la tarde* used with the time instead of *de la tarde* — *A las tres en la tarde*.
- *A* used instead of *en* — *Estaré *a la biblioteca*.

Situation (e)

You are unable to complete a group project because you are missing some information. Write the email you send to a member of the group requesting the information. (Function: Requesting information)

Suggested response: *Envíame la introducción del proyecto.*

Many candidates were awarded partial marks for their response to this situation as they did not indicate the specific information required for the project. Areas of weakness in the responses rendered included:

- Words which were commonly misspelt — *proyecto, información, necesito, deberes*.
- *Informática* rendered for *información*.
- *Evitar* used for *enviar*.
- Declarative statements used instead of the interrogatives, for example, *Puedo enviar la información, por favor* instead of *¿Puedes enviarme la información, por favor?*
- Incorrect form of the command used, for example, the plural form was sometimes rendered for the singular form.
- Incorrect preposition used, for example, *de* was commonly used instead of *sobre* — *información de la cultura* instead of *información sobre la cultura*.

Situation (f)

Your teacher asks you to write the two qualities you admire most about your best friend. Write the response you send to him/her. (Function: Describing)

Suggested response: *Él/ella es amable y generoso/a.*

The responses were generally appropriate but a number of candidates misinterpreted the word ‘quality’ for physical characteristics, hence they rendered responses such as *Ella es alta y bonita*. Other areas of weakness noted were:

- Incorrect spelling of *inteligente, cualidades, mejor, interesante, simpático, amable*.
- *Ella* used for *su* and vice versa.
- *Quiero* substituted for *me gusta*.
- Incorrect position of adjectives — *mi amigo mejor* instead of *mi mejor amigo, mi favorita amiga* instead *mi amiga favorita*.
- Incorrect verb for ‘to be’ used — *Estar* used when the verb *ser* was required for the descriptions given.
- Incorrect form of the adjectives given — *Mi amigo es *generosa y cómico*.
- Recognizing the need for spelling change when *y* is used before a word beginning with ‘*i*’ or ‘*hi*’, for example, *simpático e inteligente*.
- Incorrect form of verb was used, for example, *Dos cualidades* es*

Situation (g)

Your friend was not at school today. Send an email informing him/her of two things that happened during the Spanish class. (Function: Providing information)

Suggested response: *Ana y Juan pelearon en la clase y Susana rompió una ventana.*

Most candidates did not use the preterite tense to report on the things that took place in the class. Other areas of weakness included:

- Incorrect spelling of the words *clase, profesor, leyó, fuimos, tarea, deberes*.
- *Dijo* being used for *dio*.
- *Examinación* and *exam* being used for *examen*.
- Articles being omitted; for example, when talking about the teacher — *la señora/el señor, la profesora, el profesor*.
- Incorrect use of articles, for example, *el clase* instead of *la clase*.
- Incorrect agreement between subject and verb, for example, *Nosotros *aprendieron el tiempo imperfecto en la clase*.

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure. Two asterisks (**) indicate an omission.*

- Incorrect conjugation of the preterite tense, for example, *aprendé* instead of *aprendí*.
- Omission of Personal *a*.

Situation (h)

Your class is planning an after-school activity. Write a note to the principal seeking permission. (Function: Seeking permission for an activity)

Suggested response: *Señor(a), ¿podemos vender helado después de las clases?/¿Nos da permiso para usar la cancha/la actividad?*

The responses to this situation were generally appropriate. The problem that some candidates had was in recognizing that the polite/formal register was expected. Other areas of weakness included:

- Common spelling errors of *permiso*, *podemos*, *después*.
- Incorrect vocabulary, for example, *La película* was used for *el cine*; *antes* and *apres* were used for *después*; *permisión* was used instead of *permiso*.
- Incorrect form of verb being used with *permitir*, *poder*.
- Incorrect preposition being used with the infinitive; for example, *dar permiso a tener* was used instead of *dar permiso para tener*.

Situation (i)

Your friend cannot go out with you tonight. Write the email you receive in which he/she apologizes and suggests an alternative arrangement. (Function: Apology and suggestion)

Suggested response: *Lo siento, ¿por qué no salimos el viernes próximo?*

The responses were generally appropriate. Some candidates, however, failed to include both elements requested in the situation. Other areas of weakness noted included:

- Misspelling of *semana*, *mañana*, *commercial*.
- Incorrect use of vocabulary; for example, *la película* was used instead of *el cine*; *anoche* was used for *esta noche*; *preguntar* was used for *pedir*; *examinación*, *exam* were rendered for *examen*.
- Non-usage of the subjunctive after the verbs *sugerir* and *querer*.

Situation (j)

Your mother leaves you a note giving two instructions that she would like you to follow. Write the note you receive. (Function: Giving instructions)

Suggested response: *Limpia tu dormitorio y lava los platos.*

Candidates' responses were generally appropriate. Notable weaknesses included:

- Incorrect spelling of *dormitorio*, *lavar*, *fregar*.
- Incorrect vocabulary; *limpiar* was incorrectly used for *lavar*.
- Incorrect formation of commands.

- Familiar and polite commands used in the same sentence to address the same person. This inconsistency in register was seen in responses like * *lava su ropa y limpie tu dormitorio*.
- Infinitives were used to give commands.

Further Comments and Recommendations

The situations were straightforward and required the use of vocabulary and grammatical structures which candidates at this level should be able to master. Some candidates misinterpreted some of the situations or did not pay attention to details and as a result they omitted important information. It is therefore important that teachers work with students to help them to improve on the interpretations of the situations and to recognize significant information that is requested.

Candidates also need to understand that the responses to the situations do not always call for the use of the present tense. A range of situations can be presented requiring various tenses and moods. Teachers need to prepare students to look out for the tenses required and to continue to advise them to try to identify the function/notion required for each situation so that they can give responses that are appropriate and adequate.

Teachers should give students as much practice as possible at writing the responses to the situations so that they can improve on their spelling and writing skills in general. In addition, writing practice should help candidates to understand the important role of the accents to differentiate words that are otherwise identically spelt; for example, *mamá* and *mama*, *papá* and *papa*, *sí* and *si*, *tú* and *tu*, *mí* and *mi*, *más* and *mas*, and in the case of the preterite tense and the present tense, *bailó* and *bailo* or the preterite tense and the subjunctive — *hablé* and *hable*. Candidates also need to understand that the absence of the tilde over the *n* is treated as a spelling error and they are penalized for writing words such as *manana*, *senor*, *senorita*, and *senora*.

Section II (Question 2/Question 3) — Letter/Composition

This section assessed candidates' ability to produce a piece of Spanish of 130–150 words based on an outline given in English. Candidates were expected to address all of the four cues given, using a wide range of idioms, vocabulary and accurate grammar. The demands of this question were within the requirements laid out in the syllabus and in the range of ability expected of candidates at this level.

Letter

Write a letter to your Puerto Rican friend telling him/her of a gift you received but which you do not like. Be sure to include

- who gave you the gift and for what occasion
- a description of the gift
- why you do not like the gift and what you plan to do with it
- what you would have preferred to receive and why.

Candidates' Performance

In the letter, candidates' performance ranged from very limited to excellent. Performance in the composition ranged from very limited to very good. The majority of candidates, even those who clearly had grammar and vocabulary deficiencies, was able to produce a response. In fact, the issue of faulty grammar and to a lesser extent vocabulary, posed the major problem for too many candidates. The letter was the preferred option chosen by a large majority of candidates. In their responses, most candidates addressed all four cues given but some were able to cover only two out of four, within the requested length (130–150 words), thereby suffering a loss of what might have been a better score on that question. Also, a few candidates answered in English and not Spanish.

Strengths of Candidates

- Some candidates successfully produced both the present subjunctive and past subjunctive, for example, *Espero que estés bien; hubiera preferido; me gustaría si fuera de otro color; si me hubiera dado.*
- Candidates also made good use of idioms, for example, *si yo llevo esta blusa yo andaré de boca en boca porque no me queda bien; yo seré la comidilla del barrio.* There was also correct use of *darse cuenta*.
- Most candidates were familiar with basic vocabulary for clothes, family, descriptive adjectives, salutations, opening and closing sentences — *Querido/a, espero que te encuentres bien, saludos a tu familia.*

Weaknesses of Candidates

- Too many candidates seemed not to have mastered the differences between *ser* and *estar* — *el regalo *estaba un vestido, ¿Cómo *es tu familia? la blusa *estaba verde; soy muy bien.*
- The verb *gustar* continues to pose problems for many candidates — *yo me gusta el reloj; me gusta* las flores; yo me lo gusta; ella gusta lo; me lo gusta el reloj.*
- Incorrect vocabulary and failure to use correct word in appropriate context — a gift was rendered as *un presente* or *una regla* or *un gifto*; to return (to give back) was translated as *regresar* or *volver* instead of *devolver*. *Escribe *mi espalda pronto* was given for ‘write me back soon’; **derecha espalda* for ‘write back’. The pluralizing of ‘*ropa*’ (clothes) was frequently done by candidates.
- Absence of agreement between noun and adjective and incorrect use of adjectives; for example, *zapatos amarillo; flores rojos; pantalones blanco; un vestido alto* (instead of ‘*largo*’); *pantalones altos; el vestido antiguo* (instead of *antiguado*).
- Irregular verbs posed a challenge, for example, *Estaron en la fiesta, mi tío me *dijo un regalo; *obteni muchos regalos.* *Prefería* was often used instead of *preferiría*. There was frequent use of accents with the preterite of *ver* (*vió*) and *dar* (*dió*).

The Composition

Write a composition for your Spanish class on an examination that you failed. Be sure to include

- i. details of the examination (what type it was, duration and when it was held)
- ii. how you prepared for the examination
- iii. how both you and your parents reacted on receiving the results
- iv. what you will do differently the next time.

Strengths of Candidates

Some candidates made good use of idioms and relevant vocabulary such as *a lo hecho pecho* (must make the best of it now); *al ver los resultados, lloré a lágrimas vivas* (I cried uncontrollably); *se me da bien en...* (I do well in...). There was good use of *raspar un examen* (to scrape through an exam); *no aprobar un examen*. There was also generally good use of the preterite tense.

Weaknesses of Candidates

Errors were similar to those that were seen in the letter. Incorrect vocabulary was frequent, for example, ‘*examinacion*’ for ‘*examen*’; *los resultados/las resultas* for ‘*los resultados*’; *las/el/la mathematicas* instead of ‘*las matemáticas*’. In addition, the use of ‘*en*’ before days/dates was widespread — *en lunes*; *en el 20 de mayo*. The future tense of *hacer* was frequently rendered as *yo haré*.

Further Comments and Recommendations

The quality of candidates’ work continues to be affected because of grammatical inaccuracies, incorrect spelling and vocabulary deficiencies. Teachers are again urged to give students practice in preparation for the examination. Extensive writing must be encouraged. Teachers may source teaching and learning resources via the Internet, and engage students in exciting activities which stimulate their interest in the language and their desire to dedicate quality time to master the vocabulary and grammar which would strengthen their productive skills in the target language.

Teachers should also create programmes that allow students to see Spanish as ‘something real’ rather than just an academic subject. For example, teachers can set up a pen pal system; simulate activities that create an environment where students are immersed in the target language (a restaurant setting, a supermarket, a travel agency, a shopping mall, and, if possible, visit a Spanish-speaking country).

Section III (Question 4/Question 5) — Contextual Announcement/Contextual Dialogue

This section required candidates to choose (i) either to write a contextual announcement or (ii) to complete a contextual dialogue. Cues were given in English for both options and candidates were to use between 80 and 100 words to complete their responses.

Both the contextual announcement and the contextual dialogue had similar levels of difficulty. However, the contextual announcement allowed candidates the freedom of expression whereas the contextual dialogue guided them to utilize certain vocabulary and structures.

Contextual Announcement

A computer manufacturing company has made a monetary contribution to your Spanish Club’s fund-raising for a particular activity. Write the announcement which will be read at the next meeting of the Spanish Club to inform members of this gesture.

Responses to ALL of the cues listed below MUST be included in the announcement.

- i. Name of the company and the amount contributed
- ii. The activity for which the funds are being raised
- iii. The specific aspect of the activity to which the funds will be applied
- iv. An expression of gratitude to the company
- v. A hope for continued support from the company.

Development of Ideas and Responses

Ideas and responses were generally satisfactory. Candidates made a good attempt at responding to the cues fully rather than writing them in point form or creating an advertisement/poster. However, some candidates wrote the announcement as though inviting members to a meeting rather than the announcement to be delivered at the meeting.

Performance by the better candidates fell within the categories of good and fairly good. Candidates demonstrated knowledge of relevant vocabulary for both questions and were therefore able to respond adequately to the cues. Candidates generally performed satisfactorily on this question but the level of accuracy of grammar and vocabulary compromised what would have otherwise been good announcements. Nevertheless, candidates were able to use a wide range of vocabulary items to express what would be bought with the funds.

Below are some of the common errors made by candidates.

Words frequently misspelt:

- *Companía* instead of *compañía*
- *Dollar* instead of *dólar*
- *Cubo/clube* instead of *club*
- *Fundos* instead of *fondos*
- *Suporto* instead of *apoyo*
- *Encontrar personas nuevas* instead of *conocer*
- *Dineros* instead of *dinero* or used with quantities, for example, *quinientos dineros*
- *Escuche* instead of *entendí/oí*
- *Decir un grande gracias* instead of *dar muchas gracias*
- *Dos cien* instead of *doscientos*

Grammatical errors:

- Irregular preterite form and general spelling of *contribuir*
- Preterite of *escoger*
- Omission of past participle after the form of *haber*
- Use of *tener* to create the perfect tense
- *Nosotros* used instead of *nuestro* to denote possession
- Incorrect use of *por* and *para*
- Feminine article with word such as *idioma* and *programa*
- Omission of the personal *a*
- Incorrect endings for gerund — *iendo* used with *ar* verbs
- *Apoyar* not readily known
- Omitted/misplaced accents in forming the preterite/future tenses
- *Me encanta(n)* and *me gusta(n)*
- *Con no* for *sin*
- *El club español*
- Failure to use *gerund* after *continuar*
- Future tense not handled well, for example, *teneremos* for *tendremos*
- Passive not well handled, for example, *el dinero usará por el viaje*
- *Dinero* used for *dólares*
- After using *compañía* many were unsure which verb form to use (third person singular or plural)
- *Gustar* incorrectly used — *Nos gustaríamos dar las gracias*
- Omission of *de* after *un millón*

Examples of Good Performance

Candidates were able to find a variety of activities to which their club would allocate funds. These included concerts, charities and school trips.

