



CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

CSEC[®] Modern Languages

**SYLLABUS
SUBJECT REPORTS**

Macmillan Education
4 Crinan Street, London, N1 9XW
A division of Springer Nature Limited
Companies and representatives throughout the world

www.macmillan-caribbean.com

ISBN 978-0-230-48192-3

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www.cxc.org

www.cxc-store.com

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First published 2014

This revised edition published June 2022

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CSEC Modern Languages

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

The syllabus has been 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. It is intended that these functions should be the core of the instructional planning process.

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.



CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE
CSEC®

MODERN LANGUAGES
SYLLABUS

Effective for examinations from May–June 2017

Published by the Caribbean Examinations Council

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The Modern Languages Syllabus (CXC 27/0/SYLL 15) was amended in 2015 for first examination in 2017.

Teaching is expected to commence on the amended syllabus in September 2015.

The amendments to the syllabus are indicated by italics.

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



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Modern Languages Syllabus

◆ 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 behaviours. 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, *Portuguese* and Spanish provides an opportunity for *students* to develop an understanding and appreciation of the cultural and historical contexts of societies in the Americas. Students will acquire the skills, attitudes and knowledge that will contribute to a 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 *three* of the languages in use in the *Americas*. As students develop the competence to listen, speak, read and write in French, *Portuguese* and Spanish and interpret aspects of the culture in which the languages are embedded, they acquire the means to facilitate deeper interaction with our 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, *Lusophone*¹ and Hispanic countries in the region.

In designing *this* 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, *Portuguese* and Spanish;

¹ *Lusophone* – Portuguese-speaking.



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

◆ GENERAL OBJECTIVES

On completion of the syllabus, students should:

1. understand and respond appropriately to spoken French, *Portuguese* and Spanish from a variety of sources;
2. communicate orally in French, *Portuguese* 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, *Portuguese* and Spanish;
6. communicate appropriately and accurately in writing in French, *Portuguese* and Spanish;
7. develop insight into the cultures of the Francophone, *Lusophone* and Hispanic peoples of the *continent*.

The General Objectives may be grouped under the following headings:

1. RECEPTIVE

On completion of the syllabus, students should:

- (a) understand the language as *it is* spoken clearly and simply;
- (b) 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

Students should be able to:

1. respond appropriately to spoken forms of French, *Portuguese* 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, *Portuguese* and Spanish;
4. respond appropriately to simple written statements and instructions in French, *Portuguese* 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, *Portuguese* 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 their experiences;
14. express ideas and opinions in continuous writing in French, *Portuguese* and Spanish, for example, in compositions, letters and dialogues.

◆ SUGGESTED TIMETABLE ALLOCATION

It is recommended that a minimum of five 40-minute periods per week, *over two academic years* or the equivalent be allocated to the syllabus.

◆ CERTIFICATION

The syllabus is offered for General Proficiency certification. A candidate's performance will be indicated on the certificate by an overall numerical grade on a six-point scale as well as a letter grade for each of four profile dimensions, namely, Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing.



◆ DEFINITION OF PROFILE DIMENSIONS

On completion of the syllabus, students are expected to develop skills under four profile dimensions:

- | | | |
|------------------|---|--|
| 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. |

◆ 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.

◆ FORMAT OF THE EXAMINATIONS

GENERAL PROFICIENCY

Paper 01
(1 hour 20 minutes)

A 60-item Multiple-Choice test in two Parts.

PART A – Listening Comprehension (30 Items)

Section I : (8 items)

Requires candidates to listen to a sentence and choose, from among four pictures in their test booklet, the picture that corresponds to the sentence.

Section II (8 items)

Requires candidates to listen to a sentence followed by a question or an incomplete statement. They should choose the most appropriate response from among the four options provided.

Section III: (6 items)

Requires candidates to listen to two selections in the target language followed by a number of questions. For each question they will choose the best response.

Section IV: (8 items)

Candidates are required to listen to a passage in the target language. Questions on the passage as well as four possible answers for each question are provided. They are to choose the most appropriate answer from among the four options provided.

PART B – Reading Comprehension (30 Items)

Section I: (8 items) *Eight sentences are given each containing a blank space. Candidates are required to choose the most appropriate response from the four options provided.*

Section II: (8 items) *Candidates are given a short selection with blank spaces. They are required to choose the response that is grammatically correct from among the four options provided.*

Section III: (7 items) *Candidates are given a short selection with blank spaces. They are required to choose the most appropriate response from the four options provided.*

Section IV: (7 items) *Candidates are given TWO reading selections. For each selection, questions are given. They are to choose the best response from the four options provided.*

Paper 02
(2 hours 15 minutes) A written paper in **four** Sections, one question in each Section. All sections and questions are compulsory.

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

Section II: *Requires candidates to write an informal letter of about 130–150 words in the target language.*

Section III: *Requires candidates to write a contextual dialogue of between 80–100 words and to complete information using cues in English.*

Section IV: *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. The examination has three Sections.

Candidates will be required to

- (i) respond orally to situations given in English;*
- (ii) read a passage aloud;*
- (iii) participate in guided conversation on selected everyday topics.*

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

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

Section III:

*Requires candidates to participate by responding to four questions on each of **four** topics.*

GUIDELINES FOR PAPER 03

The Mark Scheme for Paper 03, the Oral Examination, provides a clear guide of what is required from the candidates for each of the three aspects of the examination (see Mark Scheme at end of syllabus). Teachers should use the Mark Scheme and the following guidelines in preparing students for the Paper 03 examination.

Situational responses

Candidates will be required to respond orally to situations and/or instructions given in English.

When preparing students for this Section of the examination it is crucial that they are familiar with the different functions listed in the syllabus. Each situation responds to a function, for example, requesting, thanking or expressing condolences, to name a few. Students should be taught how to recognise the functions and to respond appropriately to them.

They should be guided to the quality of responses needed. They should know that one word answers, such as 'thanks' and 'yes' and 'no', do not reflect how much of the language they know. At the same time, they should be warned that answers that are too long may incur penalties for grammar. An ideal response is one that is appropriate with only the essential information required. Students will have an opportunity in the general question Section of the examination to demonstrate how much of the language they know.

Reading passages

Candidates will be required to read a passage aloud.

Teachers should ensure that students are very familiar with the sounds specific to the language which they are learning. Students must be familiar with the:

- (a) vowel sounds;*
- (b) the changes in sounds depending on where the letters are placed in the word as well as the variations of sounds from one region or country to the other;*
- (c) intonation and stress.*

Teachers should therefore ensure that students are familiar with the rules of accentuation, intonation and stress.

Guided conversation

*Candidates will be required to participate in conversation by responding to 4 questions on each of **four** topics. The guided conversations are based on the following topics:*

- (a) Home and Family.*
- (b) School and Career.*

- (c) Sports and Recreation.
- (d) Daily Routines.
- (e) Shopping.
- (f) Travel.

When preparing students for this section of the examination teachers should ensure that students:

- (a) are familiar with the interrogatives;*
- (b) listen carefully to the entire question and to what the question is asking before they respond;*
- (c) avoid responses that are simply 'yes' and 'no'. Encourage them to provide a comprehensive answer. There is no penalty for saying too much;*
- (d) vary their vocabulary as much as possible, using synonyms and idiomatic expressions.*

WEIGHTING OF EXAMINATION COMPONENTS

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 on pages 10–32 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.

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

Simple Present

Passé Composé

Simple Past

Future

Imperfect

Pluperfect

*Past Historic (Passé Simple)

Conditional

Spanish

Simple Present

Present

Continuous/Progressive

Present Perfect

Preterit(e)

Future

Imperfect

Pluperfect

Past Continuous

Conditional

Portuguese

(Simple) Present

Present Continuous/Progressive

Present Perfect

Preterit(e)

Future

Imperfect

**Pluperfect*

Past Continuous/Progressive

Conditional

*For recognition only.



Moods

French

Indicative
Imperative
Infinitive
Present Subjunctive

Spanish

Indicative
Imperative
Infinitive
Present Subjunctive
Imperfect Subjunctive

Portuguese

Indicative
Imperative
Infinitive
Personal Infinitive
Present Subjunctive
Imperfect Subjunctive
Future Subjunctive

Voice

Active Voice
Passive Voice

1. ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS	SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS		
		FRENCH	SPANISH	PORTUGUESE
1.1 Greetings and responses	In the classroom, in public places, at home.	Bonjour / Bonsoir Ça va? Salut Quoi de neuf? Très bien, merci. A vous aussi/A vous de même	Buenos días / Buenas tardes ¿Que tal?/ ¿Como te va? ¡Hola! ¿Qué pasa? ¿Qué hay de nuevo? Muy Bien Igualmente	<i>Bom dia / Boa tarde</i> <i>Como vai você?/Tudo bem?/Como estão as coisas?/ Que tal?</i> <i>Oi/Olá</i> <i>O que há de novo?</i> <i>Muito bom</i> <i>Igualmente</i>
1.2 Farewells	In the classroom, in the home, in the street, in social situations, at the airport, at the train station.	Au revoir, à bientôt/ à tout à l'heure / à plus tard. Bonne nuit / Bon voyage	!Hasta la vista! !Hasta luego! Adios Vaya con Dios! Buen viaje!	<i>Até logo! /Até breve!/Até mais!</i> <i>Adeus!</i> <i>Vá com Deus! / Fique com Deus</i> <i>Boa viagem</i>
1.3 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	<i>Eu quero apresentar...</i> <i>Este é</i> <i>Esta é</i>

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS		SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS		
			FRENCH	SPANISH	PORTUGUESE
1.4	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	<i>O senhor, a senhora Seu/Dona O meu amigo/a minha amiga Querido/a</i>
1.5	Beginning and ending of letters	From the country of the target language to the home country and vice versa, excuses, invitations.	Cher + prénom. Mon cher, Je vous (t') embrasse Amitiés Bien des choses Grosses bises, gros bisous Ecris-moi vite	Estimado amigo, Querido, Un abrazo de tu amigo Con cariño Besos y abrazos/ Cariños y saludos de	<i>Prezado senhor/Prezada senhora/Caro senhor Cara senhora Querido/Querida Um abraço do seu amigo Com amor, com carinho Beijos e abraços</i>
1.6	Holiday Greetings	At Christmas, New Year, Easter.	Joyeux Noël, Bonne Année Joyeuses Pâques Bonne Fête Bonnes vacances Meilleurs voeux	Feliz Navidad/ Feliz Año Neuvo/ Próspero año nuevo Felices Pascuas	<i>Feliz Natal/ Feliz/Próspero Ano Novo/ Feliz Páscoa</i>

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS		SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS		
			FRENCH	SPANISH	PORTUGUESE
1.7	Birthday wishes and other greetings for other festive days/celebrations	At home, in the street, at fêtes.	Bon anniversaire Bonne fête des Mères Bonne fête des Pères	Feliz cumpleaños Feliz día de Madres Feliz día de Padres	<i>Feliz Aniversário/Parabéns! Feliz Dia das Mães Feliz Dia dos Pais</i>
1.8	Toasts	Dinners, Weddings, Flag-raising ceremonies, State visits.	Vive.....! Que.....! A votre/ta santé!	!Qué viva.....! !Salud!	<i>Viva! Saúde!</i>
1.9	Thanking, expressing gratitude	Letter, social situations.	Merci Je vous remercie Je vous suis reconnaissant(e) Etre obligé Merci bien/ beaucoup Je vous (t') en prie De rien Il n'y a pas de quoi.	Muchas gracias Mil gracias De nada No hay de que	<i>Obrigado/a Muito obrigado/a De nada Não há de que! Não foi nada!</i>
1.10	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!	<i>Sinto muito Desculpe!/Desculpas</i>

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS		SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS		
			FRENCH	SPANISH	PORTUGUESE
1.11	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! Quel dommage!/ Hélas C'est dommage Tant pis	Lo siento mucho ¡Qué lástima!	<i>Sinto muito</i> <i>Que pena!</i> <i>Que lástima!</i> <i>Tanto faz</i>
1.12	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!	<i>Parabéns para você!</i> <i>Parabéns!</i> <i>Muitas felicidades!</i>
1.13	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!	<i>Boa sorte!</i> <i>Que tudo esteja/vá bem!</i> <i>Te desejo...</i>
1.14	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!	<i>Os meus pêsames!</i> <i>Sinto muito</i>

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS		SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS		
			FRENCH	SPANISH	PORTUGUESE
1.15	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! ¡Oye! ¡Ojo! ¡Hola!	<i>Cuidado!</i> <i>Veja!</i> <i>Meu Deus!/Nossa!</i> <i>Olhe!</i> <i>Ouçá!</i> <i>Oi/Olá!</i>
1.16	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	<i>Querer</i> <i>Eu gostaria</i> <i>Faça-me o favor</i> <i>Tenha a bondade de</i> <i>Por favor</i>
1.17	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	<i>Querer</i> <i>Eu gostaria de</i> <i>Convidar para...</i> <i>Gostar</i> <i>Se não for inconveniente/</i> <i>Se não importar</i>

2. GIVING, SEEKING AND RESPONDING TO INFORMATION

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS	SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS		
		FRENCH	SPANISH	PORTUGUESE
2.1 Identifying	In the home, in school, in stores and banks, in restaurants/ hotels/ airports/train stations/ports, in the city, in the country.	<p>Etre Qu'est-ce que c'est? C'est, ce sont. Est-ce que c'est...? Etes-vous mécanicien? A qui est le livre? Il est français? Il s'appelle..... Ta maison, c'est laquelle? Je suis le cadet/l'aîné</p>	<p>Ser ¿Qué es? Es/son. ¿Qué es esto? ¿Es Vd. mecánico? ¿De quién es el libro? ¿El es venezolano? El se llama... ¿Cuál es tu casa? Yo soy el menor/mayor</p>	<p>Ser Qual é / o que é É / São Que é isso? O senhor é o mecânico? Este livro é de quem? Ele é brasileiro? Ele se chama.... Qual é sua casa? Eu sou o caçula/o menor/maior</p>
2.2 Completing an application form	Offices, embassies, educational institutions, job locations.	<p>Nom Adresse Âge Date et lieu de naissance</p>	<p>Nombre Dirección Edad Fecha y lugar de nacimiento</p>	<p>Nome Endereço Idade Data e lugar de nascimento</p>
2.3 Describing	Description of persons, places, things.	<p>Il y a C'est le premier/dixième Un vieil home Une voiture bleue Une femme mariée</p>	<p>Hay Primero a décimo Un buen muchacho Un hombre rico Una mujer casada</p>	<p>Há Primeiro ao décimo Um bom garoto Um homen rico Uma mulher casada</p>

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS	SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS		
		FRENCH	SPANISH	PORTUGUESE
2.4	Describing how things are done	All settings and topics.	Bien Vite	<i>Bem</i> <i>Rápido</i>
			Lentement Avec soin Sans hésiter Il est sorti en courant	<i>Lentamente</i> <i>Com cuidado</i> <i>Sem hesitar</i> <i>Saiu correndo</i>
2.5	Describing weather, time, season	Temperate and tropical places.	Il pleut Il fait beau au clair de /la lune	<i>Está chovendo</i> <i>O tempo está bom</i> <i>Há lua/A lua brilha</i>
			Il est midi Il est deux heures Tôt Tard Ce mois Cette année Ce matin Aujourd'hui <i>Hier,</i> <i>cette nuit</i> <i>Hier soir</i> La semaine prochaine La semaine dernière L'année prochaine L'année dernière Il y a deux ans/deux jours	<i>É meio-dia</i> <i>São duas horas</i> <i>Cedo</i> <i>Tarde</i> <i>Este mês</i> <i>Este ano</i> <i>Esta manhã</i> <i>Hoje</i> <i>Ontem</i> <i>Esta noite</i> <i>À noite</i> <i>Próxima semana</i> <i>Semana passada</i> <i>Próximo ano</i> <i>Ano passado</i> <i>Dois anos atrás/há dois anos, em dois dias</i>

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS	SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS		
		FRENCH	SPANISH	PORTUGUESE
Describing weather, time, season (cont'd)		Il attend depuis deux jours	<i>Hace dos días que espera</i>	<i>Ele espera há dois dias/Fazem dois dias que ele espera</i>
		Il attendait depuis deux jours	<i>Hacía dos días que esperaba</i>	
		Nous rentrons tôt le lundi	<i>Regresamos temprano el lunes</i>	<i>Voltamos para casa Segunda-feira cedo</i>
		Je pars lundi	<i>Me voy el lunes</i>	<i>Vou embora na segunda-feira</i>
		On se verra dans deux jours	<i>Nos vemos en dos días</i>	<i>Vemos-nos em dois dias</i>
2.6 Narrating	Imaginative and personal incidents.	Au printemps,	<i>En primavera</i>	<i>Na primavera</i>
		En été.	<i>En el verano</i>	<i>No verão</i>
		La saison des pluies/l'hivernage	<i>El verano</i>	<i>O verão</i>
		Un cyclone	<i>El invierno</i>	<i>O inverno</i>
		Un ouragan	<i>El ciclón</i>	<i>O ciclone</i>
		<i>La saison sèche /le carême</i>	<i>El huracán</i>	<i>O furacão</i>
		L'argent a été volé	<i>La estación lluviosa/seca</i>	<i>A estação seca/chuvosa</i>
		On a volé l'argent	<i>El dinero fue robado</i>	<i>O dinheiro foi roubado</i>
			<i>Se robó el dinero/Robaron el dinero</i>	<i>Ele roubou o dinheiro</i>
				<i>Eles roubaram o dinheiro</i>
				<i>Ele decidiu fazer</i>
				<i>Eu queria ir para casa</i>

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS		SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS		
			FRENCH	SPANISH	PORTUGUESE
	Narrating (cont'd)		La porte s'ouvre Il allait tomber Elle venait de manger quand... Il a décidé de faire Il voulait faire	<i>Se abre la puerta</i> El iba a caer Acababa de comer cuando... Decidió hacer Quería ir a casa	<i>A porta se abre</i> <i>Ele cairia</i> <i>Ele acabou de comer</i> <i>quando ...</i> <i>Ele decidiu fazer</i> <i>Queria ir para casa</i>
2.7	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, <i>biologie</i> , français, espagnol...	Quisiera carne/mantequilla/ naranjas No quiero leche Toma ¿Tienes moneda?...No tengo Uno..a un millón Estudio la química, la biología, el español	<i>Eu gostaria de</i> <i>carne / manteiga /</i> <i>laranjas</i> <i>Eu não quero leite</i> <i>Há um</i> <i>Tem troco? ... Não tenho</i> <i>Um..a um milhão</i> <i>Eu estudo química,</i> <i>biologia, português,</i> <i>espanhol, francês</i> <i>Dois quilos de ...</i> <i>Um litro de ...</i> <i>Uma garrafa de ...</i> <i>Quanto/a (s)</i> <i>Muito/a (s)/ bastante</i> <i>Demais / demasiado</i> <i>Suficiente</i> <i>Nenhum(a) /nada</i>
			Deux kilos de ... Un litre de Une bouteille de Combien de? Beaucoup de Bien des Trop de Assez de Aucun	Dos kilos de... Un litro de... Una botella de... ¿Cuántos? Mucho Demasiado Bastante Ninguno	

