



## Oral component

### GENERAL COMMENTS

The oral component of the Spanish examination consists of two sections. The Conversation (approximately seven minutes) is about the student's personal world; for example, school and home life, family and friends, and interests and aspirations.

The second section, the Discussion (approximately eight minutes), focuses on aspects of the language and culture of the Spanish-speaking world, as prepared for their detailed study. The Detailed Study should be based on a sub-topic related to one or more of the prescribed topics. Please refer to the *VCE Spanish Study Design* for more information.

The majority of students demonstrated an understanding of the requirements of the examination. All students observed the appropriate greeting conventions when interacting with the assessors. However, some students introduced themselves by name, including their surname. This is not required and students should be reminded to avoid disclosing any such personal information and not to mention their school name.

### SPECIFIC INFORMATION

#### Section 1 – Conversation

The overall performance in this section was fairly good. Some students were able to engage in a good exchange and very comfortably provide information about themselves, their families, their school life, their friends, their free time activities, and their experiences in Spanish-speaking countries while visiting family or as exchange students. They also mentioned the subjects they studied at school and elaborated on why they had chosen those subjects, and which aspects were relevant to further studies or aspirations.

Most students conversed fluently, discussing and commenting on issues that came up in the course of the conversation. They presented ideas, information and opinions while maintaining the flow of the communication. Many students used accurate vocabulary and grammatical structures and very little English interference was noted. Many students used correct verb forms, particularly when the subjunctive mood was required. It is advisable to study verbs, moods and tenses during the year.

In this section of the examination, the majority of students were able to demonstrate very good management of the language. Their expression was clear and contained good grammatical structures. The pronunciation was also clear.

Students are required to advance the conversation and link with the assessors. In order to demonstrate their ability to meet the criteria, students should expand the conversation with comments and descriptions rather than, for example, simply giving the number of people in their family. Assessors will often prompt the student with phrases such as 'Could you elaborate on...', 'Tell us...', or 'Comment on...' so that students realise that the ability to **communicate** with appropriate **content** and the correct use of **language** should be demonstrated in this section.

Future students should keep in mind that preparation is the key to this task. Students are advised to prepare a variety of topics related to their personal world. It is recommended that they practise conversing on such topics in class with teachers and with other students.

#### Section 2 – Discussion

The main focus of this section is to discuss and explore aspects of the sub-topic in the Detailed Study. At the beginning of this section, students have one minute in which to indicate to assessors the sub-topic chosen. Students should briefly introduce the main focus of the sub-topic. During the discussion they will be required to mention the various texts they have studied in detail (for example, articles, poems, songs, plays, films and so on).

It is recommended that students use at least three different text types, and careful attention should be paid to the requirements as described in the *VCE Spanish Study Design*. This part of the examination consists of a discussion, therefore it is important to remind students that they must be prepared to express ideas and opinions about the texts



analysed, not simply retell the content of the short story or the film. They need to demonstrate an understanding of the deeper level of the studied text or texts.

In general, students demonstrated very good preparation of the different topics. They not only demonstrated a very good understanding of the area chosen, but also presented their topics very well by using a variety of vocabulary and accurate grammar.

Although the quality of the Discussion section for most students was excellent, it is important to ensure that students are reminded that the purpose of this section is not only to speak in Spanish but also to convey their understanding of the texts analysed in class.

The topic 'Celebrations', particularly festivals in Latin America, was one of the most popular topics and was very successfully presented by students.

### **Capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively**

Students must ensure that they are able to discuss their chosen sub-topic. This may involve, for example, explaining how the issues in the film portrayed the topic they are discussing. The assessors are interested in the student's opinions and ideas about the texts studied.

Many students discussed their texts in detail, presented various points of view and demonstrated that they had analysed the texts in depth. The students' ideas and opinions often made the discussions interesting and fruitful.

### **Relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas**

Overall, the majority of students demonstrated that they had spent time and effort preparing for this task and they achieved good results. Many students had chosen interesting texts. They expressed their points of view in depth and were able to support their opinions with evidence from the texts studied. Some students had prepared their topic very well and discussed and presented relevant information and ideas. However, a few students were poorly prepared and simply retold the story of a film or a novel. These students were not able to discuss the texts in depth, present opinions or present analytical arguments.