The better announcements included expressions such as *recaudar*, *darse cuenta de*, *los hambrientos*, *llevarse a cabo*, *sumamente*, *meter una solicitud*, *minusválido*, *Deseamos que nos siga ayudando en el futuro*.

Examples of Poor Performance

- *El día de deportes* en el 8 de Julio.*
- **Nos gustaríamos decir gracias.*
- *El programa* es estudiando sobre el clima.*
- *El programa* ayudará con nuestro concierto.*

Contextual Dialogue

You are on an exchange student programme in a Spanish-speaking country and are having a conversation with Mr Ramirez, at whose house you are staying.

Responses to ALL of the cues listed below MUST be included in the dialogue.

- i. Information on the exchange programme
- ii. How you were selected
- iii. Why you chose that particular country
- iv. What the experience is like/has been like for you
- v. How you will benefit from the exchange visit.

The majority of candidates attempted this question. The better candidates handled the cues well. Most candidates adhered to the rubric and generally attempted to create responses to all of the cues. However, many candidates did not recognize key elements in the guided conversation, which if recognized, would have created a more fluid response. For example, the question which elicits a response about how you were chosen requires a response to suggest some type of choice which flows into “*la tuya*”, but was ignored. In addition, a response was needed to satisfy why you chose the particular country but also needed a more detailed answer than “because I always wanted to visit it”. Most candidates completely missed the required response for the fourth utterance and partially missed the fifth response. The final response by Mr Ramirez was also missed and candidates failed to provide a reasonable statement that would naturally lead to Mr Ramirez’s response. Some candidates named Brazil, Italy, Jamaica, New York, Barbados. They failed to choose a Spanish-speaking country as required.

The better candidates managed to provide good responses to the fourth statement expressing why he/she was selected and also took into consideration the cue which followed. Some candidates indicated that they had written *ensayos*, *poemas*, but should have chosen a feminine noun to coincide with the statement *la tuya fue la mejor*. Many of them were able to vary their answers for the next two responses rather than being repetitious. However, some were unable to give more than one reason for choosing the country to lead up to the statement *los visitantes tienen los mismos intereses*.

Common errors made by candidates are given below.

Vocabulary items:

- *Interestante*, instead of *interesante*
- Difficulty expressing “Spanish-speaking country and/or people”
- Use of *de* when referring to ‘the’
- Use of *a* instead of *en* — *Un profesor a la escuela me seleccionó*
- Use of *país* as a plural form
- *Estudiante* instead of *estudiante*
- *Selectar* instead of *seleccionar*
- *Grado* for *nota*
- *Muy* interchanged with *mucho*
- Spelling of *aprender* with a double consonant (*aprender*)
- *Porque* used instead of *a causa de*

An asterisk (*) indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure. Two asterisks (**) indicate an omission.

- *Graciar* used instead of *agradecer*
- *Si* used instead of *sí*
- *Mi* used instead of *mi*
- *Simpático* used to describe countries and places of interest

Grammatical errors:

- Confusion between use of adjective *bueno* vs. adverb *bien*
- Use of *y* before *inteligente*
- Incorrect position of adjectives in relation to nouns
- Poor expression of passive voice *fue seleccionado/yo seleccionaron*
- Demonstrative adjectives and gender agreement, for example, *esta país*
- Use of possessive *mi* in place of subject pronoun *yo*
- *Estoy feliz estar aquí* — *de* was often omitted
- *Gustar* used with plural subjects, for example, *Me gusta los museos y las iglesias*

Example of Good Performance

Me chiflan los rascacielos.

Example of Poor Performance

Me seleccionaron porque fue la mejor alumna.

Further Comments

- Poor punctuation in both questions led to ambiguity and confusion and, at times, unnecessary loss of marks. Several anglicized words were used, for example, *el principal (director)*. The perpetual problems presented themselves such as *ser vs. estar*, subject and verb agreement, contractions of *de+el*, *a+el*, *si* and *sí*; *me*, *mi*, *mí*, the repeated misspelling of numbers, use of *ese* instead of *que* to express *that*, the missing accent from *mas*.
- Candidates also used many literal translations which led to many syntactical and grammatical mistakes, for example, *estará ponerla a buen usa*.
- Candidates realized the need for the use of the subjunctive but were not able to use it properly.
- Stronger candidates showed very good use of grammatical structures such as the subjunctive and past tense, while many weaker candidates did not adhere to word limit.

Recommendations for Teachers

- Teachers are encouraged to address the repeated recommendation that frequent practice of both types of exam questions is necessary.
- Teachers should also encourage more reading in the target language and language fundamentals should be taught more.
- Students should be given more exposure to all aspects of the possible demands of the questions.
- Students should also be directed to adhere to the rules/rubric even in classroom practice and to read the questions carefully.

- Advice should be given about the importance of legible handwriting which can lead to less confusion and avoid misinterpretation on the part of the examiner.
- Both questions should be integrated into the lower school syllabus so students become familiar with these structures. These can be incorporated into junior school topics such as food, or classroom objects.

Section IV (Question 6) — Reading Comprehension

This question assessed candidates' ability to read a passage in Spanish and then demonstrate comprehension skills by responding in English to questions posed in English based on the passage. This passage was suitable for candidates at this level. There were not any structures that should have impeded candidates' ability to read and comprehend. The vocabulary should have been learned in the first three years of studying Spanish. Candidates, however, seemed more comfortable responding to questions that did not require too much information.

Candidates responded satisfactorily to the questions asked and adhered to the rubric of the question. Many of them steered clear of responding wholly in Spanish. There were, however, candidates who responded in 'Spanglish'. In addition, there were some candidates who did not comprehend the passage, and so their responses bore little likeness to what was presented for their comprehension. However, most candidates understood the subject matter.

Candidates' Strengths

Questions (a), (b), (c), (d), (g), and (i) were handled well by candidates. Candidates were required to respond to straightforward 'what' and 'why' questions that did not demand advanced thought processes.

Candidates' Weaknesses

Questions (e), (f), (h) and (j) presented some challenges for candidates. These were the questions that probed deeper at candidates' comprehension skills, calling for them to offer explanations in (h) and (j). Surprisingly, Questions (e) and (f), which were identifying or listing questions, highlighted not only candidates' problems with vocabulary, but a weakness in understanding the importance of articles, prepositions and a recognition of Spanish names given to persons. Examples of these are presented below.

Question (a)

Why was Doña Carmen angry when Arturo came home?

Suggested response: *Doña Carmen was angry because Arturo was wet.*

Incorrect response: She was angry because he went out and came home late.

Most responses to this were correct, except where candidates did not know the meaning of *mojado*.

Question (b)

What was Arturo holding?

Suggested response: *Arturo was holding his swimming trunks and a wet towel.*

Incorrect response: He was holding a bath dress and a humid towel OR He was holding toilet paper.

Some candidates viewed *vestido de baño* literally and thought *toalla* referred to toilet paper. Most candidates responded correctly. Some candidates got partial marks because they failed to mention the two items or failed to indicate in their response that the towel was wet.

Question (c)

What had Arturo's mother warned him against?

Suggested response: *She warned him not to go swimming.*

Incorrect response: She warned him against getting sick.

Some candidates linked this question to Question (d) and ignored *que no fuera a nadir*. Most candidates responded appropriately.

Question (d)

Why did she give him this warning?

Suggested response: *She gave him this warning because he was sick.*

Incorrect response: She gave him this warning because she was sick.

Those candidates who responded appropriately to Question (c) also provided a correct response to this question. However, some could not tell whether it was Carmen or Arturo who was sick.

Question (e)

List THREE activities in which Arturo engaged when he went out with his friends.

Suggested response: *He ran on the beach, played and floated with his friends in the water.*

Incorrect response: He ran at the side of the beach, floated in the river and played in the sand.

This was challenging for some candidates. Where 'mar' was taken for river, there was confusion about 'en' and whether it meant 'in', 'on', 'at', 'along'. *Chapotear* seemed not to be known, and was used sometimes as 'chopped' or 'chatted'.

Question (f)

Which persons did Arturo think would confirm that he was speaking the truth?

Suggested response: *He thought that his friends, the lifeguard and the ice cream vendor would confirm that he was speaking the truth.*

Incorrect response: The safeguards, lollypop vendors and his friends Ademas, Podian and Salvavidas.

While many candidates were able to correctly identify the persons, there were too many who did not recognize *salvavidas* as 'lifeguard', or did not know the meaning of *helado* and who saw *el* as being plural. The need to familiarize candidates with male and female first names in Spanish is again stressed.

Question (g)

What did Arturo's mother suspect?

Suggested response: *She suspected that he was not speaking the truth.*

Incorrect response: That Arturo was seasick.

Generally, this question was answered satisfactorily. However, some candidates were influenced by Question (d) where Arturo was warned against swimming because he was sick, and so for this part of the question they wrote that Carmen suspected he was sick.

Question (h)

Explain why Arturo thought he had not done anything wrong.

Suggested response: *Although he went into the water, he did not swim.*

Incorrect response: Arturo thought he had done nothing wrong because he was with his friends.

Many candidates missed the fact that he should not have gone into the water at all, but that he did.

Question (i)

What symptoms did Arturo display that night?

Suggested response: *He coughed all night, had fever and a headache.*

Incorrect response: He tossed and turned all night, had a pain in his head and changed colour.

The majority of candidates answered this correctly. Those who did not know *tosió* called upon their own experiences, and so this became ‘tossed and turned’.

Question (j)

Explain how this experience could influence Arturo’s behaviour in the future.

Suggested response: *He would learn to listen to his mother because disobeying could lead to serious consequences.*

Incorrect response: He would continue to be bad and when he has children he wouldn’t know what to tell them.

As usual, the question that calls for an inference poses a challenge. While candidates understood that Arturo needed to listen to his mother, they did not seem to understand that disobedience has consequences.

Further Comments and Recommendations

Candidates are to be commended for adhering to the rubric. There was an improvement in the way in which candidates responded compared with last year.

It is hoped that teachers and future candidates will take note of the following recommendations.

- Vocabulary building: practise teaching and learning vocabulary in context, for example, A day at the beach — all the vocabulary associated with the beach and related activities.
- Grammatical structures and idiomatic expressions: phrasal verbs, prepositions, need to be tied into vocabulary building to ensure proper expression.
- Sentence construction: time should be spent on sentence construction in both Spanish and English.
- Spelling: this can distort information. Many words are being incorrectly spelt — ‘fever’ became ‘fifa’, ‘five’ and cough became ‘caff’, ‘carf’.

- Attention must be paid to tenses, in both the first and target languages.
- In previous reports, some websites were recommended for improving comprehension skills. Here are some that should help with vocabulary building:

<http://www.learnspanishfeelgood.com/vocabulary>

<http://www.intro2spanish.com/vocabulary>

<http://www.wordplay.com>

<http://www.braser.com>

<http://www.spanishabout.com>

Paper 03 – Oral Examination

The oral examination tested the ability of candidates to: (1) produce appropriate responses in Spanish to a number of situations testing specific functions, (2) read aloud a short passage in Spanish and (3) carry on a conversation in the target language by responding to questions based on four out of six topics set out in the syllabus, namely, Daily Routine, Home and Family, School and Career, and Travel.

Section I — Responses to Situations/Instructions

This section required candidates to produce appropriate responses in Spanish to situations/instructions described in English in keeping with the function specific to the situation.

Performance on this section demonstrated a range of abilities among the candidates. Some candidates performed very well in this section, producing responses which were not only appropriate but which were expressed correctly, exhibiting sound grammatical structures, a wide range of vocabulary and ample use of idioms. These candidates delivered their responses with spontaneity, self-confidence and a high degree of fluency.

On the other side of the performance spectrum, many candidates performed poorly in this section. They showed very little command of grammar and vocabulary to handle the examination competently. There was some attempt to produce a response which could be rewarded for appropriateness but the language was severely flawed with grammatical inaccuracies and poor vocabulary. Candidates often made up their own words such as: ‘*mi dificultad en español es situacionales’. This was in response to B.2: “Your Spanish teacher asks what is your main difficulty in Spanish.”

Many candidates opted not to provide a response and requested to skip some of the situations. In some cases where an attempt was made, the response was too distorted to be awarded marks. Also, many candidates did not read the situations carefully and as a result gave inappropriate responses. For example, a situation might have required the candidate to ask a question, for example, A3 or B4. Many candidates made a statement instead of asking a question.

Examples of responses which highlight weaknesses in language (grammar and vocabulary) include:

- *Es escuela hora*
- *Colegio es en...* (This response was given to the situation: “The gardener at school is mowing the lawn during class. What does your teacher explain to the gardener?”)

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure. Two asterisks (**) indicate an omission.*

Other incorrect responses include:

- *Sugiero que nosotros* voy*
- *Es muy importante para *me*
- *Nosotros *viajes en la semana*
- **Congraciones*
- **Que tu es casa (for ¿por qué estás en casa?)*
- **Yo hacer un erra (for usted hizo un error)*
- **¿Que es llamo? (for ¿quien llamó?)*

Other errors noted were:

- Incorrect use of *ser*; for example, *Mi abuela es muy mal*

Yo soy muy enfermo.
¿Dónde eres después de la escuela?