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS	SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS		
		FRENCH	SPANISH	PORTUGUESE
2.8 Locating	All settings and topics.	<p>Au/à la Sur Dans Contre, à côté de Au fond de/autour de</p> <p>L'Afrique L'Europe Le Sénégal</p> <p>Le Canada Les Etats-Unis La Havane La France La Martinique Le Havre</p> <p><i>Chez moi</i> <i>Vers</i> <i>En haut</i></p> <p><i>Là-bas</i> <i>Tout droit</i> <i>A droite, à gauche,</i> <i>L'est, À l'ouest, dans le nord de</i></p>	<p>Sobre</p> <p>En Al lado de Alrededor de</p> <p>La Argentina El Perú El Canadá Los Estados Unidos La Habana</p> <p>En casa</p> <p>Hacia arriba, Hacia abajo</p> <p>Todo derecho A la derecha, A la izquierda</p>	<p><i>Sobre</i></p> <p><i>Em</i> <i>Ao lado de/em torno de/ao redor de</i></p> <p><i>A África</i> <i>A Europa</i> <i>O Senegal</i> <i>A Argentina</i> <i>O Peru</i> <i>O Canadá</i> <i>Os Estados Unidos</i> <i>Havana</i> <i>A França</i> <i>A Martinica</i></p> <p><i>O Brasil</i> <i>Portugal</i></p> <p><i>Em casa, para casa</i></p> <p><i>Acima / em cima</i> <i>Para baixo / embaixo</i> <i>Lá</i> <i>Em frente</i> <i>À direita, à esquerda</i></p>

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS		SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS		
			FRENCH	SPANISH	PORTUGUESE
Locating (cont'd)			<i>au nord/ nord-ouest, au sud/ au sud-est, À l'ouest, dans le nord de</i>	Al norte/noreste Al sur/sudeste	<i>o norte/nordeste, o sul/sudeste, ao oeste, ao norte</i>
2.9	Questioning and Inquiring	All settings and topics.	Quoi? Lequel? Où? Pourquoi? Quand? Comment? /Que? Qui? Je ne sais pas si.. Je me demande si... N'est-ce pas?	¿Qué? ¿Cuál? ¿Dónde? ¿Por qué? ¿Cuándo? ¿Cómo? ¿Quién? ¿No sé si...? ¿Me pregunto....? ¿Verdad?	<i>O quê? Qual? Onde? Por quê? Quando? Como? Quem? Não sei se ... Eu me pergunto se...? Verdade? / Não é?</i>

3. EXPRESSING OPINIONS

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS	SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS		
		FRENCH	SPANISH	PORTUGUESE
3.1 Expressing agreement and disagreement	All settings and topics	ne..pas ne..que, seulement	No. No más de/que, solamente	<i>Não.</i> <i>Não mais do que / que,</i> <i>somente (só)</i>
		Ni...non plus “Ne” without “pas” “Pas” without “ne” Avoir raison/tort	Ni...tampoco Tener razón/Equivocarse	<i>Nem ... nem/nem....</i> <i>tampouco</i> <i>Equivocar-se, errar</i> <i>Ter razão</i>
		Oui, si, mais si. Non, mais non. Pas question.	Sí, no. ¡De ninguna manera! <i>¡Nunca!</i>	<i>Sim, não.</i> <i>De jeito nenhum!</i> <i>Nunca</i>
3.2 Expressing confirmation and denial	All settings and topics	Entendu, bien sûr. être d'accord Etre d'accord avec qqn Etre d'accord pour Croire, penser, voir Entendre	¡Bueno! Estar de acuerdo con Creer, ver, parecer <i>Entender</i>	<i>Bem! Ok!</i> <i>Concordar com/estar de</i> <i>acordo com</i> <i>Crer, ver, parecer</i> <i>Entender</i>
		Il est évident que Il n'y a pas de doute que. Il ne fait aucun doute J'estime que..	Es claro que/ <i>es evidente</i> <i>que</i> No hay duda que Creo que...	<i>É claro que</i> <i>Não há dúvida, sem</i> <i>dúvida(s)</i> <i>Creio que, acredito que..</i>

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS		SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS		
			FRENCH	SPANISH	PORTUGUESE
	Expressing confirmation and denial (cont'd)		Je sais que Je pense que Nier C'est faux	Sé que ... Negar <i>No es verdad</i>	<i>Eu sei que...</i> <i>Negar</i> <i>Não é verdade</i>
3.3	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!	<i>Poder</i> <i>Talvez, tomara que, acaso,</i> <i>Expressões impessoais</i> <i>Estar seguro/a</i> <i>Certamente! Sem dúvida!</i> <i>Absolutamente!</i> <i>Claro!</i>
3.4	Expressing opinions		Je pense que Je crois que Je dirais A son avis, selon/ d'après Ça se dit	Creo, pienso, me parece A mi parecer En mi opinión	<i>Creio que, penso que, parece-me que, na minha opinião, a meu ver</i>

4. EXPRESSING EMOTIONS, ATTITUDES AND OTHER RESPONSES

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS		SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS		
			FRENCH	SPANISH	PORTUGUESE
4.1	Expressing approval, happiness, liking, satisfaction, disapproval, dislike, dissatisfaction	All settings and topics	Vouloir, désirer, aimer être bien, être content de Approuver, plaire à, Satisfaire Allez! Chouette Zut alors! C'est bon C'est bien ne pas aimer détester Être contre/ désapprouver	Gustar, estar bien, estar contento con, de Satisfacer ¡Dale! ¡Qué asco! Está bien No tener inconveniente <i>No querer</i> <i>Odiar</i> <i>Estar contra</i>	<i>Gostar de, estar bem, estar contente com/por</i> <i>Aprovar, agradar a</i> <i>Satisfazer</i> <i>Ótimo</i> <i>Que nojo!</i> <i>Está bem</i> <i>Não gostar de</i> <i>Detestar, odiar</i> <i>Estar/ser contra</i> <i>Desaprovar</i>
4.2	Expressing preference	All settings and topics	Préférer/aimer mieux	Preferir, gustar más, más que, menos que.	<i>Preferir, gostar mais (do) que/menos (do) que</i>
4.3	Expressing interest, lack of interest	All settings and topics	Negation Impersonal expressions Plaire à être intéressé par S'intéresser à Avoir envie de	Negation Impersonal expressions Tener interés en Interesarse en Quisiera	<i>Negação</i> <i>Expressões impessoais</i> <i>Ter interesse em</i> <i>Interessar-se por</i> <i>Querer</i> <i>Estar a fim de</i>

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS		SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS		
			FRENCH	SPANISH	PORTUGUESE
4.4	Expressing surprise	All settings and topics	<p>S'étonner de Être surpris être étonné Surprendre Ça m'étonne que + subjunctive Ça ne m'étonné pas. C'est étonnant/ surprenant Quelle surprise Quelle joie! Ça alors!</p>	<p>Estar sorprendido</p> <p>¡Qué sorpresa! ¡ Qué alegría!</p>	<p><i>Estar surpreso/a</i> <i>Surpreender-se</i> <i>Admirar-se com</i> <i>Maravilhar-se com</i> <i>Ficar pasmo/a com</i></p> <p><i>Que surpresa!</i> <i>Que alegria!</i> <i>Nossa!</i></p>
4.5	Expressing hope	All settings and topics	<p>Penser, espérer, compter, vouloir</p>	<p>Esperar, pensar Que + subjunctive</p>	<p><i>Esperar que, pensar que</i> <i>+ subjuntivo</i> <i>Tomara que + subjuntivo</i> <i>Gostaria de/que</i></p>
4.6	Expressing worry, fear	All settings and topics	<p>The expletive Ne Avoir peur, craindre de + infinitive, craindre que + subjunctive S'inquiéter, se soucier. Oh là là!</p>	<p>Temer, tener miedo</p> <p>Inquietarse</p>	<p><i>Temer</i> <i>Ter medo de</i> <i>Inquietar-se com</i> <i>Recear que</i> <i>Tomara que não... + subjuntivo</i></p>

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS	SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS		
		FRENCH	SPANISH	PORTUGUESE
4.7	Insisting	All settings and topics	Insister sur/pour que + subjunctive	<i>Insistir em</i>
			Avoir l'intention de	<i>Pensar que</i>
			Répéter	<i>Repetir</i>
				<i>Dever (p.ex. você deveria...)</i>
4.8	Expressing want, wish, desire	All settings and topics	Devoir	<i>Dever</i>
			Savoir	<i>Saber</i>
			Rappeler	<i>Lembrar que/de</i>
			Il faut + infinitive	<i>É necessário que</i>
			Il faut que + subj.	<i>É preciso que</i>
			Il est nécessaire que + subj.	
			Désirer	<i>Desejar</i>
			Chercher	<i>Procurar</i>
			Avoir besoin de	<i>Querer</i>
			Aimer	<i>Ter vontade de</i>
			Vouloir	<i>Necessitar</i>
			Tenir à	<i>Fazer questão de</i>
			Il me faut	<i>Ter a bondade de</i>
			Avoir la bonté de	<i>Fazer o favor de</i>

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS		SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS		
			FRENCH	SPANISH	PORTUGUESE
4.9	Expressing willingness	All settings and topics	Vouloir bien Voulez-vous...? Volontiers Avec plaisir	Querer Tener la bondad de Con gusto	<i>Querer</i> <i>Ter vontade de</i> <i>Com prazer</i>
4.10	Granting/ seeking permission	All settings and topics	Permettre à .. de Dire à ... de Donner la permission à ... <i>D'accord</i> Laisser Demander la permission Faire une demande Pouvoir Permettez-moi Je me permets de S'il vous plaît	Permitir Dejar Dar permiso a <i>De acuerdo</i> Rogar Pedir Poder Permítame Me permite + infinitive <i>Por favor</i>	<i>Permitir</i> <i>Deixar</i> <i>Dar permissão para</i> <i>Estar de acordo (com)</i> <i>Pedir permissão para</i> <i>Poder</i> <i>Permita-me</i> <i>Deixar fazer</i> <i>Por favor</i>
4.11	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	<i>Dever</i> <i>Ter de/que</i> <i>Precisar</i> <i>Necessitar</i> <i>Ser obrigado/a a</i>

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS		SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS		
			FRENCH	SPANISH	PORTUGUESE
4.12	Expressing prohibition	All settings and topics	Défendre à ... de Interdire à ... de Arrêter de Empêcher de Ne pas permettre	Impedir Dejar de Evitar Prohibirse	<i>Impedir</i> <i>Proibir</i> <i>Evitar</i> <i>Deixar de</i>
			Il est interdit de Il ne faut pas	Se prohíbe No se debe	<i>É proibido...</i> <i>Não pode...</i>
4.13	Expressing commands, instructions, directions	All settings and topics	Infinitives Negative infinitives Voulez-vous	Infinitives Negative infinitives Tener la bondad	<i>Infinitivos</i> <i>Infinitivos negativos</i> <i>Fazer o favor de...</i> <i>Por favor, ... + imperativo</i>
			Question forms: positive and negative Imperatives	Question forms: <i>positive and negative</i> Imperatives	<i>Imperativos positivos e negativos</i>
4.14	Suggesting a course of action	All settings and topics	1 st person plural imperative Question forms Suggérer/proposer de	1 st person plural imperative Question forms Sugerir/proponer	<i>Imperativo na 1ª pessoa do plural</i> <i>Formas de perguntar</i> <i>Sugerir/propor</i>
			Dire de Inviter à *Si + the imperfect tense Aller + infinitive	<i>Invitar</i> ¿Qué te parece si ...? Ir a + infinitive	<i>O que acha de...?</i> <i>Que tal + 1ª pessoa do plural...?</i> <i>Não gostaria de...?</i>

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS		SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS		
			FRENCH	SPANISH	PORTUGUESE
	Suggesting a course of action (cont'd)		Valoir la peine On y va? Pourquoi pas?	<i>Vale la pena</i> ¿Por qué no?	<i>Vamos + infinitivo...?</i> <i>Vale a pena...</i> <i>Vamos?</i> <i>Por que não?</i>
4.15	Advising	All settings and topics	Positive and negative Il vaudrait mieux que + subj. Conseiller Donner des conseils Il vaut mieux Ça vaut la peine	Positive and negative Aconsejar Dar consejo Más vale Vale la pena	<i>Positivo e negativo</i> <i>Aconselhar</i> <i>Dar conselho a</i> <i>Vale a pena...</i> <i>Seria melhor se...</i> <i>Penso que é melhor...</i>
4.16	Warning	All settings and topics	Conditional or If clauses Prévenir, avertir, alerter Exclamations: Attention!	Conditional or If clauses Avisar, prevenir Exclamations: ¡Cuidado! ¡Ojo! ¡Peligro!	<i>Condicional ou formas com "se"</i> <i>Avisar, prevenir, alertar</i> <i>Exclamações:</i> <i>Cuidado!,</i> <i>Perigo! Atenção! Olhe!</i> <i>Ô/Ai, meu Deus!</i>

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS	SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS		
		FRENCH	SPANISH	PORTUGUESE
4.17 Promising	All settings and topics	Aller + infinitive Promettre. Offrir Donner la parole	Ir a + infinitive Prometer Ofrecer/ofrecerse Dar la palabra	<i>Ir + infinitivo</i> <i>Prometer</i> <i>Oferecer, oferecer-se</i> <i>para</i> <i>Dar a palavra</i>
4.18 Threatening	All settings and topics	Aller + infinitive Menacer Conditional clauses Attention! Si tu continues à + inf...future	Ir a + infinitive Amenazar Conditional clauses	<i>Ir + Infinitivo</i> <i>Ameaçar</i> <i>Orações condicionais</i> <i>Atenção!</i> <i>Se você continuar a...</i>

5. CONNECTIVES

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS		SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS		
			FRENCH	SPANISH	PORTUGUESE
5.1	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	<i>Pois, logo, então, depois, enfim, assim que, em lugar de</i>
5.2	Addition	All settings and topics	Et puis, ensuite, de plus	y, e, de ahí, también, además	<i>E, além de/disto, também, ademais, com</i>
5.3	Reinforcing	All settings and topics	En plus, de plus, en outre, et encore, d'ailleurs	Además, es más, aun más, sobre todo	<i>Além disto, além do mais, sobretudo, aliás</i>
5.4	Similarity	All settings and topics	Aussi bien que, comme, également	Así como, tanto como	<i>Assim como, tanto ... quanto</i>
5.5	Introduction	All settings and topics	Il y avait une fois Il était une fois Une fois Par un...jour	Había una vez Una vez	<i>Era uma vez... Certa vez Um/certo dia Há um tempo Tempos atrás</i>
5.6	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	<i>Resumindo Em suma Por fim Finalmente Finalizando</i>

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS		SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS		
			FRENCH	SPANISH	PORTUGUESE
5.7	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 consequence	<i>De maneira/modo que</i> <i>Por/como consequência</i> <i>Como resultado</i> <i>Por causa de</i> <i>Orações subordinadas de consequência</i>
5.8	Deduction, induction	All settings and topics	Donc, ainsi, et ainsi de suite	Así, pues, por lo tanto, por eso	<i>Ou seja, pois, portanto, por isso, assim sendo</i>
5.9	Conclusion	All settings and topics	Pour conclure, finalement, en fin de compte, en conclusion	En conclusión, por fin, finalmente	<i>Concluindo, por fim, finalmente, afinal</i>
5.10	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	<i>Quer dizer, ou seja, em outras palavras, explicando de outra forma/maneira/jeito</i>
5.11	Exemplification/ illustration	All settings and topics	Par exemple Et caetera Selon/d'après Citer Donner des exemples	Por ejemplo etcétera Según Citar Dar ejemplos	<i>Por exemplo</i> <i>etc.</i> <i>Segundo, de acordo com</i> <i>Citar</i> <i>Dar exemplos</i>

FUNCTIONS/NOTIONS		SETTINGS AND TOPICS	GRAMMAR AND LEXIS		
			FRENCH	SPANISH	PORTUGUESE
5.12	Contrast and coordination	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	<i>Ao contrário, mas, senão, por outro lado</i> <i>E</i> <i>(nem)... nem</i>
5.13	Replacement	All settings and topics	Sinon, au lieu de, à la place de, en échange Pourtant, cependant, néanmoins. *Quoique/bien que + subj.	En lugar de, en vez de Sin embargo; no obstante, aún Aunque	<i>Em lugar de, ao invés de, contudo, todavia, não</i> <i>Obstante, ainda (que)</i>

Suggested Teaching and Learning Activities

Teachers are encouraged to engage students in activities such as those listed below as they seek to achieve the objectives of the syllabus.