Some students who performed well were able to show their understanding of their sub-topic, made comments and comparisons which were rich and varied, as well as demonstrate an understanding of cultural aspects of their topic.

### **Clarity of expression**

Most students used a good range of vocabulary and grammatical structures. However, some students occasionally used an inappropriate style and register. Students are expected to comply with the cultural formalities of the language, such as the use of *usted* when addressing the assessors.

## **Written component**

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Most students understood the requirements of the written examination and were well prepared. Some sections of the paper required a response in English and others a response in Spanish. It is very important for students to answer in the correct language, as responses in the wrong language are considered incorrect and are not awarded marks. Students should read the tasks, follow instructions carefully and make use of the space provided for taking notes.

Teachers should make the students aware of the following.

- Students should attempt all questions.
- Responses in the wrong language will receive no credit.
- No credit will be given for notes or drafts. Marks will be awarded only for answers given in the space provided.
- If a student makes a minor English language mistake, yet produces a correct answer, full marks will be given.
- The meaning of the response should be conveyed accurately for marks to be awarded.
- In Section 3 – Writing in Spanish, students should comply with the word limit specified.
- Not all questions based on a text are purely factual; some are higher-order questions and require analysis, so that students can demonstrate that the text was understood at a deep level.



## **SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

### **Section 1 – Listening and responding**

#### **Part A – Answer in English**

In this section most students answered the questions correctly. The texts were very clear and the questions were based on the information heard on the recordings. Students are advised to listen carefully and to take notes during both readings of the text, as this will assist them in completing their answers.

##### **Text 1**

The first text consisted of a tourist guide announcement to a group of tourists visiting the city of La Habana, capital of Cuba. Appropriate answers could be obtained by carefully listening to the text.

##### **Question 1**

La Habana

##### **Question 2**

All of:

- The Law Palace
- The Revolution Square
- Carpentier Park.

##### **Question 3**

Both of:

- the tourist should let the Tourist Guide know beforehand whether they wanted a vegetarian meal
- let Sara know.

##### **Text 2**

The second text consisted of a dialogue or conversation between two friends, Luisa and Paco. Luisa had recently moved to a country house and works from home.

##### **Question 4**

- the Internet
- a computer

##### **Question 5**

Two of:

- climb trees
- ride their bikes
- spend time outdoors.

##### **Question 6**

Since moving to the countryside, Luisa:

- is more happy and relaxed
- takes her children to school
- goes on more outings with her family
- has more time to spend with her husband and they go for walks together
- no longer goes to the cinema or out for coffee with her friends, but she does not mind that.



## Part B – Answer in Spanish

### Text 3

This section consisted of an interview with a Danish traveller called Mette who regularly travels to Spain. Most students were able to respond to the questions on this text appropriately.

### Question 7

*Mette siente alegría, siente ganas de gritar ‘Hola España’, siente ganas de probar la comida española se siente como en su casa.* (She feels happy, she feels like eating Spanish food, she feels at home, she feels like saying ‘Hello Spain’.)

### Question 8

*Por cortesía, para no ofender, por amabilidad, por respetar la costumbre* (to be courteous, to avoid causing offence, to be kind and polite, and respect the custom)

### Question 9

*Abriendo su casa al ajeno, compartiendo la comida y la bebida, diciendo ‘aquí tienes tu casa’* (opening their house to a stranger, sharing their food and drinks and saying ‘you have a home here’)

## Section 2 – Reading and responding

### Part A – Answer in English

#### Text 4

This part consisted of an adapted piece of writing from *El Amor en los tiempos del Colera* (Love In The Time Of Cholera) by Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

### Question 10

*Se levantaba muy temprano en la mañana. Al amanecer.* (He used to get up very early in the morning/at the crack of dawn.)