- Failure to recognize the need to use the tense appropriate to the situation given, for example, “You take your father’s car without his permission and get into an accident.” Candidates’ responses were almost always in the present tense: *Papa, uso el carro hablo por teléfono en el carro*

Vocabulary weaknesses included many candidates not knowing the word for ‘purse’, and the word *corregir* was frequently rendered as *correctar*. This clearly affected the quality of their responses to the questions: B. 4 and F.5.

The most common errors were:

- *Ser/estar — ¿Dónde es la casa de la profesora?*

Yo soy en Grand Anse.

- Subject/verb agreement or failure to conjugate verbs

Tú no voy a la fiesta.
Tú tener estudiar.
Yo necesita a practicar.

- Article/noun agreement — *la español*

Los fiestas
Los direcciones

- Noun/adjective agreement — *Tu amigo*

Mucho fotografías

- Negative sentences — *El es no simpático*

Mi internet es no funcionando

- Incorrect position of adjective — *mi favorito texto*

- Conjugated verb after *poder puedes busca*

Puedes traigo

- Incorrect usage of position of pronouns — *ayudo tu*

Ayudarete
Ayudartu

It should also be noted that some candidates responded to the situations by using reported speech instead of direct speech as required.

Recommendations

Candidates appear not to be fully aware of the functions they need to know in order to respond to the situations presented. The syllabus is very clear as to the functions which candidates are expected to be able to use to perform well in this section. Teachers are again encouraged to develop exercises to adequately afford students the opportunity to practise these functions orally. Practice in responding to situations orally must begin in the early stages in the teaching/learning process and teachers must avoid the tendency to wait until the examination year to expose students to this skill.

Section II — Reading Passages

This section assessed candidates' ability to read a passage in Spanish (125–130 words) demonstrating correct pronunciation of discrete sounds, good intonation and fluency. Candidates exhibited a wide range of competencies in this section from very good to extremely weak. Excellent readers exhibited a solid knowledge of the Spanish sound system, were well acquainted with the rules of stress and accentuation and read with fluency.

Weaker candidates continue to be challenged by the reading component of the oral examination. It is indeed a cause for concern that despite being exposed to the language for several years many candidates exhibit ignorance of the fundamentals of the Spanish sound system. Their pronunciation was faulty and anglicized in many cases. It was clear that many candidates did not know what the passages were about, thus producing very disjointed reading.

The following are some of the problems which candidates presented.

- Failure to distinguish between the vowels *i* and *e*. For example, *realidad* was pronounced as *rialida*, *comparten* was rendered as *compartin* and *electrónico* was rendered as *ilictrínico*.
- Rendition of the aspirated *h* in words like *hay*, *hable*, *ahorra* and *vehículo*.
- The pronunciation of *g* continues to pose difficulties. Many candidates failed to differentiate between *g* before *a*, *o* and *u*, and *g* before *e* and *i*. For example, *seguridad* was rendered as *sejuridad*; *g* was pronounced as in English in the word *generoso*. The second *g* in the word *gigantesco* was pronounced like *h* (*hihantesco*).
- General problems in placing the stress where it belongs on the word.

relatán for *relatan*
Ayudá for *ayudan*

- The anglicizing of cognates such as:

direction for *dirección*
orthoridades for *autoridades*
educacionales for *educacionales*
opertunidad for *oportunidad*
recommendable for *recomendable*

Other common errors made by candidates included:

<i>l</i> for <i>ll</i>	— <i>orgullo, ellos, detalles, embotellamiento</i>
<i>c</i> for <i>cc</i>	— <i>dirección, protección, accidentes, accede</i>
<i>n</i> for <i>ñ</i>	— <i>niñeros, pequeños, cariño</i>
<i>r</i> for <i>rr</i>	— <i>correo, ahorra, carreteras, herramientas, barril</i>
Omission of vowels	— <i>pensan</i> instead of <i>piensan</i> <i>usaros</i> instead of <i>usuarios</i> <i>relizada</i> instead of <i>realizada</i>

Problematic words included:

Cualquier, económicas, algún, aconsejan, pueden, acuático, contraseñas, respetuosamente, tobogón, estacionamiento, embotellamiento, precauciones, automovilísticos, irremplazable, beneficia.

Recommendations

It is clear that the deficiencies in reading as outlined above stem from inadequate preparation and practice. Teachers must ensure that the sound system of the language is understood from very early in the learning process. Syllabification and stress are major pitfalls which must be addressed from very early. Spanish must be constantly used in the classroom and opportunities must be created for students to produce the language as often as possible.

Section III — Guided Conversation

The Guided Conversation section of the oral examination tests the ability of candidates to respond to a number of questions based on four topics. This year the topics on which the candidates were tested were Daily Routine, Home and Family, School and Career, and Travel. Candidates were asked four questions on each of the topics and were assessed on comprehension and spontaneity, fluency and expression.

This section of the oral examination continues to be the most challenging for candidates. Some candidates at the upper end conversed easily and with great accuracy. Their answers to the questions were spontaneous and tended to be extended, demonstrating a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical correctness. However, too many candidates struggled with this section, handicapped by a limited vocabulary and poor knowledge of grammatical structures. The constant request by candidates to have the questions repeated was a clear indicator that there was limited comprehension of the questions asked.

The errors in grammar evident in this section were much the same as those mentioned in Section I and included:

- General weakness in the conjugation and appropriate usage of verbs
- Lack of concord between noun/adjective and subject/verb
- Incorrect use of *ser* and *estar*, *por* and *para*
- Difficulty in using object pronouns

The following are some specific comments on each of the four topics.

Daily Routine

Many candidates handled the questions in this section quite well with good vocabulary such as

Navegar el internet

El celular es una distracción.

Surprisingly, the word *cosas* was not known by a few candidates. The common grammar error seen here was the failure to conjugate verbs: *todos los días yo estudiar, comer, ir a la escuela.*

There were three questions that did not pose a comprehension challenge for candidates. They managed well with

¿Cuál es el número de tu teléfono celular? ¿Dónde vives? Describe a tu profesor/a favorito/a.

While candidates were able to respond to *¿Te gusta usar facebook?* and *¿Hay muchos accidentes en tu país?*, they were unable to go beyond *si* or *no* to expand on an explanation or the reason.

Home and Family

Most of the questions on this topic were easily understood. Other than a few lapses in vocabulary, where, for example, candidates used *hijos*, for *hermanos*, not much difficulty was observed. Many candidates did not know the word *junta*.

For the question *¿Con quién prefieres pasar tu tiempo libre, con tus amigos o con tus abuelos?*, many candidates responded without changing the possessive adjective — response often being *con tus abuelos/tus amigos*.

School and Career

This topic was generally handled satisfactorily by candidates. However, some candidates failed to use the appropriate tenses when required. For example, *¿Qué estudiaste el fin de la semana pasada?* was responded to as *Yo estudio español*. There was also difficulty with the verb *gustar*: *Yo no gusto inglés*. The very noticeable error was failure to make the noun/adjective agreement when candidates were describing their teacher:

Ella es bajo OR *Ella es muy divertido y simpático.*

Travel

This topic was the most challenging for candidates. Vocabulary items like *extranjero* and *veces* posed difficulty for weaker candidates. Candidates fell short in their responses to the questions:

1. *¿Hay muchos accidentes de tráfico en tu país? Explica.*
5. *¿Te gusta conducir? Por qué?*
6. *¿Te gustaría montar en motocicleta?*

The challenge for candidates was to expand on their responses. Another challenge for almost all candidates was Question 4: *¿Qué se puede hacer para evitar los accidentes de tráfico?* While the better candidates were able to generate a response, many candidates could not.

The following words were not understood:

Recreo, extranjero, parientes, motocicleta, barrio, evitar, conducir, junta, frecuencia, diariamente, prohibir, montar, medio de transporte.

Recommendations

Teachers must ensure that the communicative approach to language is adopted in the classroom. As far as possible, the target language should be used in the classroom so that students will become comfortable hearing Spanish around them. Extensive use of Spanish in the classroom will not only strengthen students' listening and speaking skills, but will also increase their confidence when communicating in Spanish.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2014

**SPANISH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The examination demanded that candidates recognize the functions they were required to perform, using vocabulary and structures expected of candidates who have undergone five years of study.

Many of the difficulties encountered by the candidates were based on the misinterpretation of situations presented and failure to focus on all the elements required to be awarded full marks. Significant marks were lost as many responses qualified as partially appropriate or completely inappropriate.

Some responses were far too long and candidates lost many marks because of the high number of errors in these long responses.

Spelling errors continue to be a concern, especially as candidates are penalized for incorrect spelling, including the omission of accents. The issue of accents needs to be considered carefully.

The formation of the tenses required continues to be a serious challenge for candidates.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section I – Directed Situations

In this section, candidates were presented with ten situations for which they were required to provide written responses in Spanish. Candidates were assessed on the appropriateness of their responses and the quality of language used. Inappropriate responses were awarded no mark, even if the quality of language was perfect.

The questions were in keeping with the demands of the syllabus, and were well within candidates' ability. The questions demanded vocabulary and structures of an everyday nature that were well within the candidates' grasp, and consequently, many candidates made a good attempt at responding to them.

Candidates' Performance

Generally, performance of candidates was satisfactory. There were a few poor performances. Poor performance resulted from candidates' lack of focus on the elements required by the question, incorrect grammar, lack of vocabulary, as well as inappropriate tense for the situation presented and omission of accents.

Candidates' Strengths

Some candidates answered concisely and fulfilled the requirements of the question. These candidates provided generally correct responses albeit with few grammatical flaws. It was evident from these responses that the candidates generally recognized the functions required by each question.

Situation (a)

You have to stay back late after school this afternoon. Write the text message that you send to your mother explaining this. (Function: Explaining)

Suggested response: *Tengo que quedarme en la escuela porque hay un partido de fútbol.*

- Many candidates did not interpret this question correctly and therefore did not provide all of the required information. They answered without making a specific reference to their late arrival home. Instead they only stated the reason i.e. the activity they had to do after school.
- Many did not know the vocabulary for 'to arrive' using *llevar* instead of *llegar*.
- Many did not know the vocabulary for 'to stay' using *hospedarse/alojarse*. Many of those who knew '*quedar*' spelt it as 'kedar' and 'cedar'.
- 'To arrive late' was frequently rendered as '*ser/estar tarde*'.

- Many candidates could not express time (AM/PM) correctly, writing ‘*a las tres en la tarde*’ instead of ‘*de la tarde*’.
- The written accent was often missing on *mamá*.
- The following words were spelt incorrectly - *clase (classe) /deberes (debres) / escuela (escula) / colegio (colejio) (coleigo)* and *práctica (pratica)*
- The expression *después (de)* was also used incorrectly - ‘*tengo clases despues escuela*’ / ‘*voy a club de musica despues de.*’

Situation (b)

Your uncle is coming to visit and sends an e-mail to your father informing him of two details of his arrival. Write the e-mail your uncle sent. (Function: Giving information)

Suggested response: *Llegaré el lunes a las cinco de la tarde.*

Most candidates performed well on this question. However, a few misinterpreted the requirements of the question. Instead of giving information for details relevant to the uncle's impending arrival, they gave information focusing on what he planned to do after his arrival. In some cases, reasons for his visit were given.

- Many candidates used the wrong tenses. The present, preterite and conditional tenses were used instead of the future tense. Where attempts were made to use the future tense the following errors were noted – ‘*sere llegando*’, ‘*soy venir*’, ‘*sera viniendo*’
- The incorrect preposition ‘*en*’ was used instead of ‘*a*’ - for example, a number of candidates wrote ‘*llegaré en el aeropuerto*’ instead of ‘*llegaré al aeropuerto*’
- Telling the time / date or day were common areas of concern. E.g. ‘*Llego en lunes a son las ocho en la tarde/Voy en diciembre 24/A la cuarto y media.*’
- The vocabulary for flight was frequently rendered as *vuela / vuelta / viaje/vuelvo*
- The verbs ‘*llevar*’ and ‘*salir*’ were used instead of ‘*llegar.*’
- The verb ‘*venir*’ was incorrectly formed in the continuous - *yo es viniendo*
- The word ‘*aeropuerto*’ was often misspelt – *aroporta*
- There was also the incorrect placing of adjectives before the nouns as well as lack of agreement when referring to items of clothing. For example, ‘*azul pantalones*’

Situation (c)

Your mother is visiting Canada and promises to do something for you while there. Write the e-mail she sends to you. (Function: Promising)

Suggested response: *Prometo comprarte los libros que pediste.*

This question was handled well by most candidates. Some candidates misinterpreted the question and made a request for something instead of a promise. Others responded that the mother was unable to fulfill the promise. Common grammatical/lexical errors were:

- The pluralization of *ropa (ropas)*
- The verb ‘*prometer*’ was a challenge for many. They rendered ‘I promise’ as ‘*promesa*’, ‘*promeso*’, ‘*promitido*’, ‘*promiso*’, ‘*prometa.*’ In addition some candidates used *prometo* followed by the present tense instead of the infinitive. E.g ‘*Prometo voy.*’ Some candidates used a preposition after *prometo*. E.g ‘*Prometo a ir.*’
- Many items of vocabulary/clothing were misspelt- *zapados /zapatoes / centro commercial / vestida / fotografias /photos/fotographias/ celular /telephono/mobil*
- Lack of agreement was noted. For example, ‘*los fotos*’
- Expression ‘to take photos’ was often incorrect - ‘*tener fotos de los monumentos*’
- Candidates used the formal register for mother to child communication.

- Incorrect use of subject pronoun after preposition - 'para tu' / 'por tu'
- Incorrect use of indirect object pronoun – 'voy a comprar tu' instead of 'te'
- Other errors included incorrect noun/adjective placement/agreement with descriptions. Adjectives of color were also problematic - 'un vestido de azul'
- Spelling of *comprar* as *comparar* and the inability to form the future tense correctly was a notable error.