TOPIC	FUNCTION	SUGGESTED TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES
Home and Family	Describing/Similarity	<p>Students will research a typical Brazilian, French West Indian, Haitian or Hispanic family and make comparisons with their own family. This will be presented orally to the class.</p> <p>Students will create a dialogue between themselves and a facebook friend in which they discuss similarities and differences between their families, and how they feel about certain members of their family.</p>
School and Career	Giving, seeking and responding to information	<p>Students will respond by email to an advertisement for a certain job. They will provide personal information, educational qualifications and explain why they think they are suitable for the job.</p> <p>Students will work in groups/pairs to ask and answer questions on what profession they would like to follow, reasons for choosing this profession, and qualifications needed for this profession.</p> <p>Students will listen to a dialogue between two young people about subjects studied at school, their preferences, and reasons for subjects they have chosen. They will then respond to questions based on this dialogue.</p>
Sports and Recreation	Giving, seeking and responding to information	<p>Teacher will act as a talk show host and develop an activity in which students will engage in discussion about their favourite sports and sportspersons.</p> <p>Students will research a famous sportsperson and present to the class orally about this person. They will provide personal details about the person as well as his/her achievements in the world of sport.</p> <p>Students will write a dialogue between themselves and a friend in which they discuss their leisure time activities. This will be dramatised in front of the class.</p>

TOPIC	FUNCTION	SUGGESTED TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES
Daily Routines	Narrating	<p><i>Students will imagine they are teachers, actors, calypsonians, rappers or journalists and talk about the activities they engage in daily.</i></p> <p><i>Students will work in pairs to compare and contrast their daily activities.</i></p>
Shopping	Expressing Preference	<p><i>Students will develop and dramatise a shopping scene at a mall in which a group of friends discuss items they would like to purchase.</i></p> <p><i>Students will interview each other about the types of purchases they make online and write a report about their findings.</i></p> <p><i>Teacher will create a situation in class in which students go into different shops to make purchases. Students will be required to work in pairs to role play these scenarios. Guidelines will be given by teacher as to what is to be included in the dialogues, for example, asking for an item, asking the cost for an item, asking to try on something, saying something fits well.</i></p>
Travel	Describing	<p><i>Teacher will play short selections about the modes of transportation used by different people for various activities. Students will respond orally to questions based on these selections.</i></p> <p><i>Students will talk about the types of transportation they use daily.</i></p>

LIST OF CARIBBEAN WORDS SPANISH

A. NATURE

1. General Vocabulary

el invierno	- winter
el verano	- summer
la estación de lluvias	- rainy season
la estación seca	- dry season
la sequía	- drought
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 fruits and vegetables)

el aguacate	- avocado
la anona	- sweet sop, sugar apple, custard apple
el ayote/la calabaza	- pumpkin
el bambú	- bamboo
la berenjena	- eggplant, aubergine, garden egg, melongene, baigan
la caña de azúcar	- sugar cane
el caimito	- star apple, caimite
el camote	- sweet potato
el chayote/el güisquil	- cho cho, christophine, chayote
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	- ochro, okra
la papaya	- pawpaw, papaya
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		2. Inhabitants	
Anguilla	- Anguilla	el de Anguilla	- Anguillian
Antigua y Barbuda	- Antigua and Barbuda	él de Antigua y Barbuda	- Antiguan and Barbudian
Barbados	- Barbados	barbadiense	- Barbadian
Belice	- Belize	beliceño/a	- Belizean
Cuba	- Cuba	cubano/a	- Cuban
El Caribe	- The Caribbean	caribeño/a	- Caribbean
Dominica	- Dominica	dominicano/a	- Dominica
La Guyana	- Guyana	guyanés/guyanesa	- Guyanese
La Guyana Francesa	- French Guyana	guyanés/a francés/a	- Grench Guyanese
Grenada	- Grenada	grenadiense/grenadine	- Grenadian
Guadalupe	- Guadeloupe	guadalupense guadalupeño/a	- Guadeloupean
Haití	- Haiti	haitiano/a	- Haitian
Jamaica	- Jamaica	jamaíquino/a jamaicano/a }	- Jamaican
Las Antillas	- The West Indies	antillano/a	- West Indian
Martinica	- Martinique	martiniqueño/a martiniqués/martiniquesa }	- Martiniquan, Martinican
Montserrat	- Montserrat	él de Montserrat	- Montserratian
La República Dominicana	- Dominican Republic	dominicano/a	- Santo Domingan
San Cristóbal	- St. Christopher /St. Kitts		
Santa Lucía	- St. Lucia	él de Santa Lucia	- St Lucian
San Vicente	- St. Vincent	vicentino/a	- Vincentian
Surinam	- Suriname	surinamés/surinamesa surinameño/a }	- Surinamese
Trinidad y Tobago	- Trinidad and Tobago	ciudadano de Trinidad y Tobago trinitario/a tobagonés	- Citizen of Trinidad & Tobago Trinidadian Tobagonian
Islas Vírgenes	- Virgin Islands	el de las Islas Virgenes el mestizo el indio el indígena el mulato el criollo	- Virgin Islander Mestizo Indian Native Mulatto 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 ají/chile/picante	- hot pepper
la empanada	- patty made of fish or meat	el gazpacho	- cold vegetable soup
el arepa	- small patty made of corn flour with a filling	el taco	- a crisp type of savoury
la paella	- a rice dish with seafood	la tortilla	- type of savoury pancake. Varies in size and shape from country to country.
el tamal	- type of meat pie made of cornmeal dough, like a pastelle		
el ron	- rum		

D. OCCUPATION

la commadrone/la partera	- midwife	el finquero/el granjero	- farmer
el pescador	- fisherman	la canoa	- canoe
la azada	- hoe	el machete	- cutlass
la red	- dragnet		

E. RELIGION

el espanto	- evil spirit	el hechicero/el brujo	- obeahman
el hechizo	- Obeah	musulmán	- Muslim
hindú	- Hindu, (East) Indian	el vudú	- Voodoo, vodun
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 Día 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	- Ball games (Spanish and Cuban)
festejar	- to celebrate	la siesta	- Spanish custom of resting in the afternoon
		el nombre compuesto	- compound name
		el Noviazgo	- 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		

H. TECHNOLOGY

1. Communication

la computadora } el ordenador }	- computer	el fax, telefax	- fax
la computadora de mesa } la computadora personal }	- personal computer	la tarjeta telefónica	- phone card
la computadora portátil	- Laptop	el contestador automático	- an answering machine
juego de computadora	- computer games	el teléfono portatil	- portable telephone

Technology (cont'd)

la informática	- computer studies
la computación el programador	- computer programmer

2. Electronics

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

LIST OF CARIBBEAN WORDS FRENCH

A. NATURE

1. General Vocabulary

l'anse (f)	-	bay	le morne	-	hill
l'ouragan	-	hurricane	le piton	-	piton
le cyclone	-	cyclone, hurricane	la ravine	-	gully
la saison des pluies	-	the rainy season	la sécheresse	-	drought
la saison sèche	-	dry season			
le petit carême	-	Indian summer			
l'été	-	summer			
l'hiver	-	winter			

2. Fauna

l'agoutí (m)	-	agouti	le crabe	-	crab
l'anolis (m)	-	small lizard, zandoli	la crevette	-	shrimp
le cabri	-	goat	le lambi	-	conch, lambie
le caïman	-	alligator	la langouste	-	crayfish, spiny lobster
le cochon marron	-	wild boar	le lézard/le maboya	-	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	-	ochro, okra
l'aubergine (f)	-	eggplant, aubergine, garden egg, melongene, baigan	la goyave	-	guava
l'avocat (m)	-	avocado pear	l'hibiscus (m)	-	hibiscus
l'avocatier	-	avocado 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, christophine, chayote	la papaye	-	pawpaw, papaya
le citron vert	-	lime	la patate (douce)	-	sweet potato
le cocotier	-	coconut tree	la pomme cannelle	-	sweet sop, sugar apple, custard apple
le corossol	-	soursop	la pomme cythère	-	golden apple,
			le pois d'angole	}	June/jew plum,
la figue (la figue- banane), la bacove	-	banana	le pois congo		pommecythere
le flamboyant	-	poinciana	la sapotille	-	pigeon pea, congo (gungo) pea
le fruit à pain	-	breadfruit		-	naseberry, sapodilla

B. COUNTRY AND INHABITANTS

1. Country			2. Inhabitants		
Anguilla	-	Anguilla	Anguillais(e)	-	Anguillan
Antigua et Barbuda	-	Antigua and Barbuda	Antiguais(e)/un(e) originaire de Barbuda	-	Antiguan and Barbudan
La Barbade	-	Barbados	Barbadien(ne)	-	Barbadian
Le Belize	-	Belize	Bélizien(ne)	-	Belizean
Cuba	-	Cuba	Cubain(e)	-	Cuban
Les Caraïbes	-	The Caribbean	Caraïbe/Caribéen(ne)	-	Caribbean
La Dominique	-	Dominica	Dominiquais(e)	-	Dominican
La Grenade	-	Grenada	Grenadien(ne)	-	Grenadian
Le Guyana	-	Guyana	Guyanais(e)	-	Guyanese
La Guyane Française	-	French Guyana	Guyanais(e)	-	French Guyanese
St-Vincent Les Grenadines	-	St Vincent The Grenadines	St-Vincentien(ne)	-	From St Vincent and the Grenadines
La Guadeloupe	-	Guadeloupe	Guadeloupéen(ne)	-	Guadeloupean
Haïti	-	Haiti	Haïtien(ne)	-	Haitian
Les Iles Vierges	-	Virgin Islands	Originaire des Iles Vierges	-	From the Virgin Islands
La Jamaïque	-	Jamaica	Jamaïquain(e)	-	Jamaican
Les Antilles	-	The West Indies	Antillais(e)	-	West Indian
La Martinique	-	Martinique	Martiniquais(e)	-	Martiniquan, Martinican
Montserrat	-	Montserrat	Montserraten(ne)	-	Montserratan
Nevis, Nièves	-	Nevis	Névisien(ne)	-	Nevisian
La République Dominicaine	-	The Dominican Republic	Dominician(e)	-	Santo Domingan
St-Christophe	-	St Kitts	Kitticien(ne)	-	Kittician
Ste-Lucie	-	St Lucia	St-Lucien(ne)	-	St Lucian
Le Surinam	-	Suriname	Surinamais(e)	-	Surinamese
La Trinité et Tobago	-	Trinidad and Tobago	Trinidadien(ne) et Tobagonien(ne)	-	Trinidadian
Les îles Turques et Caïques	-	The Turks and Caicos Islands	une câpresse	-	Black woman with straight hair
			chabin(e)	-	Mixed person with fair skin and curly hair
			un mulâtre, une mulâtresse	-	Mulatto

C. HOME AND FAMILY

1. General

la case	-	hut
le hamac	-	hammock

2. Clothes

le bacoua	-	Martiniquan 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 ochroes/okras, spinach or dasheen leaves
la cassave	-	cassava bread, bammy	le cari/le curry	-	curry
le colombo	-	curry (dish)	la ciboulette	-	scallion, chive
le mabi	-	mauby	le gingembre	-	ginger
la morue	-	codfish, salted cod, saltfish	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

le coutelas	-	cutlass
la houe	-	hoe
la machette	-	machete

2. Fisherman – Pêcheur

la pirogue	-	canoe
la seine	-	drawnet

E. RELIGION

hindou	-	Hindu	la magie	-	witchcraft
musulman	-	Muslim	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(e)	-	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/un cantique 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 (une fève) 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 (l'abolition de l'esclavage) 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 (l'hymne national)	la Toussaint, le premier novembre	- All Saints' day (A public holiday. People visit cemeteries and lay wreaths and flowers [often chrysanthemums – des chrysanthèmes] 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 téléfax }	- fax		

2. Electronics

la télévision câblée	- cable TV	un jeu vidéo	- a video game
une antenne parabolique	- a satellite dish	un baladeur	- a personal stereo, walkman
un magnétoscope	- a VCR	un four à micro-ondes	- a microwave oven
une télécommande	- a remote control	un distributeur automatique	- a vending machine, an automatic teller machine
un disque compact }	- a compact disc	une carte de crédit	- a credit card
une platine laser	- a CD player		

**LIST OF CARIBBEAN AND BRAZILIAN WORDS
PORTUGUESE**

A. NATURE

1. General Vocabulary

<i>a baía</i>	-	<i>bay</i>	<i>a colina, o morro</i>	-	<i>Hill</i>
<i>a estação seca</i>	-	<i>dry season</i>	<i>a montanha</i>	-	<i>mountain</i>
<i>o furacão</i>	-	<i>hurricane</i>	<i>o pico</i>	-	<i>peak</i>
<i>a estação das chuvas,</i>	-	<i>the rainy</i>	<i>a ravina</i>	-	<i>gully</i>
<i>a estação chuvosa</i>		<i>season</i>			
<i>a seca</i>	-	<i>drought</i>	<i>o igarapé</i>	-	<i>stream, creek</i>

2. Fauna

<i>o agouti, a cutia</i>	-	<i>agouti</i>	<i>o caranguejo</i>	-	<i>Crab</i>
<i>o anólis</i>	-	<i>small lizard,</i> <i>zandoli</i>	<i>o camarão</i>	-	<i>shrimp</i>
<i>a cabra</i>	-	<i>goat</i>	<i>a concha</i>	-	<i>conch, lambi</i>
<i>o jacaré</i>	-	<i>alligator</i>	<i>o lagostim, a lagosta</i>	-	<i>crayfish, spiny lobster</i>
<i>o javali</i>	-	<i>wild boar</i>	<i>o lagarto</i>	-	<i>lizard</i>
<i>o caititu, o cateto, o</i>		<i>quenk, peccary,</i>	<i>o capivara</i>	-	<i>capybara</i>
<i>porco-do-mato</i>		<i>wild hog</i>			
<i>o beija-flor</i>	-	<i>hummingbird</i>	<i>o mangusto</i>	-	<i>mongoose</i>
<i>a concha, a</i>	-	<i>shell</i>	<i>o papagaio</i>	-	<i>parrot</i>
<i>carapaça, o casco</i>					
<i>a paca (agouti paca)</i>	-	<i>lappe, labba</i>	<i>o gambá</i>	-	<i>manicou</i>
<i>o tatu</i>	-	<i>tattoo,</i> <i>armadillo</i>	<i>a onça</i>	-	<i>jaguar</i>
<i>o gavião-real</i>	-	<i>Harpy eagle</i>	<i>a lontra</i>	-	<i>otter</i>

3. Flora (including fruits and vegetables)

<i>o abacaxi</i>	-	<i>pineapple</i>	<i>o quiabo</i>	-	<i>ochro, okra</i>
<i>a beringela</i>	-	<i>eggplant,</i> <i>aubergine,</i> <i>melongene,</i> <i>garden egg,</i> <i>baigan,</i> <i>boulanger</i>	<i>a goiaba</i>	-	<i>guava</i>
<i>a couve</i>	-	<i>kale</i>			
<i>o abacate</i>	-	<i>avocado pear</i>	<i>o hibisco</i>	-	<i>hibiscus</i>
<i>o abacateiro</i>	-	<i>avocado tree</i>	<i>o inhame</i>	-	<i>yam</i>
<i>o bambu</i>	-	<i>bamboo</i>	<i>o milho</i>	-	<i>corn</i>
<i>a banana (madura)</i>	-	<i>banana (ripe)</i>	<i>a manga</i>	-	<i>mango</i>
<i>a banana-da-terra, a</i>	-	<i>plantain</i>	<i>a mangueira</i>	-	<i>mango tree</i>
<i>banana comprida</i>					
<i>a banana</i>	-	<i>banana</i>	<i>o aipim, a macaxeira,</i>	-	<i>cassava</i>
			<i>a mandioca</i>		
<i>a bananeira</i>	-	<i>banana tree</i>	<i>o maracujá</i>	-	<i>passion fruit</i>

<i>o cacau</i>	-	<i>cocoa</i>	<i>o maracujá-açú</i>	-	<i>barbadine, granadilla</i>
<i>a buganvília, a primavera, a três-marias</i>	-	<i>bougainvillea</i>	<i>o coco</i>	-	<i>coconut</i>
<i>a cabaça</i>	-	<i>calabash</i>	<i>a laranja</i>	-	<i>orange</i>
<i>a cana-de-açúcar</i>	-	<i>sugar cane</i>	<i>a palmeira</i>	-	<i>palm tree</i>
<i>o taro, o inhame-coco</i>	-	<i>coco yam</i>	<i>a toranja</i>	-	<i>grapefruit</i>
<i>o chuchu</i>	-	<i>cho cho, christophine, chayote</i>	<i>o mamão</i>	-	<i>pawpaw, papaya</i>
<i>o limão</i>	-	<i>lime</i>	<i>a batata doce</i>	-	<i>sweet potato</i>
<i>o coqueiro</i>	-	<i>coconut tree</i>	<i>a fruta-do-conde, a biribá, a ata</i>	-	<i>sweet sop, sugar apple, custard apple</i>
<i>a graviola</i>	-	<i>soursop</i>	<i>a cajamanga, a cajarana</i>	-	<i>golden apple, pommecythere, June/Jew plum</i>
<i>o jambo</i>	-	<i>pommerac, Otaheite apple</i>	<i>o feijão</i>	-	<i>bean</i>
<i>o feijão-fradinho</i>	-	<i>black eye pea</i>	<i>o feijão guandu</i>	-	<i>pigeon pea, gungo (congo) pea</i>
<i>a ervilha</i>	-	<i>pea</i>	<i>o grão-de-bico</i>	-	<i>chick pea, garbanzo bean, channa</i>
<i>as ervilhas secas</i>	-	<i>split peas</i>	<i>o sapoti</i>	-	<i>sapodilla, naseberry</i>
<i>a flor-do-paráiso, o pau-rosa, o flamboiã</i>	-	<i>poinciana, flamboyant</i>	<i>a acerola</i>	-	<i>West Indian/Barbadian cherry</i>
<i>a fruta-pão</i>	-	<i>breadfruit</i>	<i>o caju</i>	-	<i>cashew</i>
<i>o tamarindo</i>	-	<i>tamarind</i>	<i>a janitá</i>	-	<i>breadnut, chataigne</i>
<i>a melancia</i>	-	<i>watermelon</i>	<i>a pupunha</i>	-	<i>pewah</i>
<i>a taperebá</i>	-	<i>hog plum</i>	<i>o caimito</i>	-	<i>caimite, star apple</i>
<i>a pitomba-das-Guianas</i>	-	<i>chennette, guinep, akee</i>	<i>a ciriguela, a siriguela</i>	-	<i>Jamaica plum</i>
<i>a carambola</i>	-	<i>carambola, five fingers</i>	<i>o pimentão</i>	-	<i>sweet pepper</i>
<i>a romã</i>	-	<i>pomegranate</i>			

B. COUNTRY AND INHABITANTS

1. Country			2. Inhabitants		
Anguila	-	Anguilla	anguilano/a	-	Anguillan
Antígua e Barbuda	-	Antigua and Barbuda	antiguano/a e barbudiano/a	-	Antiguan and Barbudan
Aruba	-	Aruba	arubano/a, arubiano/a	-	Aruban
Bahamas	-	Bahamas	bahamense, baamense, baamês/baamesa, baamiano/a ou bahamiano/a	-	Bahamian
Barbados	-	Barbados	barbadiano/a, barbadense	-	Barbadian
Belize	-	Belize	belizenho/a ou belizense	-	Belizean
Bermuda		Bermuda	bermudiano/a		Bermudan
o Caribe, as Caraíbas	-	the Caribbean	caribenho/a	-	Caribbean
Cuba	-	Cuba	cubano/a	-	Cuban
Dominica	-	Dominica	dominicano/a ou de Dominica	-	Dominican
a República Dominicana	-	the Dominican Republic	dominicano/a ou da República Dominicana	-	Dominican
as Antilhas Holandesas (Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Santo Eustáquio, São Martinho)	-	Dutch Antilles (Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Sint Eustatius (Statia), Sint Maarten)	antilhano/a holandês/holandesa		Dutch Antillean
Guiana Francesa	-	French Guiana	guianense francês/francesa	-	French Guianese
Granada	-	Grenada	granadino/a	-	Grenadian
Guiana	-	Guyana	guianense	-	Guyanese
Guadalupe	-	Guadeloupe	guadelupano/a	-	Guadeloupean
Haiti	-	Haiti	haitiano/a	-	Haitian
Jamaica	-	Jamaica	jamaicano/a	-	Jamaican
Martinica	-	Martinique	martinicano/a	-	Martiniquan, Martinican
Montserrat	-	Montserrat	cidadão/cidadã de Montserrat	-	Montserratian
Porto Rico	-	Puerto Rico	porto-riquenho/a ou porto-riquense	-	Puerto Rican
São Cristóvão e Névis	-	St Kitts and Nevis	cidadão/cidadã de São Cristóvão e Névis	-	Kittitian and Nevisian
Santa Lúcia	-	St Lucia	santa-luciano/a	-	St Lucian
São Vicente e as Granadinas	-	St Vincent and the Grenadines	são-vicentino/a	-	Vincentian (and from the Grenadines)
Suriname	-	Suriname	surinamense ou surinamês/surinamesa	-	Surinamese