### Question 11

- *Sales para los huesos* (salts for the bones)
- *Infusion de flores para el estomago* (infusion of flowers for the stomach)
- *Ajo par alas arterias* (garlic for artery complaints)
- *Ejercicios respiratorios* (breathing exercises)
- *Bromuro de Potasio* (potassium bromide)

### Question 12

- *Las criadas o sirvientas* (the housemaids)
- *El loro* (the parrot)

### Question 13

<i>Las actividades del Dr. Urbino fuera de su casa</i>	<i>Hora del día de estas actividades</i>	<i>Lugar donde se llevan a cabo las actividades</i>	<i>Medio de transporte usado</i>
<i>Dar clases de Medicina</i>	<i>En la mañana</i>	<i>Facultad de medicina</i>	<i>caminando</i>
<i>Visitar pacientes</i>	<i>En la tarde</i>	<i>Casa de los pacientes</i>	<i>Caminando</i>

### Question 14

*Novelas/Estudios historicos*

### Question 15

*El era metódico, organizado, rutinario, meticuroso, guardaba sus hábitos y costumbres, buen lector, espíritu festivo.* (he was methodical, organised, meticulous, liked things done at a particular time, he was a good reader, he was unassuming, he had a festive spirit)

### Question 16

*Su estudiante era el loro* (because the student was a parrot)



**Question 17**

The task consisted of giving a title to the writing and justifying it with reasons based on evidence supplied in the text.

**Part B – Answer in Spanish**

**Text 5**

This text consisted of a newspaper article.

**Question 18**

*Anunciar que se eligió una mujer como presidente, por primera vez en la historia en un país conservador como Chile* (to announce that for the first time in a conservative country a woman was elected president of the country)

**Question 19**

*Mas de 180 corresponsales y enviados especiales estaban presentes en Chile* (more than 180 foreign correspondents were in Chile)

**Question 20**

*Miles de personas salieron a las calles a celebrar a lo largo de todo el país* (thousands of people came out on the streets to celebrate)

**Section 3 – Writing in Spanish**

In preparing for this section, students are encouraged to practise different kinds of writing (informative, persuasive, evaluative, personal and imaginative) and the conventions that correspond to each text type. Students would benefit from practising the different writing styles and revising verbs and tenses.

**Question 21**

Students were asked to write a personal account about an experience that has changed his/her perspective on life.

Responses needed to:

- develop a narrative with a beginning, a middle and an ending
- contain a logical sequence of events
- correctly use tenses, including the preterit and imperfect tenses for describing and recounting past events, and use connectors
- contain a variety of vocabulary
- involve an engaging narrative.

Many students chose this question and produced very interesting pieces of writing. However, in some cases the writing was not well structured and lacked flavour or substance.

**Question 22**

Students were asked to write an informative piece of writing that consisted of a speech to the students of a school in Spain on the impact of the drought in Australia. The task required:

- salutations appropriate to the target audience
- identification and description of no less than three activities
- informative and factual language
- examples of the drought and measures taken by the speaker
- a logical sequence of ideas for the text type using present tense, connectors and vocabulary relevant to the topic
- informative and factual language.

**Question 23**

The task involved the narration of an imaginative story set in an antique shop.

Responses needed to:

- develop a story with a beginning, a middle and an ending
- contain a logical sequence of events
- correctly use tenses, including the preterit and imperfect tenses for describing and recounting past events, and use connectors
- contain a variety of vocabulary

# 2008 Assessment Report



- involve an engaging and entertaining narrative.

## Question 24

Students were asked to produce an evaluative piece of writing based on the following scenario: 'While choosing your subjects for next year, you discover that your favourite subject, photography, is not being offered. Write a formal letter to the school council persuading them to offer photography'.

Responses needed to:

- be a formal letter/be in formal register including the date, headings and proper letter conventions
- maintain a balance between personal and school advantages
- provide a conclusion
- use persuasive language, including present subjunctive in order to persuade
- include a logical sequence of ideas for the text type using connectors and relevant vocabulary.

## Question 25

This task consisted of writing an evaluative report for the newsletter of the school mentioning the advantages and disadvantages of a proposed bill which would prevent young people from obtaining a driver's licence before the age of 20.

Most students discussed a number of arguments. They demonstrated the capacity to present information and ideas with reasons, examples and evidence.

Students were expected to:

- use report format/impersonal language
- maintain a balance between advantages and disadvantages
- show correct use of language given the target audience
- provide a conclusion
- use evaluative language including present and future tense
- include a logical sequence of ideas for the text type using connectors and vocabulary relevant to the topic.

Many of the written pieces complied with the requirements of the task and were excellent. Some, however, lacked structure and content. It is recommended that students practise writing in different styles throughout the year. Reading texts in Spanish, for example, short stories, novels, articles and magazines, is one of the best ways to improve literacy in the target language.