Situation (d)

You have an activity after school but forgot something important at home. Write the message you send to your mother requesting her assistance. (Function: Requesting assistance with something)

Suggested response: *Mamá, puedes traerme mi guitarra.*

This question posed a challenge for several candidates. Many candidates misinterpreted the need for a request and instead gave a statement about what they left at home without asking for it to be brought to them.

- Position of object pronouns was a common issue - 'traer mi el libro /ayuda me' Many candidates used *salir* instead of *dejar* / *tomar* instead of *llevar/traer*
- The spelling of *traer* also was a problem; it was rendered as 'trayer, trajer'.
- *Tocar* was used to mean 'to take'
- *Poder* was spelt or used incorrectly - 'peudes' and 'puedes' used with a conjugated verb, e.g. 'Puedes consigues mi texto.' 'Puedo' was often used for the 2nd person. In fact, *Puedo traer mi guitarra* was often given as the response, and clearly, this communicated something very different from what was required, and was considered an inappropriate response. (This is an example of a response that is grammatically sound, but inappropriate.)
- Incorrect use of *olvidar(se)* was noted - 'me olvido' in the present / 'se me olvide' (without accent)
- Incorrect structures involving the need for 'de' - 'matemática el libro/libro texto/español libro'
- Incorrect vocabulary – 'libra/libre' (for *libro*) / 'mirar por' or 'buscar por' (instead of *buscar*)
- *Ser vs Estar* - 'mi libro que es en mi cama'
- Incorrect use of pronouns after prepositions noted - 'para yo/con tu'
- *Por vs para* – 'por mi texto'.
- Spelling/vocabulary errors noted – 'assistir/assistencia' used instead of 'ayudar/ayuda'
- 'Porfavor' was spelt as one word – other versions were 'por favor', 'por favour', 'pro favor'
- Other spelling errors were *querio* for *quiero*, *ayudar*, *ayundar* for *ayudar*) *necisito* for *necesito* and omission of accent on *mí* in the expression 'para mí.'

Situation (e)

Your cousin won a scholarship to a prestigious university. Write the message you send congratulating him/her and asking for details. (Function: Congratulating and Asking for details)

Suggested response: *Felicitaciones primo, ¿por cuántos años es la beca?*

This situation was poorly handled by many candidates. Although they were required to offer congratulations and ask for details, the second function was often not performed. Candidates simply congratulated or/asked how the cousin is feeling.

Vocabulary/grammatical errors noted were:

- A wide range of inappropriate versions of *felicitaciones/congratulaciones/enhorabuena/ felicidades*. On many occasions this was rendered in English.

- ‘Buena suerte’/‘Que alegría’/‘Soy feliz’ were used incorrectly to express congratulations.
- The vocabulary for scholarship/university was not widely known – ‘gana/premio’ used for ‘beca’ and ‘universario’ used for ‘universidad.’
- Incorrect spelling noted – *primo* rendered as *primero*, *escuela* as *escula/escuella*, *cuando* as *caundo*
- *Ser* vs. *Estar* - ‘donde es la universidad?’
- Incorrect use of the formal register in the context given, e.g. ‘dígame’ used instead of ‘dime’.
- Many candidates left out the accents on interrogative words since this response required a question and also many were uncertain when to use *cómo/qué* and *cuál*.
- The verb ‘asistir’ was poorly spelt and the preposition ‘a’ was frequently omitted.

Situation (f)

Your friend has something that you need to complete a project. Write the e-mail you send to him/her, explaining your situation. (Function: Explaining)

Suggested response: *Necesito tu texto para mi proyecto.*

Candidates were required to express their need of an item and give a reason.

- Some candidates misinterpreted the question and provided an excuse for not completing the project — ‘No puedo hacer el proyecto. Estoy enfermo.’
- Spelling errors included – *necessito/ nesicito/nescicito* for *necesito*, *boligrapho* for *bolígrafo*, *projecta / projeto/proyecto* for *proyecto*
- Other notable errors included inappropriate vocabulary; e.g. *volver* was used instead of ‘devolver’
- ‘*asignatura*’ (often misspelt and used) for ‘*proyecto*’. The word ‘*tarea*’ was also popular among candidates for ‘*proyecto*’.
- Candidates used ‘*prestar*’ instead of ‘*pedir prestado*’ – ‘*Puedo prestarme tu libro*’.
- Candidates mixed up the use of ‘*pedir*’ and ‘*preguntar*’
- There was the omission of *para* when introducing the reason for requiring the item - *Necesito las fotos terminar el proyecto*
- Incorrect spelling of *completar* - (*completir*), *mañana* - (*manana / rnanaña*)
- Many candidates did not know the vocabulary for to finish and used *finir/fin/finito/finitar/finitir mi trabajo*
- There was also the inappropriate use of the possessive adjectives ‘*su/sus*’ instead of the familiar forms required in the context given.

Situation (g)

Your sister has been spending too much time chatting on the Internet instead of studying. Write the message you send to her warning her of the consequences of her actions. (Function: Warning and Consequence)

Suggested response: *Si no estudias no vas a tener éxito en los exámenes/Si pasas tanto tiempo en Internet vas a salir mal en tus exámenes.*

While candidates were required to provide a warning and consequence, many wrote partial responses with either a warning or a consequence.

Grammatical/vocabulary errors noted were:

- Poor formation of the future for regular and irregular verbs: *haceras / teneras*, and accents missing with the future tense of regular verbs.
- *Continuar/seguir* was followed by the infinitive
- Incorrect spelling of *examen* (*exames / examens / examinaciones/examine/examinacion*) *prueba* (*puerba*), *chatear* (*chatiar*), *calificaciones* (*calificacciones*)
- *Trabajar* vs *funcionar* - ‘*mi computadora no es trabajando*’

- Commands were poorly formed - ‘*tu estudio / estudias mas*’
- *Más* was often missing the written accent
- *Querer que* was not followed by the subjunctive — ‘*quiero que pasas tu examen*’.
- Some candidates used the subjunctive after *Si* – ‘*Si no estudies...*’
- Incorrect use of ‘*grados*’ instead of ‘*notas*’ was often observed.
- Lack of agreement noted: e.g. ‘*mal notas*’
- The verb *Ir* was usually not followed by ‘*a*’ — ‘*va decir mamá*’
- Many candidates did not know the idiomatic structure for to be successful
- ‘*No tendras éxito*’ rendered as ‘*no seras exito*’.
- *Exito* was rendered as *successo*.
- ‘*Si no*’ was often spelt as one word ‘*sino*’.

Situation (h)

Your teacher has asked the class to write their suggestion for a venue for this year’s graduation ball. Write your suggestion with an appropriate reason. (Function: Suggesting with a reason)

Suggested response: *¿Por qué no tenemos la fiesta en Sandals? es muy elegante.*

Candidates were required to recommend a location for the ball giving a reason. Many misinterpreted this question, making general suggestions about graduation/ball without mentioning a venue. It seemed that the word venue was not understood by candidates. Others suggested a venue without providing a reason. Some candidates simply described the venue.

- Most candidates did not know the vocabulary for ball - (*pelota*) / (*bola*) / (*ballon*) / (*bul*) / (*ball*) were offered in the responses.
- Incorrect spelling and poor expression were observed as common errors; examples include *graduacion* for *graduación*; *graduacion baile* for *baile de graduación*
- The vocabulary for auditorium posed a challenge for the candidates who chose to offer it as the venue. Many simply used the English while others reused the word ‘venue’.
- Candidates used ‘*de*’ with the name of the hotel (‘*Hotel de Hilton*’)
- Another erroneous expression was *comunidad de centro*
- Candidates experienced difficulty expressing the subjunctive after *sugerir* and *recomendar*; e.g. ‘*Sugiero que comienza*’
- Incorrect spelling of *sugiero* - (*sujiero* / *sugero* / *sugeiro* / *seguero*)
- Incorrect noun-adjective agreement - *el restaurante, porque es bonita*
- Many candidates used inappropriate adjectives to describe places — *simpático* / *interesante* / *amable* / *emocionante*.
- It was evident that the majority of candidates did not know the Spanish word for ‘spacious’, and therefore used *espacio* for *espacioso*
- Incorrect spelling of *restaurante* - (*restarante* / *resturante*), incorrect definite article - ‘*la hotel*’,
- Use of *por/pero* instead of *porque* were common errors.
- Incorrect use of *gustar* continued to prove challenging for many candidates, as seen in the examples ‘*Todos los alumnos le gusta, todo el mundo le gustalo*’
- Use of *estar* instead of *ser* and the incorrect use of the conditional tense were also noted.

Situation (i)

Your friend’s father has just died. Write the condolence note that you send with an offer of assistance. (Function: Offering condolence and help)

Suggested response: *Mi más profundo pésame, ¿puedo ayudar?*

This was one of the most challenging questions for many candidates. They were not able to offer condolences. Quite a few only provided condolences without offering to help thus the question was not fully answered in many cases.

- Candidates did not know the vocabulary for condolences: some reused the English expression - Condolences. *Lo siento* was a common response. However, many candidates used *Lo siento* or *los siento por...* Candidates who used the construction - *Siento que tu papá...* failed to use the subjunctive form of the verb.
- Incorrect spelling of *pésame* (*pasame / mi mas profundo pescame*) was frequently noted.
- Candidates did not know the vocabulary for 'the death' or 'to die', and *morir* was poorly conjugated; e.g. '*tu papa murrie*' and *asistir* was used instead of *ayudar*.
- *Papá* was missing the written accent, *dólares* was used instead of *dinero*.
- Incorrect use of the formal register when offering assistance to a friend was noted.

Situation (j)

A storm is approaching your country and your parents are overseas. Write the message that your mother sends instructing you of something you should not do during the storm. (Function: Instructing)

Suggested response: *No debes salir.*

This situation required the candidates to give negative instructions. Many misinterpreted and gave positive instructions instead. They offered responses like:

- '*compra enlatadas y cierra las ventanas*' for which no marks were awarded.
- Formation of negative commands/instructions seemed problematic for most candidates; to perform that function they used the present tense, ('*No sales la casa / no habla / no va a la playa*') or the infinitive (*No salir, no abrir, no usar electrónicos.*)
- Candidates also used very literal translations for 'do not do' for example. *No hace* followed by the infinitive.
- Many candidates used *salir* without the preposition *de*. E.g '*no salga la casa.*'
- Many candidates lacked the vocabulary for hurricane and used the following to express it - *hurican / hurraican / storma / storme / stormo/tormento / mal tiempo/terremoto/tempesta*). They also lacked vocabulary for the verb to leave, and offered expressions like '*No exito la casa*'.

Recommendations

Too many candidates used the infinitive without attempting to conjugate or conjugated them with incorrect verb endings.

Too many marks were lost because candidates neglected to put accents where they were required for the accurate meaning of the words needed. The following words needed to have accents: *más/tú/mí/cómo/mamá/papá/está/qué*, because without the accent there is a change in meaning. Candidates must learn the value of the accents that can change the meanings of the words especially with respect to the tenses of verbs.

The several errors detailed in the report should serve to alert teachers on the areas which need special attention as candidates are prepared for the examination.

Section II (Question 2/Question 3) – Letter/Composition

This question was marked out of 30. Candidates were required to write a letter or a composition, using 130-150 words based on an outline given in English. They were assessed on their coherence, clarity of expression, accuracy and use of relevant idiom and vocabulary.

Letter

You represented your country in the Caribbean games and you won a gold medal in your event. Write a letter to your best friend who is overseas, giving him/her the good news.

You must include

- i. details about the competition (where and when it was held)
- ii. the event in which you participated and how you were selected
- iii. how you felt and reacted when you won your event
- iv. your plans to enter future competitions.

General Comments

Candidates' performance this year ranged from very limited performance to excellence. They were required to write a continuous prose using vocabulary and structures well within the scope of the syllabus. The provision of cues allowed the candidates to approach both the letter and the composition logically and confidently. As a result, most candidates were able to produce a response, despite grammatical and lexical difficulties. The word limit continues to pose an issue for a few candidates who exceed the limit or conversely, are unable to reach it. However, most candidates were able to respond within the required length. Some responses were submitted in English and others presented English mingled with Spanish. However, it was noted that there was not the widespread use of English as in previous years.

Candidates' Strengths

Letter

Candidates were able to use well learnt opening and closing lines with great flair, showing good use of the subjunctive. Most candidates wrote correctly, the date, greeting and farewell. Even the weaker candidates had knowledge of the format of the letter. Candidates generally adhered to the rubric with the better candidates using relevant vocabulary and idioms. Examples of good idioms and vocabulary:

vamos al grano
estar en shock
pegar un grito
te echo de menos
Juegos Caribeños
fui seleccionado
aprovecharse de
el goleador
brincar
dar un suspiro de alivio
loco de alegría
boquiabierto
que Dios derrame sus bendiciones

Candidates' Weaknesses with Examples of Errors

- Too many candidates wrote about competitions which were not related to games – singing, eating and Mathematics competitions, for example
- Vocabulary related to sports was lacking:
 - “*Juegos Caribe*” for “*Juegos Caribeños*”
 - “*Medal*” for “*medalla*”
 - “*prizo/precio*” for “*premio*”
 - “*selecté/chose*” for the word *selected*
 - “*contesta*” for “*competición*”
 - “*placé primero*” for “*salí or llegué primero*”

- “Querido” was misspelt at times:
Quierdo
- Inappropriate use of the gerund:
Mi evento fue corriendo/ nadando
- A few candidates wrote the date incorrectly:
El doce de abril de dos mil catorce instead of 12 de abril de 2014

- Some verbs were rendered incorrectly in the preterite tense:
Tener, obtener, pagar, querer
- The structure of the passive voice was very often unknown:
“Seleccióné” for “fui seleccionado”
- A few candidates did not maintain the register, changing from *tú* to *usted*.
- Some candidates substituted ‘b’ for ‘v’, ‘s’ for ‘z’, and dropped the ‘h’ at the beginning of a word.
- There was incorrect use of “ser/estar” and “por/para”
- There were several instances when candidates could not produce the requisite vocabulary for the different events and these were given in English. For example, 100 metres.
- The name of the event was also given in English, in some cases written in inverted commas.
- Some letters did not adhere to the required length.