<i>Trinidad e Tobago</i>	-	<i>Trinidad and Tobago</i>	<i>trinidadiano/a, (trinitário/a, trinitino/a, trinitense) e tobaguense (tobaguiano/a)</i>	-	<i>Trinidadian and Tobagonian</i>
<i>Turks e Caicos</i>	-	<i>Turks and Caicos Islands</i>	<i>cidadão/cidadã de Turcas/Turcos e Caicos</i>	-	
<i>Ilhas Virgens Britânicas</i>	-	<i>British Virgin Islands</i>	<i>cidadão/cidadã das Ilhas Virgens Britânicas</i>	-	<i>British Virgin Islanders</i>
<i>Ilhas Virgens Americanas</i>		<i>US Virgin Islands</i>	<i>cidadão/cidadã das Ilhas Virgens Americanas</i>	-	<i>US Virgin Islanders</i>
<i>as Antilhas, as Índias Ocidentais</i>	-	<i>the Antilles, the West Indies</i>	<i>antilhano/a ou ou antilhense</i>	-	<i>West Indian</i>
<i>as Américas</i>	-	<i>the Americas</i>	<i>americano/a</i>	-	<i>off/from the Americas</i>
<i>a América do Sul</i>	-	<i>South America</i>	<i>sul-americano/a</i>	-	<i>South American</i>
<i>a América Central</i>	-	<i>Central America</i>	<i>centro-americano/a</i>	-	<i>Central American</i>
<i>a América do Norte</i>	-	<i>North America</i>	<i>norte americano/a</i>	-	<i>North American</i>
<i>a América Latina</i>	-	<i>Latin America</i>	<i>latino-americano/a</i>	-	<i>Latin American</i>
<i>indígena</i>		<i>indigenous (Amerindian)</i>			
<i>caboclo</i>		<i>a person of Amerindian and European ancestry</i>			
<i>cafuzo</i>		<i>a person of Amerindian and African ancestry</i>			
<i>pardo</i>		<i>a light brown person of mixed ancestry</i>		-	
<i>moreno</i>		<i>brown-skinned</i>			
<i>mulato</i>		<i>mulatto</i>		-	

C. HOME AND FAMILY

1. General

<i>a oca</i>	-	<i>hut</i>
<i>a rede</i>	-	<i>hammock</i>

2. Clothes

<i>o chapéu</i>	-	<i>hat</i>
<i>o lenço</i>	-	<i>scarf</i>

3. Food, Drink and the Kitchen

<i>o acarajé</i>	-	<i>bean fritter</i>	<i>o tomilho</i>	-	<i>thyme</i>
<i>a farinha</i>	-	<i>cassava flour, farine</i>	<i>a pimenta-do-reino</i>	-	<i>black pepper</i>
<i>a chicória</i>	-	<i>culantro, chadon beni</i>	<i>o cominho</i>	-	<i>cumin, geera</i>
<i>a morcela</i>	-	<i>black pudding</i>	<i>a moqueca</i>	-	<i>fish stew in coconut milk and dendê palm oil</i>
<i>a panela de barro</i>	-	<i>earthenware pot</i>	<i>o caruru</i>	-	<i>stew with ochroes/okras and shrimp and dendê palm oil</i>
<i>o beiju, a tapioca</i>	-	<i>cassava bread, cassava pancake</i>	<i>o caril, o curry</i>	-	<i>curry</i>
<i>o pão de queijo</i>	-	<i>cheese bread/roll</i>	<i>a cebolinha</i>	-	<i>scallion, chive</i>
<i>a feijoada</i>	-	<i>bean and meat stew</i>	<i>o gengibre</i>	-	<i>ginger</i>
<i>o bacalhau</i>	-	<i>codfish, saltfish, salted cod</i>	<i>o almofariz</i>	-	<i>mortar</i>
<i>o pilão</i>	-	<i>pestle</i>	<i>bater</i>	-	<i>to pound</i>
<i>a caipirinha</i>	-	<i>drink made with cachaça (Brazilian rum)</i>	<i>a pimenta</i>	-	<i>pepper</i>
<i>o tucupi</i>	-	<i>a type of cassareep</i>			

D. OCCUPATIONS

1. Farmer – Fazendeiro

<i>o facão</i>	-	<i>cutlass, machete</i>
<i>a enxada</i>	-	<i>hoe</i>

2. Fisherman – Pescador

<i>a canoa</i>	-	<i>canoe</i>
<i>a rede de pescar</i>	-	<i>dragnet</i>

E. RELIGION

<i>o hindu</i>	-	<i>Hindu</i>	<i>a feitiçaria</i>	-	<i>witchcraft</i>
<i>o muçulmano</i>	-	<i>Muslim</i>	<i>o encanto, o feitiço</i>	-	<i>charm, spell</i>
<i>o pajé</i>	-	<i>shaman</i>	<i>o vodu</i>	-	<i>voodoo</i>
<i>o zumbi, o morto-vivo</i>	-	<i>zombi(e)</i>	<i>o pai-de-santo</i>	-	<i>priest of Afro-Brazilian religions</i>
			<i>a mãe-de-santo</i>	-	<i>priestess of Afro-Brazilian religions</i>

F. SOCIETY AND POLITICS

<i>o departamento ultramarino (da França), por exemplo, a Martinica, Guadelupe e a Guiana Francesa</i>	-	<i>overseas department (of France), for example, Martinique, Guadeloupe and French Guiana</i>	<i>o estado</i>	-	<i>state</i>
<i>a região</i>	-	<i>region</i>	<i>o município</i>	-	<i>municipality, city</i>
<i>o distrito</i>	-	<i>district</i>	<i>a vila</i>	-	<i>town</i>
<i>a paróquia (Brasil), a freguesia (Portugal)</i>	-	<i>parish</i>	<i>o concelho</i>	-	<i>county</i>
<i>o bairro, a vizinhança</i>	-	<i>neighbourhood</i>	<i>a quadra</i>	-	<i>block</i>
<i>o setor</i>	-	<i>sector</i>	<i>a prefeitura</i>	-	<i>city hall, town hall</i>
<i>festear</i>	-	<i>to celebrate</i>	<i>a missa do Galo</i>	-	<i>Midnight mass</i>
<i>o dia do santo</i>	-	<i>a saint's day, name day</i>	<i>o jantar/a ceia, a festa da noite de Natal / da véspera de Ano-Novo (Reveillon)</i>	-	<i>Christmas Eve / New Year's Eve dinner / party</i>
<i>o Natal</i>	-	<i>Christmas</i>	<i>a noite de Natal</i>	-	<i>Christmas Eve</i>
<i>a árvore de Natal, o pinheirinho de Natal</i>	-	<i>Christmas tree</i>	<i>o Dia do Ano Novo</i>	-	<i>New Year's Day</i>
<i>o panetone</i>	-	<i>panettone</i>	<i>a rabanada</i>	-	<i>sweet fried slices of bread</i>
<i>o bolo Rei</i>	-	<i>a Portuguese Christmas cake</i>	<i>o bolo de mel</i>	-	<i>Madeiran molasses cake</i>
<i>a música de Natal</i>	-	<i>Christmas carol</i>	<i>a carne vinha d'alhos</i>		<i>Madeiran Portuguese garlic pork, calvinadage (in Trinidad)</i>
<i>a Epifania, a Adoração dos Reis Magos</i>	-	<i>Epiphany</i>	<i>o Carnaval</i>	-	<i>Carnival</i>
<i>a escola de samba</i>	-	<i>samba school</i>	<i>as malassadas</i>	-	<i>Madeiran Portuguese Shrove Tuesday pancakes</i>
<i>o sambódromo</i>	-	<i>sambadrome</i>	<i>Quarta-feira de Cinzas</i>	-	<i>Ash Wednesday</i>
<i>o carro alegórico</i>	-	<i>Carnival float</i>	<i>Sexta-feira Santa</i>	-	<i>Good Friday</i>
<i>o desfile</i>	-	<i>parade</i>	<i>o disfarce</i>	-	<i>a disguise</i>

<i>o trio elétrico</i>	-	<i>music truck</i>	<i>a Páscoa</i>	-	<i>Easter</i>
<i>a Semana Santa</i>	-	<i>Holy Week</i>	<i>Segunda-feira de Páscoa</i>	-	<i>Easter Monday</i>
<i>Nossa Senhora Aparecida</i>	-	<i>Our Lady (Aparecida), patron saint of Brazil</i>	<i>o Dia do Trabalho</i>	-	<i>Labour Day</i>
<i>o/a padroeiro/a</i>		<i>patron saint</i>	<i>a abolição da escravidão</i>	-	<i>abolition of slavery</i>
<i>Dia da Independência</i>	-	<i>Independence Day</i>	<i>os fogos de artifício</i>	-	<i>fireworks</i>
<i>o hino nacional de/do(s)/da(s) ...</i>	-	<i>the national anthem of ...</i>	<i>Dia de Todos-os-Santos</i>	-	<i>All Saints' Day</i>
<i>Finados</i>	-	<i>All Souls' Day (a public holiday in Brazil)</i>	<i>a rinha/a briga de galos</i>	-	<i>cock fighting</i>
<i>choro, frevo, música popular brasileira (MPB), música sertaneja, samba</i>	-	<i>Various contemporary Brazilian music genres</i>	<i>a quadrilha (dança)</i>	-	<i>Brazilian square dance, similar to the quadrille, a dance of French West Indian origin</i>
<i>festa de quinze anos (baile de debutantes)</i>	-	<i>15th birthday celebration</i>	<i>o velório, a vigília</i>		<i>wake, vigil</i>

H. TECHNOLOGY

1. Communication

<i>o computador</i>	-	<i>computer</i>	<i>o fax</i>	-	<i>fax</i>
<i>o PC ou o computador pessoal</i>	-	<i>personal computer</i>	<i>a secretária eletrônica</i>	-	<i>answering machine</i>
<i>a informática</i>	-	<i>computer science</i>	<i>o celular</i>	-	<i>cellular phone</i>
<i>o programador</i>	-	<i>a computer programmer</i>	<i>o laptop</i>	-	<i>laptop</i>
			<i>o e-mail</i>		<i>email</i>
			<i>as compras on-line</i>		<i>online shopping</i>
			<i>a rede social</i>		<i>social network</i>
			<i>a mensagem</i>		<i>message</i>
			<i>o chat</i>		<i>chat</i>
			<i>teclar</i>		<i>to type, to chat</i>

2. Electronics

<i>e</i>					
<i>a TV a cabo</i>	-	<i>cable TV</i>	<i>o jogo de video, o videogame</i>	-	<i>video game</i>
<i>a parabólica</i>	-	<i>satellite dish</i>	<i>a antena</i>	-	<i>antenna</i>

<i>o videocassete</i>	- VCR	<i>o forno de microondas</i>	- microwave oven
<i>o controle remoto</i>	- remote control	<i>o caixa eletrônica</i>	- an automatic teller machine
<i>o CD ou o disco compacto</i>	- compact disc	<i>o cartão de crédito</i>	- credit card
<i>o leitor de CD</i>	- CD player	<i>a máquina automática de venda(s)</i>	- vending machine

Guidelines for Understanding and Teaching Portuguese Pronunciation

As Milton Azevedo² sums it up, the Portuguese alphabet has 23 letters, and the letters <k>, <y> and <w> are added to write words from other languages. There are also four digraphs (two letter combinations) representing one sound each, as in <ch>, <rr>, <nh> and <lh>.

Consonants

A. Consonant letters that look like IPA alphabet symbols (and that look the same as those in English), but that may have different values depending on the position in the syllable and on the quality of neighbouring vowels.

These consonant letters have the same values as in English once they come at the beginning of a syllable and precede most vowels (we use the vowel /a/ here as an example). Note that /t/ and /d/ are exceptions and may be pronounced differently before /i/.

The consonant sounds /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/ and /g/ (all plosives) usually have an /i/ sound added at the end of syllables (which can include before consonants). Note that the voiceless ones, namely, /p/, /t/ and /k/ may cause a following vowel to be voiceless as well.

1. /p/..... *pata* 'paw'
2. /b/..... *bata* 'knock!'
3. /t/..... *taça* 'cup' (before the vowel /i/, which may be written as either <i> or <e>, this is pronounced as /tʃ/ as in the sound represented by English 'ch' as in 'chump')
4. /d/..... *data* 'data' (before the vowel /i/, which may be written as either <i> or <e>, this is pronounced as /dʒ/ as in the sound represented by English 'j' as in 'jump')
5. /g/..... *gata* 'female cat' (before the vowel /i/, which may be written as either <i> or <e>, this is pronounced as /ʒ/ (which we find in English in words like 'vision').
6. /l/..... *lata* 'tin', pronounced as /w/ at the end of a syllable
7. /m/..... *mata* 'woods', not pronounced after a vowel (only nasalises it)
8. /n/..... *nata* 'cream', not pronounced after a vowel (only nasalises it)
9. /f/..... *fado* 'fate'
10. /v/..... *vaca* 'cow'
11. /s/..... *saca* 'bag, sack', pronounced as a /z/ between vowels; this sound is also represented by <ss>, by <c> before /i/ or /e/, by <ç>, as in French and by <z> at the end of a word.

² Azevedo, Milton. *Portuguese – A Linguistic Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

12. /z/..... *zaga* 'defence' (football); this sound is also represented by <s> between vowels and by <x> in *exame* 'exam'.
13. The sound or phoneme /k/ is regularly represented by the letter <c> before non-front vowels as in *canto* 'corner'.

B. Consonant letters that exist in English but that always have different values in Portuguese

14. The letter <h> exists in Portuguese, but is never pronounced and is one of the rare silent letters.
15. The letter <j> represents the sound /ʒ/ as in French (which we find in English in words like 'vision').
16. The letter combination <qu> also represents the sound or phoneme /k/, not /kw/.
17. The letter <r> and the digraph <rr> do not sound like the English <r> which is pronounced /ɹ/. In Portuguese, the letter <r> at the beginning of a word and the digraph <rr> in the middle of a word both sound like /h/ in some varieties of the language, so that *rap* is pronounced like /hapi/, and *carro* sounds like /kahu/.
18. The letter <x> represents the sound /ʃ/ (which is generally represented as <sh> in English), the sound /z/ as in *exame* 'exam' and *exato* 'exact', and the sounds /ks/ as in *táxi* 'taxi'.

C. Two consonant letters (digraphs) that represent one sound

19. The digraph <ch> represents the sound /ʃ/ (which is generally represented as <sh> in English, and also as <ch> in English words of French origin like *machine*, *chef*, *chauffeur*, etc.).
20. <rr> - see (17) above.
21. The digraph <nh> represents the sound /ɲ/ and may be pronounced like the Spanish <ñ>.
22. <lh> sounds similar to the middle sounds in *million* ("milyun").

Please visit YouTube.com for more helpful hints.



RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS OF PORTUGUESE

Textbooks

1. Fernandes, Gláucia Roberta Rocha, Telma de Lurdes São Bento Ferreira and Vera Lúcia Ramos. *Muito Prazer: Fale o Português do Brasil*. São Paulo: Disal, 2010.
<http://www.muitoprazerlivro.com.br/ple.html>
2. de Jouat-Pastre, Clemence, Anna Klobucka and Patricia Isabel Sobral. *Ponto do Encontro: Portuguese as a World Language*. 2nd edition. New York: Pearson Education, 2013.
http://wps.prenhall.com/wl_klobucka_ponto_1/
3. Matos, Marcia and Sara Neto-Kalife. *Bom Dia - Level 1*. New Bedford, MA: Spinner Publications, 2002.
http://www.spinnerpub.com/BD_Level_1.html

Pronunciation

4. Cristóvão Silva, Thaís. *Fonética e Fonologia do Português*. São Paulo: Editora Contexto, 2002.
<http://editoracontexto.com.br/fonetica-e-fonologia-do-portugues.html> (this page has a summary and the introduction as PDFs)
See also Extra Material here:
<http://editoracontexto.com.br/material-extra>
5. http://ppglin.posgrad.ufsc.br/files/2013/04/Livro_Fonetica_e_Fonologia.pdf

Writing

6. Omniglot - Portuguese
<http://www.omniglot.com/writing/portuguese.htm>
7. Tufano, Douglas. *Novo Acordo Ortográfico de 1990*. São Paulo: Melhoramentos, 2008.
http://sistemas.rei.unicamp.br/pdf/Guia_Reforma_Ortografica_CP.pdf

Grammar

8. Ackerlind, Sheila and Rebecca Jones-Kellogg. *Portuguese - A Reference Manual*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2011.

Luso-Brazilian Portuguese Language and Culture Resources

9. Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics
http://sta.uwi.edu/fhe/dmll/Portuguese_Resources.asp

Language Learning Sites

10. Effective Language Learning Through Books, Audio, Apps, Online Courses and Tutors | Living Language
<http://www.livinglanguage.com>
11. italki: Learn a language online
<http://www.italki.com>
12. busuu | Learn Spanish, French, English and other languages for free
<http://www.busuu.com>
13. Brazzil.com
<http://www.brazzil.com>
14. Portuguese language courses
<http://www.brazil.org.uk>
15. The Portuguese Language
<http://www.golisbon.com>

Online Dictionaries

16. English-Portuguese Online Dictionary. Free online English-Portuguese translation - ECTACO UK
www.ectaco.co.uk
17. Linguee
<http://www.linguee.com/>
18. Dicionário Online - Dicionários Michaelis - UOL
<http://michaelis.uol.com.br>

News Sites

19. Google
www.google.com.br
20. Yahoo
<http://br.yahoo.com>
21. Google Notícias
<http://news.google.com.br>



22. BBC
<http://bbc.co.uk/portuguese>
23. CBN
<http://cbn.globoradio.globo.com>

More:

https://www.google.gy/search?q=portuguese+language+resources&oq=portuguese+language+resources&aqs=chrome..69i57j0l2.4314j0j4&sourceid=chrome&es_sm=0&ie=UTF-8

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P O R T U G U E S E

Paper 01 – General Proficiency

PART A – LISTENING COMPREHENSION

PART B – READING COMPREHENSION

SPECIMEN PAPER

1 hour 15 minutes

READ THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.

1. This test consists of 60 items. You will have 1 hour and 15 minutes to answer them.
2. In addition to this test booklet, you should have an answer sheet.
3. 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.
4. On your answer sheet, find the number which corresponds to your item and shade the space having the same letter as the answer you have chosen. Look at the sample item below.