Composition

Just before final exams you and your friends decided to spend the weekend camping. Write a composition about that weekend. Be sure to include

- i. where you choose to go and why
- ii. preparations you and your friends made
- iii. some of the activities in which you participated
- iv. how you and your friends plan to keep in touch in the future.

Candidates’ Strengths

Composition

The composition was the more popular choice for candidates this year. Those who attempted the question were generally at ease with what was required. Cues were followed, tenses were manipulated with proficiency and the relevant vocabulary was used. Candidates have shown an increased command of the use of the future tense. Some candidates were more creative in their use of vocabulary and idioms, showing greater coherence and clarity of expression. Many candidates have grasped the use of the preterite even with irregular verbs. The first person plural of the preterite tense was very often rendered correctly. Some candidates were even able to include the perfect and pluperfect tenses.

The use of the present subjunctive and the occasional imperfect subjunctive was also observed:

sería más feliz si estuvieras conmigo
ojalá que continúes gozando de buena salud
a él le hubiera dado un ataque cardíaco si tuviéramos que dormir en el bosque

A few candidates made good use of idioms such as:

sin más ni más
llevarse un chasco
dar pavor
en un dos por tres
andar de boca en boca

Some candidates were able to offer a richness of vocabulary:

leña, fogata, jugar damas, malvadiscos, alpiñismo
el protector solar
el repelente de mosquito
refrigerios
restar
aborrecer

There was a strong knowledge of places of interest and recreational activities:

la playa
jugar
contar historias
nadar

Candidates' weaknesses with Examples of Errors

- Vocabulary Deficiency:
 "campo" for "campamiento"
 "tento" for "tienda"
 "beberes" for "bebidas"
- Clumsy expressions such as:
 Mi y mi amigo
 Tener divertido
- Omission and misuse of prepositions
 Buscar por
 Mucho de
 Jugar fútbol
- Wrong use of tense
 Todos los días cocinamos
- Incorrect spelling for the first person plural of a stem changing verb:
 Nosotros jugamos
- Incorrect form of the preterite tense:
 Escoger – escojimos
 Decir – decieron
 Llegar – llegé
- Poor gender and number agreement:
 Una machete
 Los competiciones
 El montaña
 Mi amigos
- The incorrect use of "ser" and "estar" in expressing feelings and time and venue for events:
 Yo gané y fui contento
 La competición estaba en Barbados
- Incorrect use of object pronouns and reflexive pronouns:
 Lavome en el río
 Mi mamá dime
- Inappropriate use or omission of accents:
 Fué
 Competicion
 Estabamos
- Misuse of words with different meanings;
 Emocionado/ emocionante
 Así/ tan
 Muy/mucho

Aquí/Allí

Sorpresa/ sorprendida

- Spelling errors:
He – e
Hicimos – isimo
Estaba – estava
- Misuse of “gustar”
Nosotros ha gustado
- “Antes de” and “después de” were used interchangeably
- Subject and verb agreement’
Mis padres compró
- A few very short essays were limited to one line or sentence per point.
- Incorrect use of the gerund: *Las actividades son jugando, caminando, comiendo.*

Recommendations

The recommendations from previous years remain.

- Teachers must expose students to an even wider vocabulary and idiomatic expressions through the use of technology and teaching aides. Current topics (e.g. World Cup) should be used as resource material for exposing students to vocabulary and grammar structures, to stimulate interest as well as to encourage reading.
- Teachers are again urged to give students practice in the basics of letter and essay writing.
- Students need to be taught to expand on their points when writing.
- Teachers need to emphasize the importance of correct punctuation, paragraphs and correct spelling.
- More time needs to be spent on differentiating the use of “por” and “para”, “ser” and “estar” and the preterite and imperfect tenses.
- Other tenses ought not to be ignored- perfect, pluperfect, conditional.
- Verbs with similar meanings but used in different context should be emphasized – *pedir/preguntar, Tomar/llevar, ser/estar.*
- Teachers are encouraged to live the language as often as they can through their reading, travelling, social interactions, professional development etc.

Section III (Question 4/Question 5) – Contextual Announcement/Contextual Dialogue

This section required candidates to choose (i) either to write a contextual announcement or (ii) to complete a contextual dialogue. Cues were given in English for both options and candidates were to use between 80 and 100 words to complete their responses.

The contextual announcement and the contextual dialogue were in keeping with the information outlined in the syllabus and therefore within the scope of candidates’ ability. However, most candidates opted to answer the contextual dialogue.

Contextual Announcement

The National Dance Company will be conducting auditions for an Independence Day concert. Write the announcement to be placed in the local newspaper.

Responses to ALL of the cues listed below MUST be included in the announcement.

- i. Purpose of the announcement
- ii. Age requirement
- iii. Experience necessary
- iv. Place, date and time of auditions
- v. Contact details

Candidates' Performance

Candidates' Strengths

Most candidates observed the rubric of the question and attempted to address all of the cues.

There was a satisfactory manifestation of sound grammatical competence and good vocabulary by the majority of the candidates. Examples of good usage of language included:

*Habr  audiciones de baile
Vengan a participar en este evento especial
Para que participen en el concierto*

Candidates' Weaknesses

Many candidates who attempted this question did not show a solid command of grammar and knowledge of relevant vocabulary. Examples of errors included:

Errors in Grammar:

- Use of 'ser' or 'estar' with age instead of 'tener' ('debe ser 10 a os'; 'cuando estuve 16 a os')
- Incorrect use of 'ser' and 'estar' (*todo es invitado*) and 'ser' and 'haber' (*Ser  una actividad el d a de independencia*)
- Use of 'en' after time (*a las seis en la tarde*) as well as with date/days (*en el s bado*)
- Incorrect use of definite/indefinite articles (*la concierto del a o, las gente*)
- Inaccurate use of adjectives (*personas interesante*)
- Use of 'por' and 'para' for duration of time (*para dos a os*) also (*por m s informaci n*)
- Apocopation of *bueno/grande/primer/uno*
- Poor/lack of use of *saber* to express the ability to do something ('*Puedes bailar*' instead of '*Sabas bailar*'; '*Sabe como/que bailar*'; '*Queremos personas que conocen bailar*'

Errors in vocabulary:

- '*a son las cinco*' (*la actividad comienza a son las cinco*)
- '*tiempo*' for '*hora*' (*el tiempo del concierto es*)
- '*sies*' for '*seis*'; '*quinze*' for '*quince*'
- '*porque de*' for '*a causa de*'

Some candidates did not specify that the announcement was for auditions for a specific event and that experience was necessary and therefore their responses were limited. Furthermore, they seemed to have some knowledge of vocabulary but were challenged by incorrect spelling. Evidence of this was seen in the following:

- *bialar* for *bailar*
- *atenci n* for *atenci n*
- *esperencia* for *experiencia*
- *auditiones* for *audiciones*

Other examples of weakness in language proficiency included:

- *m s que diecisi s a os*
- *para mucho informaci n*
- *Ser  un concierto a la parque/ a la escuela/ al centro commercial*

Contextual Dialogue

Ricky, a popular young singer, is being interviewed on television.

Responses to ALL of the cues listed below MUST be included in the dialogue.

- i. Greetings
- ii. How he was introduced to music
- iii. How he became a professional
- iv. How fame has affected his lifestyle
- v. Advice he gives to young singers.

Candidates' Performance

Candidates' Strengths

Most candidates observed the rubric and attempted to address all of the cues. Even though there appeared to be challenges in interpretation and comprehension for some candidates, many were able to respond adequately to the demands of the question. Examples of good usage of language included:

*Me siento muy bien y bendecido/Me siento como un rey
El apoyo de la gente me da ánimo para seguir triunfando
Fui introducido a la música cuando cumplí siete años
A veces fue difícil, la vida no es todo sol
Todo es posible. Mantén tu cara en alto/ Nunca te des por vencido/ Nunca bota a tus sueños/ Es aconsejable que ellos trabajen duro y siempre crean en sus sueños*

Candidates' Weaknesses

Most candidates attempted this question but there was difficulty with some of responses that were provided to the questions. Although few candidates wrote either an inappropriate response or simply repeated parts of the question, most of them made a reasonable attempt at all of the cues in the dialogue. All candidates who attempted the dialogue were able to write an expression of greeting but some wrote 'Bienvenido' instead of 'No hay problema'/'No hay de que' or 'De nada'. Also, there was a misinterpretation of the interrogatives '¿Cuándo?' and '¿Cómo?' in cues four and five respectively and most of those responses were limited in content. However, the last cue was handled well by most candidates where they used the subjunctive to give advice; as is exemplified in candidates' strengths above.

Errors specific to grammar included:

- Use of 'tener' instead of 'haber' to form the perfect tense (*Tengo ganado dos premios*)
- Poor use of subject and verb agreement
- Poor use of negative words *ningún, ninguna (no experiencia necesita)*
- *Hora* instead of *tiempo (No paso mucha hora con mi familia)*
- Poor formation of Preterite tense especially with irregular or stem-changing verbs ('*Yo empecé a cantar/El introdució me.../Yo fui.../Yo tuve/tuvó....*

A lack of vocabulary was not as critical this time, as candidates used words and expressions such as 'don', 'hinchas', 'es imprescindible', although some misunderstood 'premios' and 'musical'. However, the spelling of basic numbers (*seis, veinte, diecich,*) and other simple words, was a cause for concern.

Recommendations

Teachers should continue to provide the necessary exposure to these two question types and give students constant practice in developing the contextual announcement and dialogue.

Students should be exposed to basic vocabulary and expressions related to different types of announcements/advertisements. Some examples of pertinent phrases are: *hay/habrá, se presenta, anuncio, atención, favor de, para más información.*

Students should be engaged in grammar exercises where they are assisted in recognizing their errors as well as that of their peers, and attempt to make the necessary corrections. Special attention must be given to the areas of weakness outlined in this report as well as in those of previous reports so that the repeated errors may be noted and addressed. (Examples: the personal 'a', *ser* and *estar, por* and *para, conocer* and *saber, subject/verb agreement, noun/adjective agreement).*

Section IV (Question 6) – Reading Comprehension

This question tests candidates' ability to read a passage in Spanish and then demonstrate comprehension skills by responding in English to questions posed in English and based on the passage they have read.

In at least three of the questions, candidates were asked to give explanations which demanded more than just giving answers that could be easily highlighted in the passage. These questions challenged the candidates' ability to use their first language of English to show their understanding of printed Spanish.

Candidates' Performance

Candidates showed that they need to continue working at not only acquiring vocabulary skills in order to achieve full comprehension of the passage, but on constantly revising their acquired vocabulary. In addition, while the use of English is not the focus of this question, and comprehension is, poor expression in English may prevent the candidate from achieving the maximum marks available,(as was the case in the June 2014 examination) especially in those instances when the candidates were asked to explain the actions/reactions of characters in the passage.

Candidates' Strengths

Generally, candidates were able to score at least one mark on most of the questions where more than one mark was awarded. Those candidates who scored full marks for the Reading Comprehension, in most cases expressed themselves very clearly in their sentence construction and choice of vocabulary in English. The majority of candidates are to be complimented for adhering to the instructions.

Candidates' Weaknesses

As at least three of the questions called for the candidates to 'explain', it must be noted that there was a general inability to do that. In too many cases the misspelling of key words needed to answer the questions tended to make it somewhat difficult to decipher answers. Candidates tended to write in exactly the way that they speak. There was, in some cases, poor sentence construction.

Some candidates either did not letter their responses, or doubled the lettering, e.g. two responses with the letter 'h'.

There were those candidates who tried to get around their inadequate vocabulary by directing the Examiner to the line in the passage where the answer may be found, e.g. The author's father always has to buy (lines 4-5).

Comments on Individual Questions

Question (a)

How does the writer describe Sherma?

Suggested response : *Sherma was honest and incompetent/honest and absent-minded.*

Incorrect response : Sherma was incomplete and destructive/She was a disaster.

Some candidates took '*incompetente*' to mean incomplete, and '*distráida*' to mean destructive or distractive. Some even used the title as their answer.

Question (b)

What does the author's mother always have to do after Sherma is finished ironing?

Suggested response: *She has to ensure that the iron is turned off/unplugged.*

Incorrect response: She has to re-iron the clothes.

Those who did not understand '*asegurarse*' and '*apagada*' took their cue from Sherma being described as incompetent and so had the mother making sure that the ironing was done properly or doing it over.

Question (c)

What does the author's father often have to buy?

Suggested response: *He often buys socks and shirts.*

Incorrect response: He buys shirts and ties/ clothes for Sherma/calcium tablets.

The incorrect responses here highlighted a lack of retention of vocabulary.

Question (d)

Why does the author's father have to make these purchases?

Suggested response: *Sherma either burns them or destroys them with bleach.*

Incorrect response: The iron was damaged and destroyed the colour.

Perhaps candidates did not link '*quemar*' and '*plancha*'. They knew something was damaged, but not 'what' and 'how'.

Question (e)

What does the family frequently have to change in the house?

Suggested response: *They frequently have to change the locks.*

Incorrect response: They changed the hole in the door/ the curtains.

Some candidates did not know '*las cerraduras*'. They thought it meant curtains, articles of furniture. Some even thought that this word meant 'keys'.

Question (f)

Explain the reason for these frequent changes.

Suggested response: *Because Sherma often lost the keys to the front door.*

Incorrect response: Because Sherma broke the key in the principal's door.

Candidates who answered (e) incorrectly did not get this answer either. ‘*La puerta principal*’ was believed to be the principal’s door.

Question (g)

What was Sherma asked to do last week instead of coming to work?

Suggested response: *She was asked to go and look for the keys.*

Incorrect response: She was asked to go outside/ She was told not to come back.

‘*Fuera*’ suggested ‘outside’ to some candidates. Some candidates also thought that given Sherma’s record she was fired.