Sample Item

O Brasil é...

- (A) um país
- (B) uma colônia
- (C) uma cidade
- (D) um continente

Sample Answer



The best answer to this item is “um país” so (A) has been shaded.

5. If you want to change your answer, erase it completely before you fill in your new choice.
6. When you are told to begin, turn the page and work as quickly and as carefully as you can. If you cannot answer an item, go on to the next one. You may return to this item later.

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

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PART A

ITEMS 1–30

LISTENING COMPREHENSION

45 minutes

SECTION I

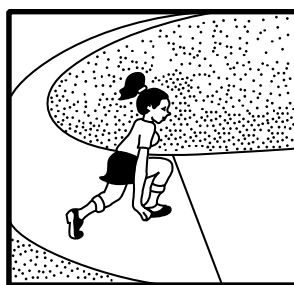
Instructions: For each question in this section you will hear a single sentence. Choose from the four pictures in your test booklet the ONE picture which BEST shows what the sentence says. Then, shade the corresponding space on the answer sheet. For example, you will hear:

O rapaz vai começar a correr.

You see:



(A)



(B)



(C)



(D)

The correct answer is picture (D), so you would shade the space with the letter (D) on your answer sheet.

1.



(A)



(B)



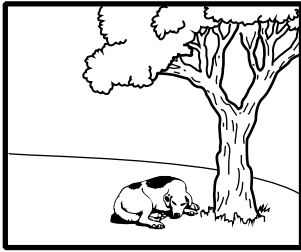
(C)



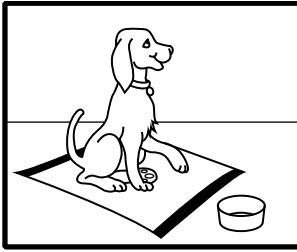
(D)

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

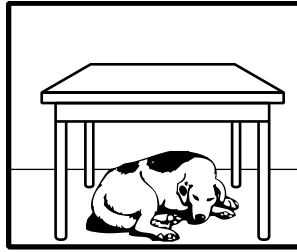
2.



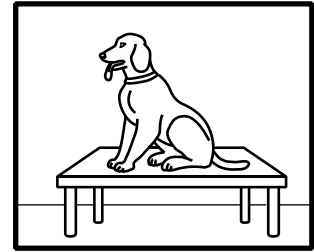
(A)



(B)

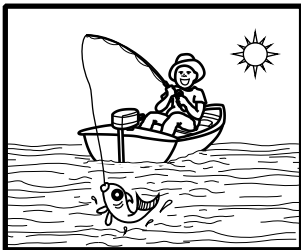


(C)

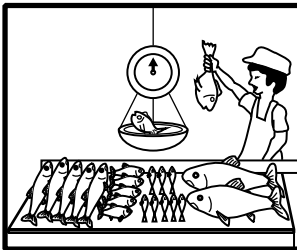


(D)

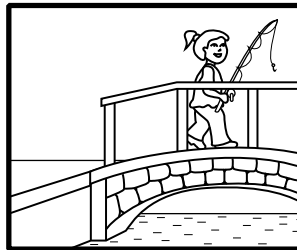
3.



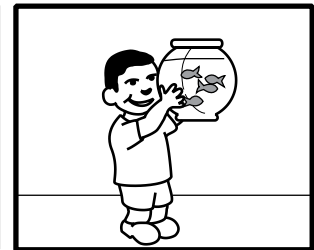
(A)



(B)

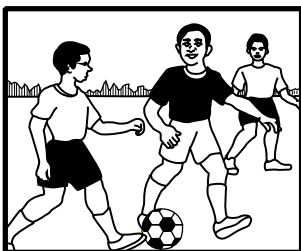


(C)

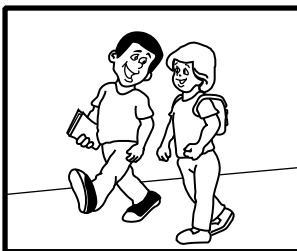


(D)

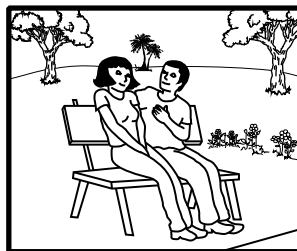
4.



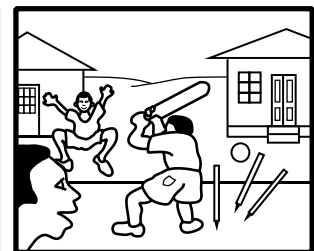
(A)



(B)



(C)



(D)

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

5.



(A)



(B)

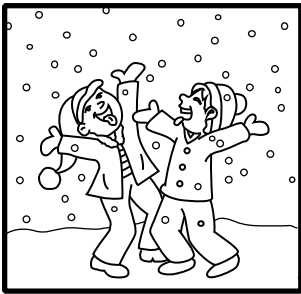


(C)



(D)

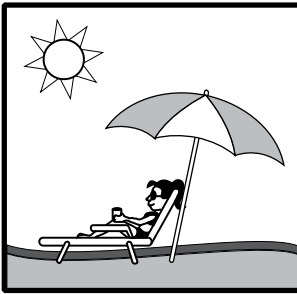
6.



(A)



(B)



(C)



(D)

7.



(A)



(B)



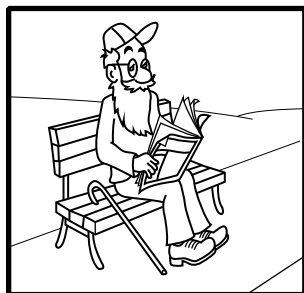
(C)



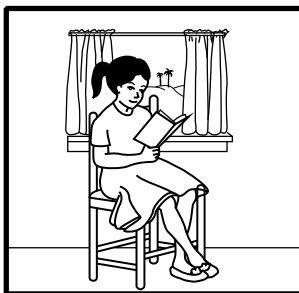
(D)

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

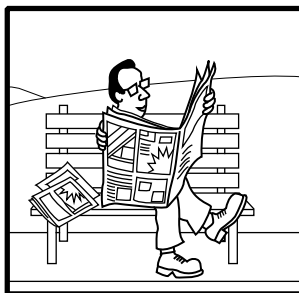
8.



(A)



(B)



(C)



(D)

SECTION II

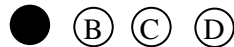
Instructions: In this section you will hear a number of sentences. Each sentence will be read twice and will be followed by one question or incomplete statement. Four suggested answers for each question are printed in your test booklet. For each question, choose the answer which **BEST** completes the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

- Mãe, estou com muita fome! (Twice)
O que esta pessoa está querendo?

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

- (A) Uma maçã
- (B) Uma bebida
- (C) Um remédio
- (D) Um brinquedo

Sample Answer



The correct answer is (A), so you would shade the space with the letter (A) on the answer sheet.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>9. (A) Há dez dias
(B) Na semana que vem
(C) Na semana passada
(D) Daqui a várias semanas</p> | <p>13. (A) À praia
(B) À igreja
(C) À escola
(D) A uma festa</p> |
| <p>10. (A) Trabalhar muito
(B) Correr no parque
(C) Tomar um remédio
(D) Tomar uma caipirinha</p> | <p>14. (A) A mãe de Joana
(B) A amiga de Joana
(C) A colega de aula de Joana
(D) Uma conhecida de Joana</p> |
| <p>11. (A) Ir à praia
(B) Jogar futebol com os amigos
(C) Fazer uma festa no pátio de casa
(D) Ficar em casa e ver um filme</p> | <p>15. (A) No aeroporto
(B) Na loja de roupas
(C) No posto de gasolina
(D) Na feira de comidas típicas</p> |
| <p>12. (A) Na rua
(B) De férias
(C) No jardim de casa
(D) Em uma obra de um prédio</p> | <p>16. (A) Na livraria
(B) Na fazenda
(C) No jornal da cidade
(D) No jardim de infância</p> |

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

SECTION III

Instructions: In this section you will hear a series of public announcements or selections followed by a number of questions. Each announcement or selection will be read twice. For each question there is a choice of four responses or completions. Select the BEST response and shade the corresponding space on your answer sheet. There is no sample question for this section.

First Selection

17. (A) Um dia de saúde
(B) Um dia de carreira
(C) Uma entrevista de trabalho
(D) Um exame para estudantes
18. (A) Estudantes de primeiro grau
(B) Estudantes de segundo grau
(C) Estudantes dos quarto e quinto níveis
(D) Estudantes dos segundo e terceiro níveis
19. (A) Falar com profissionais
(B) Conseguir um emprego
(C) Entrevistar outros estudantes
(D) Estudar para um exame

Second Selection

20. (A) Redes sociais podem ser úteis
(B) Redes sociais podem ser seguras
(C) Redes sociais podem ser perigosas
(D) Redes sociais podem ser prejudiciais
21. (A) Roubar e ligar
(B) Roubar e visitar
(C) Roubar e comunicar
(D) Roubar e prejudicar
22. (A) Para fofocar
(B) Para ler texto
(C) Para comunicar
(D) Para fazer a pesquisa

NOW GET READY FOR SECTION IV IN WHICH A PASSAGE IS GOING TO BE READ TO YOU.

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

SECTION IV

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

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

Plans to Visit Brazil

PART A

PART B

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>23. What city does Marcos want to visit?</p> <p>(A) Brazil
(B) Ceará
(C) Fortaleza
(D) Trinidad and Tobago</p> | <p>27. When will they go to Brazil?</p> <p>(A) In 2020
(B) In one month's time
(C) During the Olympics
(D) During the Football World Cup</p> |
| <p>24. Which of his relatives live in Brazil?</p> <p>(A) An aunt and a cousin
(B) An aunt and a brother
(C) An uncle and a cousin
(D) An uncle and a brother</p> | <p>28. How old are Satesh and Robin?</p> <p>(A) Seven years
(B) Sixteen years
(C) Thirty-two years
(D) Forty-eight years</p> |
| <p>25. Why did Marcos not go to Brazil during the Football World Cup?</p> <p>(A) His aunt got married.
(B) His sister got married.
(C) He had classes at school.
(D) His family travelled to Trinidad and Tobago.</p> | <p>29. When they arrive in Brazil they will ...</p> <p>(A) play football
(B) have a big party
(C) play music and dance
(D) have a big family picnic</p> |
| <p>26. How long has it been since Marcos saw his brother?</p> <p>(A) Six years
(B) Seven years
(C) Sixteen years
(D) Seventeen years</p> | <p>30. His Portuguese will MOST likely improve because while in Brazil, Marcos will...</p> <p>(A) go to the cinema
(B) go sightseeing a lot
(C) see many Brazilians
(D) practise the language daily</p> |

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, GO ON TO THE NEXT ONE. YOU CAN COME BACK TO THAT QUESTION LATER.

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

PART B
ITEMS 31–60
READING COMPREHENSION
30 minutes

SECTION I

Instructions: Each of the following sentences contains a blank space. Below each one are four choices. Select the one which is **BEST** in each case. Then, shade the corresponding space on the answer sheet.

Example

Não vou à praia hoje porque está ...

- (A) quente
- (B) chuvoso
- (C) ensolarado
- (D) agradável

Sample Answer



The correct answer is (C), so you would shade the space with the letter (C) on your answer sheet.

- 31.** Amanhã não vou acordar cedo porque minha loja vai estar...

- (A) bonita
- (B) fechada
- (C) muito grande
- (D) cheia de clientes

- 32.** Ele não gosta de ... de manhã cedo, pois prefere ir à praia depois das 17 horas.

- (A) nadar
- (B) pensar
- (C) estudar
- (D) ler o jornal

- 33.** Nós ganhamos muitos presentes no Natal. Nós estamos muito...

- (A) tristes
- (B) doentes
- (C) cansados
- (D) contentes

- 34.** Eu preciso digitar um texto no computador, mas no momento não temos...

- (A) uma caneta
- (B) papel e lápis
- (C) energia elétrica
- (D) nenhum convite

- 35.** O sol está muito quente e não chove há muitas semanas em São Paulo. O solo está totalmente...

- (A) seco
- (B) velho
- (C) saturado
- (B) molhado

- 36.** Sempre que cuido do jardim. Cuido das... das flores e de outras plantas.

- (A) gatas
- (B) nuvens
- (C) pessoas
- (D) árvores

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

37. Nossa, entrou um animal selvagem aqui em casa! Quem deixou a porta...?

- (A) aberta
- (B) pintada
- (C) fechada
- (D) trancada

38. Os turistas gostaram da Guiana e agora eles também estão muito... para conhecer o Brasil.

- (A) tristes
- (B) desanimados
- (C) preocupados
- (D) entusiasmados

SECTION II

Instructions: In the conversation below, select the word or phrase which will make each sentence **GRAMMATICALLY CORRECT**. Then, shade the corresponding space on the answer sheet.

Example:

En não te ontem.

- (A) viste
- (D) viu
- (E) vejo
- (D) vi

Sample Answer



The correct answer is (D), so you would shade the space with the letter (D) on your answer sheet.

A Imensidão do Brasil

A República Federativa do Brasil é o terceiro em área e o segundo mais populoso país
39 **40**

Américas. Sua área total de 8.514.876 km² e sua população é de aproximadamente 188 milhões
41

de O Brasil é em 26 estados, e um Distrito Federal (Brasília), e é subdividido em
42 **43**

5.564 municípios autônomos. O Brasil é país vasto e diverso, conhecido especialmente
44 **45**

diversidade de meio-ambiente.
46

- 39.** (A) maior
 (B) grande
 (C) menor
 (D) pequeno

- 42.** (A) habitante
 (B) migrante
 (C) habitantes
 (D) imigrantes

- 45.** (A) por
 (B) pelo
 (C) pela
 (D) para

- 40.** (A) de
 (B) em
 (C) das
 (D) dos

- 43.** (A) divididos
 (B) divididas
 (C) dividido
 (D) dividida

- 46.** (A) sua
 (B) seu
 (C) suas
 (D) seus

- 41.** (A) é
 (B) são
 (C) está
 (D) estão

- 44.** (A) um
 (B) uns
 (C) uma
 (D) umas

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

SECTION III

Instructions: The scenario below contains blank spaces indicating that words are left out. For each blank space, there are four suggested answers. After reading the scenario carefully, select the choice that is BEST in the context for each blank space. Then, shade the corresponding space on the answer sheet.

Example

O namorado da Eliete decidiu um presente para o Dia dos Namorados, mas ele não

1

..... o que escolher para ela.

2

1. (A) comprar-lhe
(B) comprá-la
(C) comprá-lo
(D) comprar-lhes

2. (A) sei
(B) sabe
(C) souber
(D) saber

Sample Answer

1. ☒ (A) ☐ (B) ☐ (C) ☐ (D)

2. ☐ (A) ☐ (B) ☒ (C) ☐ (D)

The correct answers are (A) and (C) respectively, so you would shade spaces (A) and (C) for the respective choices.

E-mail de aniversário

Carolina

Você é muito especial pra mim! ____ é uma data especial. Você ____ seus 15 anos. Parabéns!

47

48

Nossa amizade é ____ linda. Eu vou estar sempre ____ seu lado. Muitos anos de vida pra você.

49

50

Não se ____ que você tem uma grande amiga que sempre vai te apoiar quando você ____.

51

52

Que Deus te dê ____ a felicidade do mundo! Amo você!

53

Com carinho e amizade
Priscila

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

47. (A) hoje
(B) ontem
(C) sempre
(D) anteontem

50. (A) a
(B) à
(C) no
(D) ao

53. (A) tudo
(B) todas
(C) todo
(D) toda

48. (A) acaba
(B) começa
(C) termina
(D) completa

51. (A) esquecer
(B) esquece
(C) esqueça
(D) esquecem

49. (A) nada
(B) muito
(C) muita
(D) bastantes

52. (A) precisa
(B) precisar
(C) precisará
(D) precise

SECTION IV

Instructions: 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, shade the corresponding space on the answer sheet. There is no sample question for this section.

- (a) Items 54–56 refer to the following.



Lanchonete de frutas tropicais

De seg. a sex., das 08:00h às 21:00h, sábado, das 08:00h às 23:00h
Servimos somente sucos, vitaminas e batidas
Praça de Alimentação do Shopping Center, perto do aeroporto central
Serviço de moto-táxi para entrega também. Disque 3224 6768

54. Em quais dias a lanchonete está fechada? 56. O cliente pode tomar sua bebida favorita...
- (A) Aos sábados (A) Só em casa
(B) Aos domingos (B) Só no aeroporto
(C) De segunda a sexta (C) Só na lanchonete
(D) De segunda a sábado (D) Em casa ou na lanchonete
55. A lanchonete se localiza...
- (A) no aeroporto
(B) no supermercado
(C) na praça da cidade
(D) no Shopping Center

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

- (b) Items 57–60 refer to the following.

Depois de muito trabalho no escritório, Samuel estava voltando à noite para casa a pé quando ele ouviu um grito muito forte. Ele começou a andar mais devagar e ao se aproximar do lugar ele viu e ouviu um homem grande segurando e ameaçando um outro homem, dizendo “Dê-me a bolsa agora ou eu vou te bater muito...”. Assustado, Samuel parou de repente e muito devagar tomou uns passos para trás silenciosamente, decidiu chamar a polícia usando seu celular. A resposta foi muito rápida, pois parece que os policiais estavam perto e ele viu dois policiais chegando em suas motos. Eles foram diretamente e prenderam o homem abusador.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>57. Ao voltar para casa à noite, Samuel ouviu...</p> <p>(A) um barulho grande
(B) um grito muito forte
(C) um homem falando
(D) o som de cachorro latindo</p> | <p>59. O que Samuel fez quando ele viu a cena?</p> <p>(A) Ele se escondeu
(B) Ele saiu correndo
(C) Parou e voltou devagar
(D) Parou e chamou a polícia</p> |
| <p>58. Como chegaram os policiais?</p> <p>(A) A pé
(B) Correndo
(C) Em suas motos
(D) Em carro da polícia</p> | <p>60. O que os policiais fizeram ao chegar?</p> <p>(A) Falaram com Samuel
(B) Prenderam Samuel
(C) Procuraram por Samuel
(D) Prenderam o homem abusador</p> |

END OF TEST

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



TEST CODE **01264010 – TS**

SPEC 2015/01264010 – TS

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
C A R I B B E A N S E C O N D A R Y E D U C A T I O N C E R T I F I C A T E[®]
E X A M I N A T I O N

P O R T U G U E S E

Paper 01 – General Proficiency

PART A – LISTENING COMPREHENSION

ITEMS 1 – 30

TEACHER'S SCRIPT

SPECIMEN PAPER

45 minutes

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01264010/CSEC/SPEC – TS

THIS IS THE LISTENING COMPREHENSION PART OF THE MULTIPLE-CHOICE PAPER. YOU MUST LISTEN CAREFULLY TO THE INSTRUCTIONS, AND TO EACH QUESTION WHICH WILL BE READ ONLY ONCE. NOW OPEN YOUR TEST BOOKLET ON PAGE 2 AND READ WITH ME THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR SECTION 1.

SECTION I

Instructions: 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 BEST shows what the statement says. Then, shade the corresponding space on the answer sheet. For example, you hear:

O rapaz vai começar a correr.

Now look at the four pictures printed in your test booklet. (15 seconds)

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

Begin to look at the picture (15 seconds) STOP.

Now get ready to listen to Question 1.

- | | | |
|------------|-------|---|
| Question 1 | | O homem saiu do ônibus com uma mala de viagem. (15 seconds) |
| Question 2 | | O cachorro está embaixo da mesa. (15 seconds) |
| Question 3 | | O rapaz vende peixes no mercado. (15 seconds) |
| Question 4 | | Os amigos estão jogando críquete no parque. (15 seconds) |
| Question 5 | | A senhora está limpando a janela suja. (15 seconds) |
| Question 6 | | O tempo está ensolarado. (15 seconds) |
| Question 7 | | Duas meninas estão lavando roupas. (15 seconds) |
| Question 8 | | O homem idoso lê uma revista no banco. (15 seconds) |

SECTION II

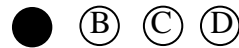
Instructions: In this section you will hear a number of sentences. Each sentence will be read twice and will be followed by one question or incomplete statement. Four suggested answers for each question are printed in your test booklet. For each question choose the answer which **BEST** completes the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

Mãe, estou com muita fome!
O que esta pessoa está querendo?

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

- (A) Uma maçã
- (B) Uma bebida
- (C) Um remédio
- (D) Um brinquedo

Sample Answer



The correct answer is (A), so you would shade the space with the letter (A) on your answer sheet.

Now listen carefully to the first question in this section.

9. Alô! Não, a secretária não está hoje, ela está de férias por sete dias.
Quando ela vai voltar? (15 seconds)
10. Nossa, estou com muita dor de cabeça!
O que esta pessoa pode fazer? (15 seconds)
11. Está muito frio e chovendo muito desde ontem.
Qual é a atividade ideal? (15 seconds)
12. Nossa, que tráfego horrível, hoje só vou chegar em casa depois das
18 horas!
Onde ela está? (15 seconds)
13. Pedro saiu de casa e não se lembrou de levar seus livros e cadernos.
Para onde Pedro vai? (15 seconds)
14. Ana paga a escola de Joana e ajuda-a todos os dias nas tarefas de casa.
Quem é Ana? (15 seconds)
15. Não gostei, achei que estão caras e grandes demais. Vou provar
outras.
Onde está este cliente? (15 seconds)
16. Rogério escreve sobre os mais novos acontecimentos do dia.
Onde ele trabalha? (15 seconds)

SECTION III

Instructions: In this section, you will hear a series of public announcements or selections followed by a number of questions. Each announcement or selection will be read twice. For each question there is a choice of four responses or completions. Select the BEST response and shade the corresponding space on your answer sheet. There is no sample question for this section.

First selection:

(Read first time at normal speed.)

A Universidade da Guiana celebrará seu dia anual de carreira para estudantes dos quarto e quinto níveis no dia treze de fevereiro. Haverá estandes exibindo opções de carreira onde os estudantes poderão encontrar os profissionais e perguntá-los sobre as oportunidades de carreiras.

(Read selection again, more slowly.)

(Read each question once to candidates.)

Question 17 Qual atividade acontecerá na universidade? (15 seconds)

Question 18 Quais estudantes são convidados? (15 seconds)

Question 19 O que os estudantes podem fazer durante o evento? (15 seconds)

Second selection:

(Read selection first time at normal speed.)

Os jovens precisam ter cuidado com as informações pessoais nas redes sociais. As redes sociais podem ser usadas para se comunicar com os amigos, mas as pessoas também podem roubar sua identidade.

(Read selection again, more slowly.)

(Read each question once to candidates.)

Question 20 Por que os jovens precisam ter cuidado nas redes sociais? (15 seconds)

Question 21 O que as pessoas podem fazer com suas informações pessoais? (15 seconds)

Question 22 Por que as redes sociais são úteis, de acordo com o texto? (15 seconds)

SECTION IV

INSTRUCTIONS

The passage should be read at a normal pace, the first and last (complete) readings each taking approximately 1½ minutes. The reading should be done in such a way as to convey changes of voice (in dialogue, for example), but explanatory gestures are not permissible. The title in English is to be read to the candidates.

(The teacher should read the following instructions aloud to the candidates immediately before the test.)

Listen carefully to the following instructions:

I shall read the passage straight through once. Listen carefully while I read.

I shall then instruct you to look at the questions in English on the text. You will be allowed **three minutes** to read the questions and make notes. There are two groups of questions.

I shall read the passage again, but this time in two parts. When I have finished reading Part A (but not before) you will be given **five minutes** in which to select your answers for the first group of questions. You must select the BEST answer and shade the corresponding letter on the answer sheet provided. This procedure will then be repeated for Part B.

I shall then read the passage a third time, straight through, after which you will then be allowed **four minutes** for final revision.

Plans to Visit Brazil**PART A**

Marcos tem dezesseis anos e gosta muito de futebol. Ele quer conhecer a cidade de Fortaleza, no estado de Ceará, onde mora um tio e o único irmão que ele não viu há sete anos. Ele também quis muito viajar ao Brasil para assistir a Copa do Mundo de Futebol em 2014, mas não foi possível porque sua família toda viajou a Trinidad e Tobago para o casamento duma prima que mora e trabalha lá. Embora a família tenha passado duas semanas na ilha e Marcos tenha gostado muito, o sonho dele ainda é visitar o Brasil.

PART B

O pai dele já confirmou que em 2016, durante as Olimpíadas, ele levará a família toda e os primos Satesh e Robin. Eles têm a mesma idade de Marcos. Lá todos passarão um mês. Vai ser uma grande reunião em família ao chegar em Fortaleza. Marcos já está pensando nas coisas que eles vão fazer. Eles irão aos cinemas, comer muito churrasco, visitar as praias e comprar roupas novas. Eles também vão passear muito e, claro, praticar diariamente muito o Português que aprenderam durante as aulas na escola.

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, GO ON TO THE NEXT ONE. YOU CAN COME BACK TO THAT QUESTION LATER.

PORTUGUESE SPECIMEN PAPER 2015 - CSEC

Item	Specific Objective	Key	Item	Specific Objective	Key
1	5	B	31	4	B
2	2	C	32	5	A
3	2	B	33	4	D
4	5	D	34	5	C
5	4	A	35	2	A
6	3	C	36	4	D
7	2	D	37	4	A
8	2	A	38	4	D
9	2	B	39	2	A
10	3	C	40	2	C
11	2	D	41	2	A
12	1	A	42	2	C
13	2	C	43	2	C
14	1	A	44	2	A
15	3	B	45	2	C
16	2	C	46	2	B
17	4	B	47	1	A
18	2	C	48	1	D
19	4	A	49	1	B
20	4	C	50	1	D
21	5	C	51	1	C
22	2	C	52	1	B
23	2	C	53	1	D
24	1	D	54	2	B
25	2	D	55	2	D
26	5	B	56	2	D
27	3	C	57	4	B
28	5	B	58	5	C
29	4	D	59	4	D
30	3	D	60	4	D



TEST CODE **01264020**

SPEC 2015/01264020

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

**CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE®
EXAMINATION**

PORTUGUESE

Paper 02 – General Proficiency

FREE RESPONSE

SPECIMEN PAPER

2 hours 15 minutes

READ THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.

1. This paper comprises FOUR sections and FOUR questions.
2. Answer ALL the questions in this paper.

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

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SECTION I

DIRECTED SITUATIONS

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS.

- 1. Write in PORTUGUESE the information required for EACH of the situations given below. Do not use more than one sentence for each situation. For some situations, a complete sentence MAY NOT be necessary. Do NOT translate the situation given. Do NOT use abbreviations.**

YOU WILL BE PENALISED FOR DISREGARDING THESE INSTRUCTIONS.

- (a) Your Brazilian correspondent, Marta, wants to know how you usually spend your weekends. Send her an e-mail in which you state TWO things that you normally do on weekends.

.....
.....
.....

(3 marks)

- (b) Your aunt sends you a gift for your birthday. Write the note you send to her thanking her for the gift and explaining why you like it.

.....
.....
.....

(3 marks)

- (c) Your Portuguese teacher asks the class to write what sites they visit on the Internet and why. Write your response.

.....
.....
.....

(3 marks)

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

- (d) You are going to arrive late for football practice. Write the note of apology you send to your coach in which you include the reason for your late arrival.

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(3 marks)

- (e) Tomorrow will be a holiday. Send a note to your friend inviting him/her to a specific activity, providing information about the activity.

.....

.....

.....

(3 marks)

- (f) Your friend wants to know what you will be wearing to your graduation ball. Write the text that you send describing the outfit you plan to wear.

.....

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(3 marks)

- (g) Your teacher has to leave the class. Write TWO instructions that she leaves on the board for the students.

.....

.....

.....

(3 marks)

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

- (h) Your brother sends a text message to your mother saying where he went and when he will be back. What does the message say?

.....

.....

.....

(3 marks)

- (i) Your best friend is leaving to study overseas. Write the farewell note you send to her and mention what you will miss about her.

.....

.....

.....

(3 marks)

- (j) Your parents are celebrating their 25th anniversary. Write the note you place in the gift congratulating them and expressing best wishes.

.....

.....

.....

(3 marks)

Total 30 marks

SECTION II
LETTER WRITING

2. Use the cues provided below to write a letter in **PORTUGUESE** of **NO MORE THAN 130–150 words**. Use appropriate tense or tenses.

YOU WILL BE PENALIZED FOR DISREGARDING THESE INSTRUCTIONS.

LETTER

Your class is going on a trip to Lethem, Guyana. You have an aunt who lives there. Write a letter to her in which you

- (i) greet her and enquire about her wellbeing
- (ii) give details about your class trip (when, where, preparations you have made)
- (iii) ask about the place (weather, people, places to visit)
- (iv) mention TWO activities you would like to do when you get there.

(DO NOT write your real name and address, but include the date in PORTUGUESE and use the appropriate beginning and ending.)

Total 30 marks

Write your answer to Question 2 here.
Remember to write your question number in the box provided below.

Question No.

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SECTION III

CONTEXTUAL DIALOGUE

- 3. Use 80–100 words to complete the dialogue between you and Michele by giving your responses. Responses to ALL of the cues listed below MUST be included in the dialogue.**

You are briefing Michele, a student, who is travelling to Boa Vista in Brazil for the first time, in order to help her enjoy her visit there.

- (i) Greetings
- (ii) Directions on how to get to Boa Vista
- (iii) Information on accommodation options
- (iv) Recommendations on tourist attractions and cultural events
- (v) Thanks and farewell

Total 20 marks

Write your answer to Question 3 here.
Remember to write your question number in the box provided below.

Question number

Michele: Oi, bom dia, tudo bem?
Você

.....

.....

.....

Michele: Gostaria de visitar Boa Vista, em Roraima, durante as minhas férias. Como ir de Lethem, na Guiana, para lá?

Você:

.....

.....

.....

Michele: Como vai ser esta viagem?

Você:

.....

.....

.....

Michele: Ainda sou estudante. Quais tipos de alojamento há?

Você

.....

.....

.....

Michele: Ouvi falar muito do Parque Nacional do Monte Roraima. Pode descrevê-lo para mim e me dizer como chegar lá?

Você:

.....

.....

.....

Michele: Há museus, parques, monumentos, praças e shoppings para conhecer?

Você

.....

.....

.....

Michele: Há eventos culturais interessantes e comidas típicas durante o mês de junho?

Você:

.....

.....

.....

Michele: Bom, agradeço muito a sua ajuda. Muito obrigada por ter me ajudado.

Você:

.....

.....

.....

SECTION IV

READING COMPREHENSION

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS.

4. **Read the following selection carefully. Do NOT translate, but answer the questions in ENGLISH.**

YOU WILL BE PENALIZED FOR DISREGARDING THESE INSTRUCTIONS.

A Clever Cat

Um gato e um rato eram melhores amigos. Eles moravam numa pequena vila e tinham muitos amigos. Num dia frio, eles decidiram comprar um pouco de comida. Eles foram ao mercado e compraram um pouco de queijo e um pote grande.

Eles deixaram o queijo no pote na igreja porque muitos dos seus amigos estavam sempre com fome.

Uma noite, o gato faminto disse ao rato que queria ir à igreja para orar porque a sua mãe estava muito doente. Ao chegar à igreja, o gato guloso comeu um pedaço do queijo. No dia seguinte, o gato novamente disse ao rato que tinha de rezar por seu filho que tinha quebrado a sua perna. Naquele momento, ele comeu todo o queijo.

Poucos dias depois, quando o inverno chegou, o rato feliz foi à igreja para comer o queijo. Para sua surpresa, não havia mais queijo. Ele procurou por toda a igreja e não conseguia encontrá-lo. Finalmente, o pobre rato lembrou da verdadeira razão porque o gato sempre quis rezar.

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

Answer, in ENGLISH, the following questions based on the selection you have just read. Use a complete sentence for EACH response.

(a) Where were the cat and the rat living?

.....
.....
.....

(2 marks)

(b) What did they buy in the market?

.....
.....
.....

(2 marks)

(c) Where did the cat tell his friend he was going?

.....
.....
.....

(1 mark)

(d) Explain his reason for wanting to go there.

.....
.....
.....

(3marks)

(e) What did the cat do on arriving at the place?

.....
.....
.....

(3 marks)

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

(f) Explain why the cat wanted to return to the same place.

.....

.....

.....

(2 marks)

(g) What was the cat's true motive for visiting that place?

.....

.....

.....

(2 marks)

(h) When did the rat go to the place?

.....

.....

(1 mark)

(i) What surprise did he get when he arrived?

.....

.....

(1 mark)

(j) Do you think that the cat and the mouse were indeed best friends? Explain.

.....

.....

.....

(3 marks)

Total 20 marks

END OF TEST

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



01264020/MS-SPEC 2015

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
HEADQUARTERS

PORTUGUESE

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

PORTUGUESE

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Question 1

Section I – Directed Situations

Question	Function	Full response	Partial response
a.	Narrating	No final de semana eu vou para a praia e jogo futebol/ No final de semana eu durmo e leio livros. (Any response that mentions 2 activities performed on the weekend)	No final de semana eu vou para a praia. No final de semana eu leio livros. (Only one activity mentioned)
b.	Thanking and Explaining	Muito obrigado pelo presente; ele é útil para fazer meus trabalhos escolares. (Thanking and explaining)	Muito obrigado pelo presente/o presente é muito útil para meus trabalhos escolares! (Either only thanking or explaining)
c.	Providing an explanation/Giving a reason	Eu visito sites de notícias para sempre ficar bem informado. (Providing information and why)	Eu visito o site XYZ/Eu leio notícias na internet (Either only providing information or only stating why)
d.	Apology/Reason	Desculpe por chegar atrasado, o ônibus teve um pneu furado (Apology and reason)	Desculpe por atrasar/O ônibus teve um pneu furado (Either only apology or only providing a reason)
e.	Invitation/Giving reason	Vamos à praia de Accra amanhã às 10h para jogar futevôlei? (Invitation and giving information)	Vamos para a praia amanhã?/Vamos jogar futevôlei amanhã? (Invitation/giving information)
f.	Describing	No baile de graduação eu pretendo vestir uma calça preta, uma camisa azul e sapatos pretos (Describing)	No baile de graduação eu usarei uma camisa. (Description not complete)
g.	Giving Instruction	É proibido comer e falar alto dentro do laboratório de línguas! (Give two instructions)	Proibido fumar! (Only one instruction)

PORTUGUESE

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Question	Function	Full response	Partial response
h.	Providing information: where and when	Olá mãe, meu irmão foi ao clube agora e volta daqui a duas horas. (Providing information: where and when)	Olá mãe, meu irmão foi ao clube. (Providing only one piece of information)
i.	Farewell/Expressing feelings	Querida amiga, tudo de bom no exterior e boa sorte, vou sentir muito a falta da sua companhia e da sua amizade (Farewell/expressing feelings)	Querida amiga, boa sorte em sua nova vida!/Vou sentir muito a sua falta! (Either only farewell or only expressing feelings)
j.	Congratulations/Expressing wishes	Parabéns pelos 25 anos de casamento, desejo tudo de bom e muitas felicidades! (Congratulations/expressing wishes)	Parabéns pelas Bodas de Prata!/Felicidades! (Either only congratulating or only expressing wishes)

Total 30 marks

PORTUGUESE

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Question 3

Michele: Oi, bom dia, tudo bem?

Você: **Bom dia, tudo bem, obrigado/a. E você?**

Michele: Gostaria de visitar Boa Vista em Roraima durante as minhas férias. Como ir de Lethem, na Guiana, para lá?

Você: **Existem táxis, vans e ônibus. Há uma ponte internacional que liga os dois países. Vá à vila de Bonfim e depois a Boa Vista.**

Michele: Como vai ser esta viagem?

Você: **A viagem é tranquila e a passagem é barata. De Bonfim a Boa Vista leva 2 horas e 30 minutos.**

Michele: Ainda sou estudante. Quais tipos de alojamento há?

Você: **Há pousadas e pequenos hotéis razoáveis. Posso recomendar o Hotel Euzébio.**

Michele: Ouvi falar muito do Parque Nacional do Monte Roraima. Pode descrevê-lo para mim e me dizer como chegar lá?

Você: **Posso, sim. O Parque Nacional em Boa Vista é muito impressionante. Tem que visitá-lo.**

PORTUGUESE

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Michele: Há museus, parques, monumentos, praças e shoppings para conhecer?

Você: Há, sim - tudo! Você pode visitar dois museus, muitos parques, várias praças e há três shoppings bem grandes.

Michele: Há eventos culturais interessantes e comidas típicas durante o mês de junho?

Você: Você pode participar das festas juninas e há muita comida gostosa, típica de Roraima e das festas juninas.

Total 20 marks

PORTUGUESE

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Question 4

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| (a) A small town/village. | (2 marks) |
| (b) Cheese/large pot. | (2 marks) |
| (c) To the church. | (1 mark) |
| (d) To pray/for his mother/because she was very ill. | (3 marks) |
| (e) He ate/a piece/of cheese. | (3 marks) |
| (f) To pray for his son/who had a broken leg. | (2 marks) |
| (g) To eat/the cheese. | (2 marks) |
| (h) When it was cold OR winter. | (1 mark) |
| (i) There was no cheese OR the pot was empty. | (1 mark) |
| (j) No, the cat pretended to be his friend and
tricked him/lied to him. | (3 marks) |

Total 20 marks



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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
HEADQUARTERS

PORTUGUESE

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

HOLISTIC MARK SCHEME

PORTUGUESE

PAPER 02 – GENERAL PROFICIENCY

HOLISTIC MARK SCHEME

Questions will be scored in one of two ways – ANALYTICALLY or HOLISTICALLY as directed.