Question (h)

What did Sherma demand afterwards?

Suggested response: *Sherma demanded that the author’s father pay her for that day.*

Incorrect response: Sherma demanded to be fired. / Sherma demanded a raise.

The majority of candidates answered this question well.

Question (i)

Explain the father’s reaction to Sherma’s demand.

Suggested response: *He was astonished that she wanted to be paid for a day that she did not work.*

Incorrect response: He was surprised at her demand.

This was where many candidates lost out on full marks. They did not explain his reaction.

Question (j)

Explain why Sherma is still employed with the family.

Suggested response: *In spite of her incompetence, Sherma is honest and honest people are hard to find.*

Incorrect response: Sherma sings with her honesty. / The weight of her flaws can count on her honesty.

Most candidates understood that Sherma was honest. What they failed to do was to explain her honesty in spite of her incompetence and the fact that it is so difficult to find honest people.

Further Comments and Recommendations

To candidates:

Candidates are to be commended for heeding many of our previous recommendations regarding identifying your answers, although there were some candidates who did not.

The following points should be borne in mind for improving performance:

- The allocation of marks points to the possible number of elements required in the answer.
- Avoid including Spanish in your answers for Section IV
- Please skip a line between written responses. It tends to make your work more legible.

- Read widely to develop an active appreciation for sentence construction, widen your knowledge base and stimulate your imagination to the extent that all three of these elements will come together for you

To teachers:

- The teaching of vocabulary remains critical for Spanish
- The Reading Comprehension is as important as the other questions. Candidates should be trained to answer questions as completely as possible, and to use correct spelling and sentence construction. The following websites have been selected to assist you in these areas.
www.weeklyreader.com/article/top-tips-teaching-reading-comprehension
www.teachervision.com
www.brighthubeducation.com/spanish...plans..reading-spanish-passages
www.readingrockets.org/article/3479
www.colorincolorado.org/educators/teaching/vocab
education.cu-portland.edu/blog/curriculum-instruction
funforspanishteachers.blogspot.com
www.spanishprograms.com

Paper 03 – Oral Examination

The oral examination tested the ability of candidates to: (1) produce appropriate responses in Spanish to a number of situations testing specific functions, (2) read aloud a short passage in Spanish and (3) carry on a conversation in the target language by responding to questions based on four out of six topics set out in the syllabus, namely, Daily Routine, School and Career, Sports and Recreation and Travel.

Section 1 – Responses to Situations/Instructions

This section required the candidates to produce appropriate responses in Spanish to situations/instructions described in English in keeping with the function specific to the situation.

Performance on this section demonstrated a range of abilities among the candidates. Some candidates performed very well in this section producing responses which were not only appropriate but which were expressed correctly, exhibiting sound grammatical structures, a wide range of vocabulary and ample use of idioms. These candidates delivered their responses with spontaneity, self-confidence and a high degree of fluency, providing very intuitive and interesting answers.

Some examples of the more successful idiomatic expressions produced by students are:

Function: Expressing disappointment

- *¡ Qué barbaridad!*
- *¡ Dios mío!*
- *¡ Ay no!*
- *¡ Ay Caramba!*
- *¡ Qué lástima!*

Function: Expressing good wishes

- *Que te mejores pronto*

Function: Expressing surprise

¡ Qué sorpresa!

Many candidates also performed weakly in this section as they showed very little command of grammar and vocabulary to handle the examination competently. Some candidates attempted to produce a response which

could be rewarded for appropriateness but the language was severely flawed with grammatical inaccuracies and poor vocabulary. Many candidates seemed puzzled by the questions and struggled to put their ideas together in Spanish, which often led to a number of Anglicisms.

Many candidates did not provide a response and requested to skip some of the situations. In some cases where an attempt was made, the response was too distorted to be awarded marks. Also, many candidates do not read the situations carefully and as a result give inappropriate responses.

For example, a situation may require the candidate to ask a question eg. E2(b). Many candidates made statements instead of asking questions.

Idiomatic expressions containing errors were:

Saying you forgot something

- *Se me olvidé la/el ...*
- *Me olvidé mi ...*

Function; Declining an invitation

- *Soy enfermo*
- *Tengo a estudiar*
- *Soy ocupado*
- *Mi papá muerto*

Function: Giving a command

- *Va a la cama*
- *Va a la dormir*
- *Tiene cuidado en camino*
- *No salir antes de las seis*
- *Levas con tú*
- *No miro la televisión*

Function: Apologising

- *Siento que levanto tan tarde*
- *Lo siento, mi amiga estaba accidente*
- *Yo daría una nueva de par*

Function: Enquiring about someone

- *¿ Qué tu problema?*
- *¿ Qué hay de nueva?*
- *¿ Dónde estuves?*

Function: expressing good wishes

- *Ten un buen viaje*
- *Todo vaya bien* instead of *todo saldrá bien*

Function: Relating an event

- *David no lavos los platos*

Function: Making suggestions

- *Sugero que vamos al cine*
- *Recomendó que vamos a la playa*

Idiomatic expressions used in the wrong context:

Function: expressing disappointment

- *¡Qué asco!*

Examples of responses which highlight weaknesses in language (grammar and vocabulary) include:

1. Inability to use imperatives. Examples:

- *No ir al cine*
- *no mirar la tele*
- *Comprarme la comida*
- *llamas tu profesora*

2. The use of the verb 'ser' to show location and temporary condition. Examples:

- *¿Dónde esla iglesia? E 5 (a)*
- *No soy en la clase*
- *El autobús fui tarde C3(b)*
- *El banco es cerca de la escuela. E 5 (b)*

3. Incorrect use of *¿Adónde?* Example : *¿Adónde está la iglesia?*

4. Incorrect subject-verb agreement. Example : '*El autobus fui tarde*' or '*yo compras comida*'

5. Incorrect noun-adjective agreement. Example; '*los zapatos blanco*'

6. Use of the conjugated verb after '*poder*'. Example: '*puede me ayuda*'

7. Incorrect position of the object pronoun. Example; '*puede me ayudar*'

8. Incorrect conjugation of the irregular verbs in the future tense. Example : '*hacerán*'

9. Use of the 2nd and 3rd person singular person of the verb '*ir*' for the familiar affirmative command. Example: '*va a tu cama*' or '*vas al mercado*'

10. Incorrect use of '*gustar*'. Example:

- *Me gusto los zapatos*
- *Me gusta las manzanas*
- *Te gusto*

11. Not applying the double negative rule. Example; '*recibo nada*'

12. Misuse of subjunctive. Example: '*sugiero que vamos a la playa*'

13. Incorrect use of '*por*' and '*para*'. Example: '*gracias para la invitación*'

14. The use of '*muy*' for '*mucho*'. Example: '*hay muy tráfico*'

OTHER EXAMPLES:

Common misuse of sound vocabulary and general improper use of infinitives include the following:

- *¿Dónde es la tienda de Juan?/ mi mamá no es en la casa (misuse of ser and estar)*
- *Excúsame .(disculpe/con permiso)*
- *No puedo buscar mis papeles (encontrar)*
- *Refundar (devolver/reembolsar)*
- *Sí mamá, yo comprende (comprendo)*
- *Usted son un maestro excelente (es)*
- *Presento (regalo)*
- *Explanación (explicación)*
- *¿por qué estás arriba? (despierto)*
- *El zapato es malo (de mala calidad)*
- *¿por qué no hay en tu cama? (estás)*
- *Yo promesa (prometo)*
- *Tu recibido un buen regalo (recibiste)*

It should also be noted that some candidates responded to the situations by using reported speech instead of direct speech as required.

Recommendations

Candidates appear not to be fully aware of the functions they need to know in order to respond to the situations presented. Teachers are encouraged to develop exercises to adequately afford students the opportunity to practise these functions orally. Practice in responding to situations orally must begin in the early stages in the teaching/learning process.

Section II - Reading Passages

This section assessed candidates' ability to read a passage in Spanish (125-130 words) demonstrating correct pronunciation of discrete sounds, good intonation and fluency. Candidates exhibited a wide range of competencies in this section from very good to very weak. Excellent readers exhibited a solid knowledge of the Spanish sound system, were well acquainted with the rules of stress and accentuation and read with admirable fluency.

Weaker candidates continue to be challenged by the reading component of the oral examination. It is indeed a cause for concern that after being exposed to the language for several years many candidates exhibit ignorance of the fundamentals of the Spanish sound system. Pronunciation was faulty and anglicized in many cases. It was clear that many candidates did not know understand the content of the passages, thus producing very disjointed reading.

The following are some of the problems which candidates presented:

- The majority of candidates stumbled on words containing one or more of the following letter combinations:
 - *que: enfoque, riqueza*
 - *qui: equivoque*
 - *gue: sigue*
 - *z: utilizarlos, confianza, adelgazar, eficaz*
 - *h: hacer, ha*
 - *ge: gente, agente, escogen*
 - *je: viaje*
 - *au: aunque, autoestima, aumento*
 - *ch: chamacas*

- *ae; aeropuerto*
 - *ll: ballenas*
 - *ee: preesco;ar*
 - *jue: juega*
 - *ie: nadie*
 - *j: relajarse, manejable*
- Words such as: *música, virtual, cerebral, resisten* which resembled their English equivalents were pronounced with the English accent and intonation. Unfamiliar words like *indudablemente, agobiante* posed a challenge for some.
 - Words containing adjacent strong vowels and diphthongs seemed to pose a problem for candidates in terms of finding the correct tonic syllable: *océano, balnearios, ejercicios*
 - Verbs conjugated in the third person were commonly mispronounced, with the stress on the last syllable. Noted errors were: *Mandan, repesentan, despiertan, ofrecen*. Here the stress was placed on the last syllable instead of the second to last.

PROBLEMATIC WORDS

Passage 1

Diccionarios, redacciones, ortografía, utilizarlos, línea

Passage 2

Preescolares, críos, habilidades, indudablemente, Einstein, autestima

Passage 3

Tonificar, gente, adelgazar, equivoque, manejable, relajado

Passage 4

Coincide, jorobados, avistamiento, lactancia, ballenato

Passage 5

Multidisciplinarios

Passage 6

Embotellamientos, balnearios

Recommendations

Teachers must ensure that the sound system of the language is understood from very early in the learning process. Syllabification and stress are major pitfalls which must be addressed from very early. Spanish must be constantly used in the classroom and opportunities must be created for students to produce the language as often as possible.

Section III – Guided Conversation

The Guided Conversation section of the oral examination tests the ability of the candidates to respond to a number of questions based on four topics. This year the topics on which the candidates were tested were Daily Routine, School and Career, Sports and Recreation and Travel. Candidates were asked four questions on each of the topics and were assessed on comprehension and spontaneity, fluency and expression.

This section of the oral examination continues to be the most challenging for candidates. Some candidates at the upper end conversed easily and with great accuracy. Their answers to the questions were spontaneous and tended to be extended, demonstrating a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical correctness.

However, the vast majority of the candidates struggled with this section, handicapped by a limited vocabulary and poor knowledge of grammatical structures.

The errors in grammar evident in this section were much the same as those mentioned in Section 1 and included:

- General weakness in the conjugation and appropriate usage of verbs.
- Lack of concord between noun/adjective and subject/verb
- Incorrect use of *ser* and *estar*, *por* and *para*
- Difficulty in using object pronouns

The following are some specific comments on each of the four topics:

Daily Routine

Many Candidates handled the questions in this section quite well. Most students responded promptly without asking for the question to be repeated. The main difficulty encountered in this section was using the verb *preferir*, followed by another verb. Example; *prefiero leo el libro y escucho musica.*

Many candidates did not know how to respond to the question *¿De qué manera tus responsabilidades en casa afectan tus estudios?* Perhaps they did not understand what the first three words meant.

Many candidates misinterpreted the question: *¿Hasta qué hora duermes los fines de semana?*, giving the time they went to bed.

Also the words *de postre* were understood by very few.

School and Career

This topic was generally handled well. However candidates did not use the appropriate tenses when required. For example: *Si fueras director/directora, ¿qué cambios harías en tu escuela?* Response: *Yo cambio el uniforme.*

Candidates were unable to give a full description of their uniform with simple responses such as: *mi uniforme es camisa blanca y falda gris.* The very noticeable error was lack of noun/adjective agreement in the description:

Mi camisa es blanco

Mis zapatos son negro

Sports and Recreation

Candidates encountered difficulty with some of the questions in this section because they lacked the necessary vocabulary to answer fully.

For example: *¿Cuáles son los beneficios de participar en un deporte?* The weaker candidates were unable to respond to this. Many responded to: *¿Cuál es tu grupo musical favorito?* by giving the type of music they like such as soca and pop.

For the question *¿Qué clase de novelas te gustan?* Candidates focused on the word 'clase' and gave the names of subjects that they are currently studying.

The question: *dime algo de una película que has visto recientemente* generally received either no response at all or simply the name of a movie.

Travel

This topic was the most challenging for the candidates. The most challenging questions included:

¿Cómo se puede viajar hoy en día? This question was frequently misinterpreted to be “how does the candidate travel?”. Example: *viajo en carro*.

¿Por qué viaja la gente? Only the more able candidates responded fully to this question.

¿Es fácil viajar entre las islas del Caribe? Explica. Many candidates responded “yes” or “no” to this as they were unable to provide an explanation.

¿Qué compran los turistas cuando visitan tu país? Here, instead of saying what tourists buy candidates said where they buy. Example: *en el Mercado*.

Describe unas vacaciones inolvidables. For this question many candidates responded: *no sé* because they could not handle the question. Some of those who responded did not use the appropriate tenses - preterite/imperfect.