Analytic scoring implies the isolation of one or more aspects of the exercise given and examining them individually. The following will be scored analytically:

- (i) Directed Situations (Section I)
- (ii) Reading Comprehension (Section IV)

A breakdown of the marking criteria to be used has been provided.

Holistic scoring, in contrast to analytic scoring, implies an overall assessment of the candidate's performance in one or more areas. The following will be scored holistically:

- (i) Letter (Section II)
- (ii) Contextual Contextual Dialogue (Section III)

Annotations	Meaning
RE	Repeated errors
P	Partial response
S	Spelling error
T	On page comment
^	Omission
x	Grammatical and vocabulary errors
→	Incorrect position of adjectives
/	Word count limit
	Horizontal line (for underlining errors specified)
?	Lacks clarity
✓	Correct mark (use for Question 4 only)

PORTUGUESE

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

HOLISTIC MARK SCHEME

PAPER II - SECTION I

DIRECTED SITUATIONS: Items - 10; Total Mark - 30

1. Each item will be assessed for its appropriateness and for correctness of expression (grammatical structure, spelling, tenses etc.).
2.
 - (i) If the response includes all elements in the situation, adequately communicates meaning, mark out of 3.
 - (ii) If the response is partially appropriate (i.e. it adequately communicates meaning but does not include all elements in the situation) or inadequately communicates the meaning, mark out of 2 and indicate by the letter **P** in the right hand margin.
 - (iii) If the response (vocabulary or structure) does not make sense, distorts or does not convey meaning, then no marks can be awarded and the candidate scores zero on the item.
3. If the candidate has written more than ONE sentence put a slash (/) after the first sentence. Mark the first sentence only, except in cases where there are two short, highly relevant sentences.
4. In assessing correctness of expression identify all errors. Each response is to be assessed separately. An error repeated in **the same** response is to be penalized only once.

Indicate errors as follows:

(i) **X** – errors of grammar, spelling and vocabulary (also accents that change the meaning of the word: example, *está*, *esté*, *compró*, *compré*)

(ii) ^ for omissions

(iii) → for incorrect word order

(iv) Repeated errors noted in the first instance only; in all other instances use **REP**

These symbols must be placed under the word where the error occurs.

5. **MARK CALCULATION**

(i) Deduct marks as follows:

0-3 errors – 0 mark

4-6 errors – 1 mark

7-9 errors – 2 marks

10 and more errors – assign zero

(ii) Marks will be generated for each response in the response box having deducted the total marks lost from **3** or **2**.

PORTUGUESE

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

HOLISTIC MARK SCHEME

PAPER II - SECTION II

LETTER: 130-150 words; Total marks - 30

Note: This question will be single-marked. The marker will use red ink for annotations.



1. In assessing the essay-type question, the following aspects are to be considered.
 - (a) Fluency of language, coherence, clarity and appropriateness to the situation;
 - (b) Grammatical correctness, range of vocabulary and idiom;
 - (c) Length.
2. Before beginning to mark the question, assess its length.
 - (i) If in doubt as to whether the answer is of an acceptable length, generate word count/check. For the purpose of marking, the minimum acceptable length of the answer is 120 words and the maximum 170.
 - (ii) If the answer appears to go beyond the desired maximum (170), put a **slash (/)** at the end of the relevant sentence. Do not read beyond the cut-off point.
3.
 - (i) Read the answer for the first time and make an overall assessment paying attention to the fluency of the language used and the appropriateness to the situation. The answer should have a logical development which is relevant and clear to the reader. Place the candidate in one of the six broad categories listed on the Mark Scale (see page 6).
 - (ii) All problematic answers (Problematic: (1) Inappropriate form, e.g. letter rather than composition; (2) Exceptionally short answers; (3) Totally irrelevant answers, etc.) should be referred to the Examining Committee by the marker.
4. Reread the answer paying attention to the candidate's correct use of grammar. During this reading, tick exceptionally good usage (e.g. idiom, structure, vocabulary), identify all errors and make your final assessment taking all of these into consideration.

PORTUGUESE

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

HOLISTIC MARK SCHEME

5. Indicate errors as follows:

- (i)  - errors of grammar, and vocabulary
- (ii) ^ - omissions
- (iii) → - incorrect word order
- (iv)  - spelling
- (v) Repeated errors noted in the first instance only; in all other instances use REP

These symbols must be placed under the word where the error occurs.

- 6. Award a mark out of 30 according to the scale set out on page 6.
- 7. Record the score in the response box.

PORTUGUESE

PAPER 02 – GENERAL PROFICIENCY

HOLISTIC MARK SCHEME

MARK SCALE FOR THE LETTER

EXCELLENT	30-24	Excellent – Ideas are well organized and logically developed, with all points clearly expressed. Candidate writes fluently using correct grammar, a wide range of idioms, vocabulary and structures. Shows coherence and clarity of expression with an occasional inaccuracy.
GOOD	23-19	Ideas are organized and logically developed, with all points clearly expressed. Shows coherence and clarity of expression. Uses generally correct grammar but may be somewhat less proficient in range of vocabulary and structures. <u>May contain a few errors.</u>
SATISFACTORY	18-15	May have addressed and developed all points showing good use of essential grammar, reasonable vocabulary and structure. Fairly clear and coherent but may have several errors.
MODERATE	14-11	May not have addressed and developed all the points. Shows general weakness in grammar, vocabulary and structure. Lacks coherence and clarity of expression but is comprehensible.
LIMITED	10-6	Has not addressed or developed all the points, uses poor grammar and vocabulary. Lacks coherence and clarity, scarcely comprehensible
POOR	5-0	Extremely weak – incomprehensible, may show (but not necessarily so) constant use of English, French or Portuguese.
NO RESPONSE	NR	Nothing written.

PORTUGUESE

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

HOLISTIC MARK SCHEME

PAPER II - SECTION IIICONTEXTUAL DIALOGUE: 80-100 words

Total Marks - 20

1. In assessing the question, the following criteria are to be considered.
 - (a) Content/Appropriateness of responses
 - (b) Coherence and clarity
 - (c) Grammar
 - (d) Length
2. Before beginning to mark the question, assess its length.
 - (i) If in doubt as to whether the answer is of an acceptable length, make a quick check. For the purpose of marking, the minimum acceptable length of the answer is 70 words and the maximum 110.
 - (ii) If in any doubt that the answer meets the minimum requirement for length, generate a word count.
 - (iii) If the answer appears to go beyond the desired maximum 110, put a **slash (/)** at the end of the relevant sentence. Do not read beyond the cut-off point.
3. Read the answer for the first time and make an overall assessment paying attention to the fluency of the language used and the appropriateness of the response.
4. Reread the answer paying attention to the candidate's correct use of grammar. During this reading, tick exceptionally good usage (e.g. idiom, structure, vocabulary), identify all errors and make your final assessment taking all of these into consideration.
5. Indicate errors as follows:
 - (i)

 - errors of grammar, and vocabulary
 - (ii) ^ - omissions
 - (iii) → - incorrect word order
 - (iv)

S

 - spelling
 - (v) Repeated errors noted in the first instance only; in all other instances use REP

These symbols must be placed under the word where the error occurs.

PORTUGUESE

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

HOLISTIC MARK SCHEME

6. Place the candidate in one of the six broad categories listed on the mark scheme (See page 9).
7.
 - (i) Award a mark out of 20 according to the scale set out on page 9.
 - (ii) Record the mark in the response box.

PORTUGUESE

PAPER 02 – GENERAL PROFICIENCY

HOLISTIC MARK SCHEME

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – CONTEXTUALCONTEXTUAL DIALOGUE

Scores	Criteria
EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD 20-16	Uses all cues well. Organizes and develops ideas/responses using language that flows naturally. Ideas/responses are very clearly expressed. Wide and proficient use of idioms, structures and vocabulary.
GOOD 15-13	Uses at least 4 of the cues well. Organizes and develops ideas/responses using language that flows naturally. Ideas/responses are clearly expressed. Uses generally correct grammar but may be somewhat less proficient in range of vocabulary and structures. May contain a few errors of grammar.
SATISFACTORY 12-10	Uses at least 3 of the cues. Organizes and develops ideas/responses using language that flows fairly well. Ideas/responses are fairly well expressed. Adequate use of idioms, structures and vocabulary to enable communication. More obvious errors in grammar are present.
MODERATE 9-7	Includes some of the cues but all may not be used well. Ideas and responses are not well organized/developed. Language shows some incoherence. Limited use of idioms, structures and vocabulary.
LIMITED 6-4	Limited use of cues. Ideas/responses are not well organized or expressed. Lacks coherence and clarity, Poor use of idioms, structures and vocabulary.
POOR 3-0	Very weak use of cues, very poor organization. Ideas/responses incoherent and incomprehensible. Very poor use of idioms, structures and vocabulary.
NR	Nothing written

PORTUGUESE

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

HOLISTIC MARK SCHEME

PAPER II - SECTION IV

READING COMPREHENSION: Items - 10 Total Marks - 20

1. Responses are to be made in ENGLISH. Where **ALL** responses are made in PORTUGUESE, total the marks and divide by 2. Where responses are in both PORTUGUESE AND ENGLISH mark **ONLY** ENGLISH responses.
2. Marks will be awarded for Comprehension. No marks will be deducted for language except where communication is affected.
3. There are 10 items for a total of 20 marks. Marks for items will range between 1 and 3 marks.
 - (a) For items out of 1 mark:

1 mark	-	fully correct
0 mark	-	completely incorrect
 - (b) For items out of a maximum of 2 marks:

2 marks	-	fully correct
1 mark	-	partially correct
0 mark	-	completely incorrect
 - (c) For items out of a maximum of 3 marks:

3 marks	-	fully correct
2, 1 mark(s)	-	partially correct
0 mark	-	completely incorrect

NOTE: These items are being marked as 1 QIG.

Assigning marks

1. Insert a tick ✓ on the part of the response that is correct.

The number of ticks ✓ should be equal to the mark(s) being assigned for each response.

The total number of ticks in the annotations count (for ticks) at the end of marking the last sub-part(j), should equal the total marks for Question 6. Enter this total count into the response box.

2. If the answer is incorrect, place an **X**. This will not affect the mark count.



TEST CODE **01264030**

SPEC 2015/01264030

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

**CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE®
EXAMINATION**

PORTUGUESE

Paper 03 – General Proficiency

**ORAL
RESPONSES TO SITUATIONS/INSTRUCTIONS**

SPECIMEN PAPER

Five situations are described below. You are required to respond to EACH one in Portuguese as indicated by the Examiner.

1. You did not do your science homework.
 - (a) What explanation do you give to your teacher?
 - (b) What do you promise to do?
2. You did not attend your best friend's birthday party
 - (a) What excuse do you give her?
 - (b) How does she express her disappointment?
3. Your brother has misplaced your cellular phone.
 - (a) What do you say to him?
 - (b) What do you threaten to do?
4. You arrived home from school later than usual?
 - (a) What reason do you give for your lateness?
 - (b) What warning does your parent give you?
5. Your neighbour is going abroad and asks you to feed her dog.
 - (a) What do you ask her?
 - (b) How does she respond?



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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

**CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE®
EXAMINATION**

PORTUGUESE

Paper 03 – General Proficiency

**ORAL
CONVERSATION**

SPECIMEN PAPER

A. Home and Family

1. Você tem uma família grande ou pequena? Explique.
2. Onde você mora?
3. Você mora em um apartamento ou numa casa?
4. Quantas divisões você tem na casa?
5. Em qual parte da casa está a televisão?
6. Você prefere a sua irmã ou o seu irmão? Por quê?
7. Descreva a sua mãe/casa.



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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

**CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE®
EXAMINATION**

PORTUGUESE

Paper 03 – General Proficiency

**ORAL
CONVERSATION**

SPECIMEN PAPER

B. Travel

1. Você gosta de viajar? Por quê?
2. Quais coisas/preparativos são importantes de fazer antes de viajar?
3. Você já foi para outro país? Qual?
4. Qual país gostaria de conhecer? Por quê?
5. O que você pretende fazer quando visitar este país?
6. Você gostaria de ir ao Brasil? Por quê?
7. Quais lugares você gostaria de visitar no Brasil?
8. Descreva um lugar que você visitou e gostou muito. Por que gostou dele?



TEST CODE **01264030**

SPEC 2015/01264030

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

**CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE®
EXAMINATION**

PORTUGUESE

Paper 03 – General Proficiency

**ORAL
CONVERSATION**

SPECIMEN PAPER

C. School and Career

1. Quais são as línguas ensinadas em sua escola?
2. Qual língua você gosta? Por quê?
3. Quais são suas matérias favoritas? Por quê?
4. Você tem as atividades extra-curriculares em sua escola? Quais?
5. É importante ter uma atividade extra-curricular?
6. O que você gostaria de ser no futuro?
7. Quais matérias você está fazendo que podem ajudá-lo/la no futuro?
8. Descreva sua escola.



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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

**CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE®
EXAMINATION**

PORTUGUESE

Paper 03 – General Proficiency

**ORAL
CONVERSATION**

SPECIMEN PAPER

D. Daily Routine

1. A que horas você normalmente acorda todos os dias?
2. O que você faz após acordar pela manhã?
3. Você costuma dormir cedo todos os dias? Explique por que/ por que não.
4. O que você faz ao chegar em casa todos os dias?
5. Você acha que tem uma vida interessante? Explique.
6. Como você ajuda com o trabalho em casa?
7. Como é um dia típico na sua família?
8. Como você passa seu fim de semana normalmente?



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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

**CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE®
EXAMINATION**

PORTUGUESE

Paper 03 – General Proficiency

**ORAL
CONVERSATION**

SPECIMEN PAPER

E. Sports/Recreation

1. Qual é seu esporte favorito e por quê?
2. Por que você acha que fazer esportes é importante?
3. Quem é sua personalidade esportiva favorita e por quê?
4. Que tipos de esportes são praticados em sua comunidade?
5. Você prefere assistir filmes em casa ou no cinema com amigos? Por quê?
6. Que tipo de música você mais gosta de ouvir? Por quê?
7. Você gosta de jogos eletrônicos? Por quê?
8. Descreva um dia típico no parque com os amigos?



TEST CODE **01264030**

SPEC 2015/01264030

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

**CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE®
EXAMINATION**

PORTUGUESE

Paper 03 – General Proficiency

**ORAL
CONVERSATION**

SPECIMEN PAPER

F. Shopping

1. Você gosta de fazer compras? Por quê?
2. Dê exemplos de três coisas que você gosta de comprar.
3. Quais são as suas marcas preferidas?
4. Você prefere feiras ou shoppings? Por quê?
5. Descreva o seu shopping preferido/a sua loja preferida.
6. Qual é o seu shopping preferido/a sua loja preferida? Por quê?
7. Você gosta de ir sozinho/a ou com a sua família ou com amigos? Por quê?
8. O que você compra quando vai ao supermercado?



TEST CODE **01264030**

SPEC 2015/01264030

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

**CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE®
EXAMINATION**

PORTUGUESE

Paper 03 – General Proficiency

**ORAL
READING PASSAGE**

SPECIMEN PAPER

The Internet (Daily Routine)

Com tantas pessoas colocando informações pessoais na internet, o marketing direcionado se tornou muito fácil e popular. Devido a essa capacidade muito precisa de marketing demográfico específico, as redes sociais são extremamente rentáveis. Mas há sempre o lado negativo, e no caso das rede sociais é, sobretudo, a questão da confiança e segurança. As redes sociais colocam seus usuários em perigo, especialmente em relação aos membros da web que fazem de conta que são outra pessoa e nas quais não se deveria confiar. Quando você só conhece uma pessoa há pouco tempo e nunca antes a conheceu pessoalmente, é muito fácil para essa pessoa criar uma auto-imagem desejável em sua cabeça, e esta imagem pode ter nada a ver com a realidade. Quando expomos nossas vidas para a comunidade da internet, nós nos tornamos muito vulneráveis, independente se nos damos conta disto ou não.

(144 words)



01264030/MS-SPEC 2015

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
HEADQUARTERS

PORTUGUESE

PAPER 03 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME FOR ORALS

PORTUGUESE
PAPER 03 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY
MARK SCHEME

SECTION I

Oral Responses to Situations - 25 marks

1. Candidates will be marked on the basis of Appropriateness, Fluency and Correctness of grammar and vocabulary.
2. If no marks are awarded for Appropriateness and Fluency, then no marks can be earned for Grammar and Vocabulary.
3. Each of the five situations will be marked separately and rated according to the Mark Scheme below.
4. A total of five marks will be allotted for EACH response – two marks for Appropriateness and Fluency, and three marks for Grammar and Vocabulary.

MARK SCHEME - ORAL RESPONSES TO SITUATIONS

Appropriateness and Fluency (2)	Correctness of Grammar and Vocabulary (3)
N/A	(3) Wide range of vocabulary and excellent control of grammatical structures.
(2) Response is fully appropriate, evenly presented with no <u>undue</u> hesitation.	(2) Good range of vocabulary and very good control of grammatical structures.
(1) Slightly disjointed but communicating appropriate responses.	(1) Limited range of vocabulary and evidence of grammatical errors.
(0) Inappropriate, lacking fluency. So disjointed that it makes no sense.	(0) Lacking correctness. Inarticulate.

PORTUGUESE
PAPER 03 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY
MARK SCHEME

SECTION II

Reading Passage - 10 marks

- (a) Examiners should not comment during the reading.
- (b) Each candidate should be allowed to read a complete passage. Only in exceptional circumstances, for example, where a candidate suffers from a speech impediment, may the reading be cut short.
- (c) Where the candidate makes an immediate and spontaneous correction it should be accepted without penalty.
- (d) Candidates should be marked on the basis of pronunciation, fluency and intonation on the scale below. Examiners should attempt to categorize each performance as outstanding, very good and so on before fixing the specific mark to be awarded.

MARK SCHEME - READING PASSAGE

RATING	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
Outstanding	(9-10) Outstanding pronunciation and fluency. Correct accentuation and stress; shows comprehension of the passage through correct phrasing and intonation
Very Good	(7-8) Very good pronunciation and fluency. Correct accentuation and stress; only occasional incorrect phrasing and intonation.
Good	(5-6) Shows knowledge of sound system but may show a few errors in pronunciation of some sounds and/or in stress. Can be readily understood.
Moderate	(4) Breaks the sense of the passage suggesting inadequate comprehension and causing difficulty for the listener
Limited	(3) Many errors; lacks fluency; stumbles constantly; poor pronunciation. Frequently incomprehensible.
Unsatisfactory	(1-2) Very poor; many basic errors; cannot be understood

PORTUGUESE
PAPER 03 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY
MARK SCHEME

SECTION III**Guided Conversation - 45 marks**

Candidates should be marked on the basis of

- (a) their comprehension, spontaneity and fluency
- (b) their correctness of expression and their range of vocabulary within the limits set by the syllabus.