Recommendations

Teachers must ensure that the communicative approach to language be adopted in the classroom. As far as possible use the target language in the classroom so that students will become comfortable hearing Spanish around them. Extensive use of Spanish in the classroom will not only strengthen students' listening and speaking skills, but will also increase their confidence when communicating in Spanish. Students must be encouraged to pay attention to the details which are required in the questions and listen carefully to the demands of the question.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION**

JANUARY 2015

**SPANISH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

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GENERAL COMMENTS

For January 2015, 380 candidates wrote the examinations compared with 417 in 2014, which represents a nine per cent decrease. Seventy-two per cent of the candidates achieved Grades I–III compared with 67 per cent in January 2014; an overall improvement of five per cent.

There was a decline in performance on Paper 01 (which assesses listening and reading skills). However, improvements in performance on Paper 02 (which assesses candidates' ability to write the language) and Paper 03 (which assesses the listening and speaking skills) compensated for this decline.

Greater exposure to the language through listening, speaking, reading and writing is strongly recommended with emphasis on immersion in the language and culture.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprised two sections, assessed the ability of candidates to listen to and understand a number of aural items in the target language and to read and understand a number of written items. Both sections required candidates to have sufficient mastery of essential grammar and vocabulary. There was a three per cent decline in performance on Paper 01 compared with January 2014.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section I (Question 1) – Directed Situations

In this section, candidates were presented with ten situations for which they were required to provide written responses in Spanish. The situations demanded that candidates recognize the function they were required to perform, using vocabulary and structures learnt after five years of study. Candidates were assessed on the appropriateness of their responses and the quality of language used. Inappropriate responses were awarded no mark, even if the quality of language was perfect.

The questions were in keeping with the expectations of syllabus. The questions demanded vocabulary and structures of an everyday nature that were well within candidates' grasp.

Candidates' Performance

Generally, the performance of candidates was satisfactory. There were few poor performances which resulted from a lack of focus on the elements required by the question, incorrect grammar, lack of vocabulary, as well as candidates' failure to use the tenses appropriately in the given situations and the tendency to omit accents.

Candidates' Strengths

Some candidates answered concisely and fulfilled the requirements of the question. These candidates provided generally correct responses albeit with few grammatical flaws. It was evident from these responses that candidates generally recognized the functions required by each question.

Candidates' Weaknesses

Like we have seen in the past, candidates' weaknesses were noted in areas of grammatical inaccuracy, limited vocabulary and incorrect spelling, especially the omission of accents. There were also instances where candidates did not provide full responses as required by the situations presented.

Comments on Individual Situations

Situation (a)

Your younger brother is going on a class outing. Write the note that your mother places in his lunch bag warning him of two things he should not do. (Function: Warning)

Suggested response: *No debes bañarte en el mar y no debes alejarte del grupo.*

Although most candidates recognized what they had to do, there were those who did not recognize the use of the *negative* command, writing *no comes y no vas*. Also, many candidates did not realize that there were to be *two* warnings.

Situation (b)

Your family has just returned from a stay at a hotel. Write the thank you note that you send in an e-mail to the manager mentioning one thing you enjoyed most about your stay. (Function: Expressing thanks and mentioning something you enjoyed)

Suggested response: *Muchas gracias, el servicio en los restaurantes fue fantástico.*

Many candidates understood what was required in this situation. However, in many cases they seemed not to remember that the comments were directed to the manager referring to *tu hotel* rather than *su hotel*.

Situation (c)

Your mother is going out but the housekeeper has not yet arrived. Write the note that your mother leaves telling the housekeeper where she has gone and when she will return. (Function: Explaining)

Suggested response: *Fui al mercado y regresaré a las dos.*

This situation was responded to appropriately. However, there seemed to be confusion as to whether to use *volver*, *devolver* or *revolver*. There was also the common error of using the third person form of the verb *ir* with the subject pronoun *yo*. (*Yo fue al supermercado.*)

Situation (d)

You were sponsored by a local company to go on an exchange programme abroad. Write the note that you send to the manager stating two ways in which you benefitted from their sponsorship. (Function: Stating benefits)

Suggested response: *Aprendí mucho sobre la cultura de Venezuela y practiqué mucho español.*

In many cases candidates opted not to respond to this situation. Those who did understood that they had to use the preterite tense and were able to mention at least one benefit.

Situation (e)

During a school activity a student misbehaves. Write the note that is sent to her parents explaining her misbehaviour and punishment. (Function: Explaining)

Suggested response: *Alicia tiene que quedarse en casa por dos días porque golpeó a un compañero de clase.*

This situation also saw a few candidates not responding fully to it, perhaps because they did not have the appropriate vocabulary. Those who responded managed quite well. Some candidates simply stated that the child was bad. Many others provided a partially appropriate response mentioning what the child did, but not elaborating on the punishment or vice versa. It was also noted that although the situation made reference to a female, many candidates in their response stated *tu hijo*.

Situation (f)

Your best friend, Marisa, is feeling sad today. Write the text message that you send to console her, suggesting what she can do to feel better. (Function: Consoling and suggesting)

Suggested response: *No te preocupes ¿por qué no escuchas tu música favorita?*

Most candidates understood the demands of this situation.

Situation (g)

You have just witnessed an accident. Write the text message that you send to your brother giving two details about the accident. (Function: Describing)

Suggested response: *El accidente fue cerca de la escuela y el conductor fue llevado al hospital.*

Generally, this situation was responded to very well, although some candidates used *golpeó* instead of *chocó*. There were just a few responses which were scarcely comprehensible, clearly a manifestation of weaker candidates' poor manipulation of the language. A striking example was *Una niña cataplan señor coche y señor coche es muy bonita*.

Situation (h)

Your brother is getting married today and is very nervous. Write the congratulatory note that you hand him, reminding him of why he should be happy today. (Function: Congratulating)

Suggested response: *¡Felicitaciones! Vas a casarte con una mujer guapa.*

Most candidates understood the demands of the situation. This situation produced some very good responses.

Situation (i)

You have just won the first prize in a local competition. Write the e-mail that you send to your aunt abroad telling her about the competition and about your prize. (Function: Giving information)

Suggested response: *Gané un celular Samsung S4 en una competencia de ajedrez.*

Candidates tended to write *premio* as *prizo* or *precio*, not realizing that they need not have mentioned *prize* in their response. Many candidates were not able to access the full marks in this situation, as they failed to make reference to the competition.

Situation (j)

Your friend invites you to a nightclub but you know that your parents will not approve. Write the text message that you send declining the invitation and giving a reason. (Function: Declining an invitation)

Suggested response: *No puedo porque mis padres no me permitirán ir a los clubes.*

Many candidates provided a full response to this situation. The major error here was one of vocabulary where candidates attempted to use the Spanish for nightclub which they did not know. Also, there was a tendency not to conjugate the verb, as seen in *Yo no ir*, and failure to demonstrate noun/adjective agreement — *mis padres son estricto*.

Further Comments and Recommendations

In most responses, there were errors in vocabulary, or a lack of vocabulary. There were many errors in spelling as well. Omission of accents is considered spelling errors, and candidates must pay attention to the importance of inserting accents where necessary so as to avoid penalty.

Teachers and candidates need to focus more on vocabulary building. Drilling where this is concerned may be tedious but necessary. Candidates are advised that constant revision of basic grammatical items learned in the Form 1–3 years is essential.

Section II (Question 2/Question 3) – Letter/Composition

The letter and composition assessed the ability of candidates to write in continuous prose using 130–150 words. Candidates were assessed on clarity and coherence of language and use of appropriate grammar, vocabulary and idiom. The demands of this question were within the requirements laid out in the syllabus and the range of ability expected of candidates at this level.

Demands of the Section

The topics presented in both questions were familiar to candidates and well within the scope of the syllabus. Candidates used their vocabulary confidently and most attempted to reach the word limit. A few candidates produced a mere paragraph. A minimal amount of students wrote English words.

Letter

You were invited to a friend's party but could not attend. Write a letter to your Venezuelan pen pal in which you include

- reasons why you could not attend
- how you felt about missing the party
- details that your friends gave you about the party
- how you plan to make up for the disappointment you have caused your friend.

Candidates' Performance on the Letter

Candidates' Strengths

The letter was a popular choice with candidates. They related well to the theme and generally used relevant vocabulary. The third person plural of the preterite tense was often rendered correctly. Candidates, for the most part, used the correct format and many wrote the date correctly. The more proficient candidates used good expressions such as:

- *Lamentablemente*
- *Una amplia gama de*
- *Toneladas de caramelos*
- *¡Qué mala fortuna!*

The subjunctive was used correctly in some scripts:

- *Espero que nos veamos*
- *Deseo que continúes gozando de buena salud*

Candidates' Weaknesses with Examples of Errors

Vocabulary deficiency

- *Tocar* for *llevar*
- *Tomar* for *llevar*
- *Partido* for *fiesta*
- *Atender* for *asistir*
- *Decir* for *hablar*
- *Bien* for *bueno*
- *Gastar tiempo* for *pasar tiempo*
- *Unfortunadamente* for *desafortunadamente*
- *A for en (a place)*

Poor gender agreement

- *Una día*
- *Un fiebre*
- *La pescado*

Misuse of certain expressions

- *Lo siento para*
- *Lo siento no puedo*
- *Soy siento*
- *Yo estoy no feliz*
- *El gustaría*

Omission of a, que or para

- *Asistir^ la fiesta*
- *Yo sé ^ese día es importante*

- *Espero ^ estés bien*
- *Tú sabes ^es*
- *Estoy escribiendo^ decirte*
- *Tuve^ hacer*

Incorrect rendering of the possessive

- *Mi amiga fiesta*
- *Una cumpleaños de fiesta*
- *Manuel's fiesta*

Incorrect positioning of adjectives

- *Muy divertidas actividades*
- *Amiga major*

Present tense for past tense

- *No puedo asistir*
- *No asisto a la fiesta*

Use of present continuous for the future

- *Estoy visitando for voy a visitar*
- *Ser vs estar*
- *Estaba una fiesta*
- *Yo soy muy mal*
- *No quiere estar mi amiga*

Incorrect position of pronoun

- *Mis amigas llamaron me*

Incorrect preterite

- *Dijen for dijeron*

Incorrect spelling

- *Fuieron*
- *Assistir*
- *Quierda*
- *Infermo*
- *Compleaños*
- *Tu major amiga*
- *Intelligente*

Incorrect date format

- *El doce de junio de dos mil quince* instead of *12 de junio de 2015*

Composition

Write a composition about a teacher who has had an influence in your life, in which you include

- a description of the teacher including qualities you admire
- your first encounter with her/him
- how she/he interacted with students and other teachers
- how she/he will influence your life in the future.

Candidates' Performance on the Composition

Candidates' Strengths

Candidates who chose this question were generally able to describe their teacher. Some were able to use the future tense correctly in the last cue.

Examples of Good Expression

- *Mi profesora es sumamente bonita*
- *Espero que sea*

Candidates' Weaknesses with Examples of Errors

Use of *gustar*

- *Ella gusta su profesión*
- *Yo me gusta*

Incorrect use of the indefinite article

- *Quiero ser una profesora*

Incorrect position of adjectives

- *Es muy dulce persona*
- *Bueno vs bien*
- *Es un muy bien professor*
- *Bailar bueno*
- *Poder vs saber*
- *Puede bailar bien*
- *Gastar vs pasar*
- *Ella gasta mucho tiempo*

Wrong translation of *that*

- *Me gusta eso era*

The verb *amar* was rendered incorrectly

- *Mi profesora te amo a todos*
- *Se amo for le amo*

Incorrect use of pronouns

- *Ella tiempo*
- *Me quiero ser*

Incorrect verb agreement

- *Yo vino*

Incorrect spelling

- *Amiable*
- *Maron*
- *Sympatico*
- *Professor*
- *Premier*

Recommendations

- Candidates sitting the examination in January must spend time during the Christmas vacation revising and revisiting weak areas.
- Continuous practice remains the key to success. Concepts can be reinforced through written, aural and oral exercises as well as in song, skits, games and other motivational activities.
- Students need to be guided on how to expand on their points in order to get the required amount of words.
- Teachers are encouraged to communicate with their students in Spanish as often as possible.
- Teachers are encouraged to continue to live the language through their own personal reading, study or research.

Section III (Question 4/Question 5) – Contextual Announcement/Contextual Dialogue

This section required candidates to write either a contextual announcement or complete a contextual dialogue. Cues in English were provided for both options.

Demands of the Section

The contextual announcement and the contextual dialogue were in keeping with the information outlined in the syllabus.

Contextual Announcement

The Venezuelan Institute is offering a Spanish course abroad for teenagers. As coordinator, you want as many teenagers as possible to attend. Write the announcement you place on the Institute's website.

Responses to ALL of the cues listed below MUST be included in the announcement.

- Who is organizing the course
- Details of the course (when, where, duration, cost)
- Who can participate
- Proposed activities
- Contact details for further information

Candidates' Performance on the Contextual Announcement

Candidates' Strengths

Most candidates observed the rubric of the question and attempted to address all of the cues. There was a good manifestation of sound grammatical competence and good vocabulary, albeit by a small number of candidates. Examples of good usage of language included:

- *un curso para jóvenes/estudiantes de español*
- *Habrán muchas actividades*
- *El Instituto Venezolano les presenta*
- *Favor de llamar a*
- *Tener que + infinitive*

Candidates' Weaknesses

Many candidates who attempted this question failed to show a solid command of grammar and knowledge of relevant vocabulary. Examples of errors included:

- Errors in Grammar
- Omission of the preposition *a* (*invita los estudiantes de español*)
- Incorrect use of *ser* and *estar* (*Yo soy organizando un curso*)
- Incorrect use of *por* and *para*

Errors in vocabulary

- *en el vacaciones de verano*
- *dinero* for *dólares* (*El curso cuesta doscientos dineros*)

Furthermore, there was evidence of poor mastery of the tenses to adequately identify the proposed activities that would be offered (*Hay cantando, bailar, juego fútbol*). Also, some responses were presented in the present continuous tense (to suggest that the course is taking place now) as opposed to future tense or immediate future (to suggest a proposed project). Candidates also seemed to have some knowledge of vocabulary but were challenged by the correct spelling. Evidence of this was seen in the following:

- *personnes* for *personas*
- *basketbol* for *baloncesto*
- *coarso/coarse/course* for *curso*

Other examples of weakness in language proficiency included:

- *por mucho información llamo*

Contextual Dialogue

It is your mother's birthday and you would like to buy her a cellular phone as a gift. You go to the store to make enquiries about the best model to buy and the cost.

Responses to ALL of the cues listed below MUST be included in the dialogue.

- Greetings and purpose of your visit
- Inquiry about types of phones that are available
- Discussion about price and features of the phone you wish to buy
- The final choice made
- Expression of gratitude/farewell

Candidates' Performance on the Contextual Dialogue

Candidates' Strengths

Most candidates observed the rubric and attempted to address all of the cues. Even when there were challenges to interpretation and comprehension, candidates were able to respond adequately to the demands of the question. Examples of good usage of language included:

- *Busco un regalo para el cumpleaños de mi mamá*
- *No tengo mucho dinero para gastar solamente*
- *Yo soy adinerado, entonces no hay problema con el dinero*
- *Me encanta mucho un descuento*

Candidates' Weaknesses

There was some difficulty with the responses that candidates provided to the questions. Cues 3 and 4 were left blank in many instances as candidates wrote those responses for Cues 1 and 2. There were some instances of misinterpretations where candidates did not clearly indicate the purpose of the visit (that the gift was for the mother). Some responses were:

- *Busco un Samsung Galaxy*
- *Quiero un teléfono*

Errors specific to grammar included:

- Use of *mirar* instead of *buscar* (*Miro un teléfono para mi mamá*)
- *¿Puedo ojos them?* to ask 'Can I see them?'
- Incorrect use of *gustar* (*Mi mamá gusta este modelo* instead of *A mi mamá le gusta...*)
- Improper placement of the negative word *no* (*el dinero es no problema*)
- Failure to distinguish between the adjective '*bueno*' and the adverb '*bien*' (*el celular no es bien*)
- *Bienvenido* for *De nada*
- *Cuando mucho* to ask 'How much?'

Vocabulary and spelling were also areas of concern, as candidates seemed to be unaware of certain words and the correct spelling of those words. For example:

- *Dollares* for *dólares*
- *Queiro* for *quiero*
- *Dineros* for *dinero*
- *Carro* for *caro*
- *Cheapo* for *barato*

Recommendations

Teachers should continue to provide the necessary exposure to these two question types and give students constant practice in developing the contextual announcement and dialogue.

Students should be exposed to basic vocabulary and expressions related to different types of announcements/advertisements. Some examples of pertinent phrases are: *hay/habrá, se busca, se ofrece, se presenta, atención, favor de, para más información.*

Students should be engaged in grammar exercises where they are assisted in recognizing their errors as well as those of their peers, and attempt to make the necessary corrections. Special attention must be given to the areas of weakness outlined in this report as well as those cited in previous reports so that the repeated errors may be noted and addressed. (Examples: the personal 'a', 'ser' and 'estar', 'por' and 'para', 'buscar' and 'mirar', subject/verb agreement, noun/adjective agreement).

Section IV (Question 6) – Reading Comprehension

This question assessed candidates' ability to read a passage in Spanish and then demonstrate comprehension skills by responding in English to questions posed in Spanish based on the passage. The passage contained vocabulary, grammar and structures suitable for candidates who have completed five years studying Spanish.

Candidates' Performance

Generally, candidates demonstrated an understanding of the passage, although they sometimes failed to provide responses that were sufficiently detailed to be awarded full marks.

Candidates' Strengths

It was heartening to see that unlike previous years, almost all the candidates observed the rubric and provided responses in English. Many responses covered all the elements of a full response and were rewarded accordingly.

Candidates' Weaknesses

Some candidates' responses lacked precision and clarity of expression. There was a level of ambiguity which sometimes caused candidates to lose marks because of the absence of pertinent, relevant and/or specific details. (Examples of these will be seen below in the incorrect responses cited).

Comments on Individual Questions

Question (a)

How does the author describe travelling with her friend Gatiana?

Suggested response: As an unforgettable experience.

Incorrect response: She described it as terrifying.

While many candidates responded correctly to this question, there were quite a few who interpreted *inolvidable* as incredible, invulnerable, explicit, unimaginable.

Question (b)

How does Gatiana feel about travelling by plane?

Suggested response: She is afraid.

Incorrect response: She does not feel good about travelling by plane.

The majority of candidates responded correctly. However, some candidates assumed that Gatiana had a fear of heights.

Question (c)

When was the first time that the author travelled with Gatiana?

Suggested response: Returning home from a conference in Trinidad.

Incorrect response: Recently.

Many candidates failed to access the full range of marks on this question. Some of the responses were vague, as seen in the incorrect response cited. Also, the preposition that some candidates used in their response changed the meaning and they communicated the opposite of what was considered an acceptable response. Many candidates offered the response ‘When they returned to a conference’ or ‘When they returned for a conference’.

Question (d)

What request did Gatiana make of the airline official and why?

Suggested response: To seat her next to the author because she (Gatiana) needed her.

Incorrect response: To have a seat near the window.

Many candidates responded appropriately to the first part of the question. They understood that Gatiana requested a seat next to her friend, but the reason they gave was very often inaccurate. Instead of *because she needed her*, many candidates simply stated ‘because it was necessary’. Some candidates considered themselves the author and responded ‘to sit next to me.’

Question (e)

What were Gatiana’s three concerns before boarding the plane?

Suggested response: If the plane was working well, if the pilot was experienced and if the air hostess could handle emergencies.

Incorrect response: If there was an emergency exit, what they would do in an emergency.

Many candidates understood the passage sufficiently well to be able to provide the three elements that comprised a full response. There were, however, responses that lacked the necessary details, or lacked clarity and were ambiguous. A noted example was ‘If they knew what to do in an emergency’.

Question (f)

What did the author do when the plane took off and why?

Suggested response: Spoke with Gatiana to try to calm her.

Incorrect response: She gave her friend tranquilizers.

Many candidates neglected to be specific and gave the response ‘The author spoke to her friend to keep calm.’ The ambiguity in this response resulted in a loss of marks. It is not clear here whether it

was the author or Gatiana who needed to be kept calm. Clarity is essential when responding to questions in a reading comprehension.

Question (g)

What suddenly happened during the flight?

Suggested response: There was turbulence.

Incorrect response: Suddenly something happened. It had an emergency.

Most responses to this question were correct, except where candidates were not familiar with the word *turbulencia*, and simply responded that ‘something happened’.

Question (h)

How did Gatiana react?

Suggested response: She grabbed the author’s hand screaming OR she started screaming saying that they were going to die.

Incorrect response: She reacted calmly. She had a heart attack.

There were several interpretations to the information presented in the passage. Perhaps many candidates were not familiar with the verb *agarró*. They thought Gatiana had gone crazy, that she had fainted, or suffered some injury which required her hospitalization.

Question (i)

Why did the author need medical attention?

Suggested response: Because of severe pains in her wrists/hands.

Incorrect response: Because she was not feeling well.

The incorrect response cited above was a very common one. Also, many candidates were not familiar with the word *muñecas* and indicated that the author had pain in the ear, in her feet, in her fingers. Some were very general in their response, and simply stated that ‘the author suffered’.

Question (j)

Explain the author’s reaction when Gatiana asked her when she would be travelling again.

Suggested response: She says she does not know because based on her last experience she does not want Gatiana to travel with her.

Incorrect response: She would not be travelling again.

As usual, the question that calls for an inference frequently poses a challenge and candidates do not very often score full marks. They tend not to include all of the essential elements that constitute the full response. Many candidates thought that the experience was so daunting for the author that the author was shocked and would never travel again.

Further Comments and Recommendations

Candidates are to be commended for adhering to the rubric. Candidates who were able to equate the amount of information needed to answer the questions with the amount of marks allocated for each are also highly commended.

We again urge teachers and students to refer to previous reports where websites were suggested as a means of helping students acquire vocabulary and strengthen comprehension skills. We reiterate the need to expose students to reading material in Spanish as this helps tremendously in vocabulary building. Extensive practice in reading comprehension must be encouraged so that students get in the habit of avoiding vague and incomplete responses.

Paper 03 – Oral Examination

The oral examination tested the ability of candidates to: (1) produce appropriate responses in Spanish to a number of situations testing specific functions, (2) read aloud a short passage in Spanish and (3) carry on a conversation in the target language by responding to questions based on four out of six topics set out in the syllabus, namely, Home and Family, Daily Routine, Travel and School, and Career.

Section I – Responses to Situations/Instructions

This section required candidates to produce appropriate responses in Spanish to situations/instructions described in English in keeping with the function specific to the situation. Performance on this section of the examination was generally satisfactory. For the most part, candidates were able to fulfill the requirements of the situations. Candidates managed to provide appropriate responses although many were hindered by a poor command of vocabulary.

The most common errors were:

- Use of *ser/estar*
- *¿Dónde es el libro?*
- *Yo es bien*

Subject/verb agreement

- *Tú puedo trabajar por el dinero*
- *Yo mira la película*
- *Nosotros ir al cine*

Use of *buen, bueno* and *bien*

- *No estoy muy bueno* (I'm not well)

Article/noun agreement

- *el platos*
- *El deberes*

Noun/adjective agreement

- *Es un buen película*
- *La película es aburrido*

Negative sentences

- *La beca es no tan importante*
- *Me no gusta*

Incorrect position of adjective

- *mi favorita película*

Conjugated verb after *poder*

- *¿Puedes busca el libro por favor?*

Incorrect position of pronouns

- *Voy a ayudar tu*

It should also be noted that some candidates responded to the situations by using reported speech instead of direct speech as required.

Recommendations

Candidates appear not to be fully aware of the functions they need to know in order to respond to the situations presented. The syllabus is very clear as to the functions which candidates are expected to be able to use to perform well in this section. Teachers are encouraged to develop exercises to adequately afford students the opportunity to practise these functions orally. Practice in responding to situations orally must begin in the early stages in the teaching/learning process and teachers must avoid the tendency to wait until the examination year to expose students to this skill.

Section II – Reading Passages

This section assessed candidates' ability to read a passage in Spanish (125–130 words) demonstrating correct pronunciation of discrete sounds, good intonation and fluency. Candidates exhibited a wide range of competencies in this section from very good to weak. Excellent readers exhibited a solid knowledge of the Spanish sound system, were well acquainted with the rules of stress and accentuation and read with admirable fluency.

Weaker candidates continue to be challenged by the reading component of the oral examination. It is indeed a cause for concern that after being exposed to the language for several years many candidates exhibit ignorance of the fundamentals of the Spanish sound system. Their pronunciation was faulty and anglicized in many cases. It was clear that many candidates did not know what the passages were about, thus they produced very disjointed reading.

The following are some of the problems which candidates presented:

- Failure to distinguish between the vowels *i* and *e*. For example, *recorrer* was pronounced as *ricorrer*, *economicamente* was rendered as *iconomicamente* and *destruyendo* was rendered as *distruyendo*
- The pronunciation of *g* continues to pose difficulties. Many candidates failed to differentiate between *g* before *a*, *o* and *u* and *g* before *e* and *i*. Problematic words were: *alguien*, *página*, *seguir*, *albergues*, *hogar*
- General problems in placing the stress where it belongs on the word especially with conjugated verbs. For example, *Anhelan*, *viven*, *desplazan*, *finalizan* (stress placed on final syllable)
- The anglicizing of cognates such as:
Experiencia, *posible*, *documentos*, *profesión*, *personalidades*

Other common errors

- *l* for *ll* (*Llevarse*, *llaman*, *bolsillo*)
- *n* for *ñ* (*Engañados*, *añadir*, *hogareños*)
- *r* for *rr* (*correo*, *ahorra*, *carreteras*, *herramientas*, *barril*)
- *s* and *z* (*Aprendizaje*, *enseñanza*)

Recommendations

It is clear that the deficiencies in reading as outlined above stem from inadequate preparation and practice. Teachers must ensure that the sound system of the language is understood from very early in the learning process. Syllabification and stress are major pitfalls which must be addressed from very early. Spanish must be constantly used in the classroom and opportunities must be created for students to produce the language as often as possible.

Section III – Guided Conversation

This section of the oral examination tests the ability of candidates to respond to a number of questions based on four topics. This year the topics on which the candidates were tested were Daily Routine, Home and Family, Travel and School, and Career. Candidates were asked four questions on each of the topics and were assessed on comprehension and spontaneity, fluency and expression.

This section of the oral examination continues to be the most challenging for candidates. Some candidates at the upper end conversed easily and with great accuracy. Their answers to the questions were spontaneous and tended to be extended, demonstrating a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical correctness. However, the vast majority of candidates struggled with this section, handicapped by a limited vocabulary and poor knowledge of grammatical structures. The constant request by candidates to have the questions repeated was a clear indicator that there was limited comprehension of the questions asked.

The errors in grammar evident in this section were much the same as those mentioned in Section I and included:

- General weakness in the conjugation and appropriate usage of verbs
- Lack of concord between noun/adjective and subject/verb
- Incorrect use of *ser* and *estar*, *por* and *para*
- Difficulty in using object pronouns

Many responses given were inaccurate in language. Many responses which required a verb in the third person, were given the first person singular. For example, *¿Qué tarea doméstica no le gusta hacer a tu mamá?* The response was: *No me gusta lavar las ventanas.*

Candidates clearly indicated from their responses weaknesses with verb conjugation and sentence formation. For example, *la computadora ayudame con estudiar.*

Vocabulary was also a weakness: *tarjetas* for *tareas*, *jugar* for *tocar*; for example, *me gusta jugar música.*

Recommendations

Teachers must ensure that the communicative approach to language is adopted in the classroom. As far as possible, teachers should use the target language in the classroom so that students will become comfortable hearing Spanish around them. Extensive use of Spanish in the classroom will not only strengthen students' listening and speaking skills, but will also increase their confidence when communicating in Spanish.