MARK SCHEME - GUIDED CONVERSATION

RATING	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	
	Comprehension and Spontaneity (20 marks)	Expression and Fluency (25 marks)
Outstanding	(18-20) Comprehends all questions; answers readily.	(23-25) Responds very appropriately and fluently. Correct expression and wide and varied vocabulary.
Very good	(15-17) Comprehends most questions fully first time; answers with minimal hesitation.	(20-22) Responds appropriately and fluently. Correct expression with an occasional inaccuracy, and wide and varied vocabulary.
Good	(12-14) Comprehends many questions fully; answers with occasional hesitation.	(16-19) Responds appropriately to most questions, but lacks fluency. Some inaccuracies in expression, has a fairly good range of vocabulary.
Satisfactory/ Adequate	(9-11) Comprehends less than half of questions asked; answers with great hesitation.	(12-15) Responds appropriately to some questions, responses tend to be disjointed; limited range of vocabulary.
Minimal/ Unsatisfactory	(6-8) Comprehends few questions; answers with great hesitation; requires frequent repetition.	(8-11) Has difficulty responding to many questions; lacks fluency and coherence.
Weak	(4-5) Comprehends few questions; answers with great difficulty.	(5-7) Responds to most questions with great difficulty and in a disjointed manner; limited in expression; faulty manipulation of structures.
Very weak	(1-3) Very limited understanding of questions; has great difficulty in responding.	(1-4) Very limited range of structures and vocabulary.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

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

JUNE 2004

FRENCH

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 la 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 collège. 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 la 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.

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 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

*Chère 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 << *Félicitations! 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 *ecrire-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:

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*.

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.

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.

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.

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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.

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 <i>espérer</i> . 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*}Maintenant, je fais la grasse ^{3*}matinée. Je reste au lit ^{4*}jusqu'à 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.

*** 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*”.

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

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 plaît*, *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*)

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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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.

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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>pied</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*, **aniversaire*, **malheureusment*)
- Word by word translation from the English structure..for example, * «*Une album qui faire les jeurnes 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 n 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 *visit   ma famille et moi, ici, dans* Trinit   et Tobago. Il est arriv   la premi  re semaine de mes vacances dans le* airport. Quand il est arriv  , nous sommes retourn  s    la maison, pour une boum. C'  tait super! Apr  s la boum nous nous sommes couch  s.*

**Dans le matin, nous sommes all  s    la plage, o   Lui et moi avons fait la natation. Lundi matin, nous avons vu les monuments historiques. Apr  s nous sommes all  s au cin  * pour ver* un film d'  pouvante. C'  tait int  ressant! Le prochain jour Lui et moi sommes all  s jouer un match du* foot. Lui a jou   tr  s bien et il a gagn   un * pour l'  quipe et il a gagn   *des argent de mon *profeseur. C'  tait amusant parce que* il n'est pas un *miembre de l'  quipe.*

*Je voudrais aller en France o   Lui habite et quand *j'arrive je voudrais voir la tour *d'Effiel et les monuments. *Je irai en France pour mes vacances *d'  t  .*

INCORRECT RESPONSES

CANDIDATE ANSWER	CORRECTIONS	CORRECT RESPONSE
*visite	Wrong verb	rendre visite
*dans	Wrong preposition	��
*le airport	Use of english word	l'a��roport
*dans le matin	No need for "dans"	le matin
*cine	Use of abbreviation	cin��/cin��ma
*ver	Use of Spanish word for "see"	voir
*du foot	Wrong use of "du"	De foot
*Il a gagne un	Object pronoun needed	Il l'a gagne
* 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 miembre	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'été.	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*, **beaucoup 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 désappointé tu ne maison pas...*

Candidates found several effective ways of expressing their disappointment including *Je regrette/je suis désolé/déçue*. 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/vaissels*, 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*, **tosses*, **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'èspere que tu vas bien. Je regrette de ne pas avoir écrit* *tôt. Je t'écis pour *dire –toi de* ma opportunité d'étudier en France.*

*Ma professeur me *donné un dépliant d'un* cour **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* superiere 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 opportunitè 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 opportunité</i>	Pronoun and spelling	Mon opportunité
<i>me **donné</i>	Omission of auxiliary 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 plaît*, *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'aille au vol sans payer car je vous ai payé la semaine dernière? ; Avez-vous un vol ce soir ? Il faut que j'aille 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
a la heure même	Accent on a; wrong position of même	À la même heure
du pique-nique	Wrong article	Le pique-nique
sont 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; ça 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.

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

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

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.*

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

CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE	CORRECTIONS REQUIRED	CORRECT RESPONSE
<i>De la chimie</i> <i>Est dépêchée</i> <i>Quitterai</i>	No need for partitive article. Reflexive pronoun required Wrong verb	De chimie S'est dépêche 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!*

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

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.

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

- 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 Généralement Un journée Creole Octobre Du Sur les rues Un	After 'pouvoir' one used the infinitive Accents missing Journée is feminine Accent missing Small letter Use of the definite masculine article here One says 'dans les rues' After the negative, use « de »	aider Généralement Une Créole octobre le dans 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.

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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', 'distracted' 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'.

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- (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

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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 vœux* 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 (**beacoup*, **color*, **dejuener*, **baïtment*, **ouverture*tres*.) The word *restaurant* was often given several different spellings in the same essay. Invented words (**rompage*, **furnitures*) 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 ouvert 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 et 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 ouvert	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 of 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 vêtement 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 *Veuillez 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 Une adult Grands chambres Jumeaux lits Un mil La taxe inclu Envoyerais Aussitôt possible	No inversion Article and spelling Agreement of adjective Inversion Article redundant and spelling Article gender and spelling Spelling of verb form Incomplete expression	vous voulez un adulte grandes chambres lits jumeaux mille taxe inclus enverrai 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-Élysées, de temps en temps, quelques-unes*)
- Careless rendition (*de* and *des, collèges* 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 *arbes *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 (**assister*, **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
Bateau	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, attencion, 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 redundant	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, peinture, quartier, naître*
- 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.

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 2015

FRENCH

GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Performance in the 2015 examination was comparable with that of 2014. 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 2015, 64.7 per cent of candidates earned Grades I–III compared with 75.9 for 2014.

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 should be within the experience of a 16-year-old candidate.

Candidates' performance on this question seemed to have been marginally better than 2014, with more candidates gaining the maximum score on this question than in previous years. Overall, the performance here appears to have improved with more candidates scoring 50 per cent and above. It was refreshing to see the significant number of candidates who continue to display excellent mastery and control of grammatical structures and use of a wide range of vocabulary and idioms to express themselves within the parameters set.

However, candidates must be reminded that for this question, it is important to be precise and concise with the language used in their responses. Too often, candidates lose marks unnecessarily with long, sometimes irrelevant, elements in their responses. They must also be taught to read carefully and identify the key elements required in each situation in order to respond appropriately. It must be remembered that this question is designed to help candidates function in real-life settings and as a result, they must be encouraged to put themselves in the situation in order to respond accordingly. Also, there is often more than one way to respond to a given situation, and they must be encouraged to use the structures and vocabulary at their disposal.

Situation (a)

In this situation, candidates were required to give two details of their physical appearance. The performance here was generally very good, as this was one of the better performing questions in this section. While many candidates scored full marks here, the challenges were the agreement and position of adjectives and, in some cases, there was confusion with the use of the verbs ‘*avoir*’ and ‘*être*’, where one was incorrectly used when the other was clearly needed. In some cases as well, the possessive adjectives were used with parts of the body, where the definite articles should have been used instead.

An example of a correct response was:

- *Je suis petite et assez mince.*

Situation (b)

For this situation, candidates were required to give a prediction of two kinds of weather for next week. While this topic has been somewhat of a staple in recent exams, candidates’ performance was not as expected. Many candidates were able to produce full, correct responses here. However, far too many continue to experience difficulty with appropriate and correct expressions for the weather. Examples of the difficulties faced by many here include an apparent lack of knowledge of the use of the verb ‘*faire*’ with expressions related to the weather, with many opting to use ‘*être*’ instead. Additionally, many seemed unable to form and use the future or immediate future tense correctly here. The rendering of ‘*la semaine prochaine*’ was also quite problematic for many, with the incorrect gender of the noun and also the position of the adjective.

An example of a correct response was:

- *Il y aura du vent et il y aura du soleil.*

Situation (c)

Here, candidates were required to express two commands in the context of a note from a mother to a child, instructing him/her to do two tasks in the house before going to school. This was very well done for the most part. However, there were many areas of difficulty here. The main challenge faced by candidates was the formation of the familiar imperative (commands) of verbs in the first group, namely ‘*er*’ verbs, where quite a number of candidates seemed to have forgotten to remove the ‘*s*’ of the ‘*tu*’ form of the verb used (**Laves la vaisselle*). Also, while most candidates appropriately used the familiar form of the command, a significant number seemed not to recognize that this form was necessary here and instead opted for the polite form.

It is also noteworthy that while many used ‘*faire la vaisselle*’ as one of the tasks, it was often incorrectly rendered, either through the misspelling of ‘*vaisselle*’ (**vaiselle*) or used with a plural article, ‘*fais *les *vaisselles*’. Another popular choice of task was ‘*nettoyer la salle de bains*’. Here again, there was difficulty with the correct conjugation of this verb (**Nettoies/*Nettoyes la salle de bains*). Another point of difficulty for many here was the rendering of ‘before you go to school’. Clearly, many candidates seemed unaware of the conjunction ‘*avant de + infinitive*’ and instead used

*‘*avant tu vas*’ and even *‘*après tu vas*’. In quite a few cases as well, the choice of tasks was inappropriate as the tasks were totally unrelated to context, that is, in the house. For those who chose to use the modal verb ‘*devoir*’, quite a number failed to use the infinitive form of the verbs that followed.

An example of a correct response was:

- *Tu dois faire ton lit et ranger ta chambre.*

Situation (d)

In this situation, candidates had to respond to a cousin who was enquiring when s/he can visit by suggesting the best time and giving a reason. Most candidates performed excellently here by responding appropriately and correctly. The main difficulty was the inability of most candidates to use the correct verb, ‘*rendre visite à*’ instead of ‘*visiter*’. In cases where ‘*rendre visite à*’ was used, candidates had difficulty using it correctly, both in terms of the correct form of the verb itself and also with the pronoun in the correct position (*‘*Rendre visiter à moi*’ and *‘*Tu rends visite à moi*’). For the second element, where candidates had to give a reason, the issue of agreement of nouns/adjectives was very problematic once again. Also, the need to use the future tense after the conjunction ‘*quand*’ when a future time is implied, seemed not to have been widely known by candidates (‘... *quand mes examens *sont *fini*’).

An example of a correct response was:

- *Tu peux me rendre visite le 25 juin parce que je veux que tu fêtes avec moi, mon anniversaire.*

Situation (e)

For this situation, candidates were required to respond to an invitation by declining the offer and giving a reason. While this is a basic function that is well within the range of candidates at this level, many were unable to score full marks here. The issue here was the first essential element, declining the invitation. Many candidates offered an apology, ‘*Je suis désolé*’ as a response for this element, where clearly this was not appropriate. The second element was much better done with reasons ranging from ‘... *ma mère est malade*’ to ‘... *j’ai beaucoup de devoirs*’. Here again though, tense usage was problematic and quite a number of candidates used the verb ‘*attendre*’ in attempting to convey their inability to ‘attend’ the concert, where ‘*aller*’ would have sufficed.

An example of a correct response was:

- *Je ne peux pas aller parce que je dois faire mes devoirs.*

Situation (f)

Candidates were required to write a note of apology for having broken a neighbour's window and to say what they would do to compensate him/her. This was very well done by many candidates, with a significant number scoring full or almost full marks. The first element of ‘apologizing’ was almost flawless, with even the weakest candidates being able to accomplish this task. The second element, expressing an act of compensation, was also not badly done. However, the issue of tense usage here

was again evident. Many candidates, even some of the more proficient ones, tended to use the present tense where clearly some form of the future would have been more appropriate. A common example of this was **J'achete une fenêtre pour vous* or even **Je *achete une fenêtre *nouveau pour toi*. As is evident here, another issue was the form and position of the adjective *'nouveau'*.

Candidates must also be more careful and consistent with regard to the form, familiar or polite, that is needed for each situation. Many began the response by addressing the neighbour as *'Monsieur/Madame'* and then went on to use the familiar form of the disjunctive/emphatic pronoun, *'pour toi'* instead of *'vous'*.

An example of a correct response was:

- *Je suis désolé, je ferai des réparations.*

Situation (g)

In this situation, candidates were required to express prohibition/interdiction and a likely penalty in the context of a sign at the zoo forbidding visitors from feeding the animals. This was arguably one of the more challenging questions in this section. While the interdiction/prohibition was well known and expressed by many, those who attempted to use the verb *'donner à manger à'* often had difficulty with the use of the requisite prepositions (*'Il est interdit de donner à manger aux animaux'*). Many instead opted to use *'repas'* and *'nourriture'* for *'manger'* and the latter was often misspelt. Instead of *'aux animaux'*, it was very common to see **à les animaux*. Despite this, the first element was much better handled than the second, that of a possible penalty. For those who attempted, two of the major difficulties were the use of *'tu'* instead of *'vous'* as in *'tu dois payer cent euros'* and a lack of awareness of the difference between the verbs *'partir'* and *'quitter'* as was evident in the frequent use of **tu dois *partir le zoo* and *'vous devez *quitter'*. This was also seen in Situation (c).

An example of a correct response was:

- *Il est interdit de donner à manger aux animaux et si vous le faites, vous devrez payer trois cents dollars.*

Situation (h)

This situation required candidates to issue a cancellation of the French club's next meeting and provide a reason. While many candidates were able to satisfactorily accomplish the tasks, the second element, that of giving a reason, was much better handled by the majority of candidates. For the first essential element, candidates used a range of expressions to indicate the cancellation including *'La prochaine réunion est annulée'* and *'La prochaine réunion n'aura pas lieu lundi'*. However, quite a significant number of candidates were not able to respond appropriately here. For those who managed to do so, there were issues of agreement of the past participle of the verb, *'la réunion est *annulé'* as well as the position and agreement of the adjective *'prochain'* as in **le réunion prochain*. The verb *'annulée'* was in some cases misspelt as **anulé*. It must also be mentioned that here, as well as in other situations where candidates attempted to provide a time using a day of the week, many seemed unaware of the difference between *'mardi'* and *'le mardi'* or any other day used.

An example of a correct response was:

- *Nous devons annuler la prochaine réunion ce mardi parce que nous devons passer un examen.*

Situation (i)

Candidates were required to provide two good wishes written by their teacher on the day of their examination. It was a bit puzzling to note that the majority of candidates was only able to respond partially to this situation. While most were able to offer ‘*Bonne chance*’ as the first wish, many fell short with the second wish. *‘*Bon chance*’ was frequently seen as well. In many instances, what was offered as a second wish did not constitute a wish, but rather a piece of advice as in *‘*Calme-toi*’ or *‘*Lis *tous les questions*’. As is evident here, many candidates failed to realize that the note, which was written on the board, was directed to the class and not to an individual student. However, in a few instances, appropriate responses like ‘*J’espère que vous réussirez à l’examen*’ were offered as a second wish.

An example of a correct response was:

- *Bonne chance et meilleurs vœux.*

Situation (j)

In this situation, candidates were required to email a friend to enquire about the homework and when it is due. While this seems to be a very straightforward and common task, the level of performance by candidates was not what was expected. In far too many responses, the language used was very distorted. One of the main challenges was candidates’ inability to use the correct interrogative for the first element as in *‘*Qu’est-ce que les devoirs?*’ instead of ‘*Quels sont les devoirs?*’ Many candidates lost marks for careless errors like *‘*le devoirs*’ as well as for a lack of subject/verb agreement. These can be easily avoided if candidates spend some time rereading their work. The second element was much better handled. It was evident, though, that not many candidates were familiar with the verb ‘*rendre*’ as used for ‘to submit or hand in an assignment’. However, many were able to use alternatives like ‘*donner*’ and ‘*retourner*’ to convey the idea.

An example of a correct response was:

- *Est-ce qu’il y a des devoirs aujourd’hui, et c’est pour quand?*

Recommendations

It is advisable for teachers to guide students in their approach to responding to 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 have the choice of writing either a letter or a composition.

The topic of both questions was seemingly within the candidates' experience and provided fair opportunities for (a) showcasing mastery of a range of tenses (present, passé composé, imperfect, pluperfect and future/futur proche tenses), (b) triggering the recall and application of a good range of high frequency vocabulary, (c) demonstrating mastery of essential grammar and (d) introducing relevant, performance-enhancing idioms.

Question 2, the letter, was the more popular of the two options.

Letter Format

Many candidates did not follow the rubric concerning the use of an appropriate beginning and ending. Many still continue to write out a full address. Also, in this regard, choosing the correct form of address — the adjective 'cher' — posed great difficulty for candidates, for example, '**Cher ma taunte et mon oncle*'. Too many candidates ended with a literal translation of an English expression: '**Avec amour, j'adore tu, truelement*,' etc. Many did not write the date in French. Where the date was given, a significant number of candidates wrote it in words (instead of using numerals) and some showed an influence from Spanish by introducing '*de*' before the month and year.

Word Limit

A significant number of candidates either exceeded or fell short of the accepted word limits. Particularly in the composition, candidates seemed to run out of things to say. This often resulted in candidates not being able to address and/or develop all of the cues given within the required limits. An otherwise superior script which was too long-winded would therefore become ineligible for a superior mark since one or more of the cues were addressed after the cut-off point. Similarly, a too-short script showing moderately good use of language would attract a more 'limited' mark since all cues would not have been addressed or developed; the candidate would not have produced an adequate body of work for a true and reliable assessment of mastery of essential grammar.

Coherence and Clarity

Weak candidates seemed to have adopted a 'stream-of-consciousness' approach to the writing of these responses. This resulted in much incoherency as candidates seemed to be stringing words together paying little or no attention to the French language structure; for example, '* *Mark arrivé a ma settlement en excitement. Mark enjoyable lui visité a le museum,* Je regarde pour Toby dans mon chamber,* Rover j'adore allé a le plague, * en samedi derniere il escape*'. Also, as in the letter, candidates wrote about the many activities their guest had taken part in when the arrival of the guest is given as having occurred just that morning. Improper sequencing of tenses was another contributor to the overall lack of clarity; both questions required candidates to recount a 'story' within a story which

was already in the past — the pluperfect tense was almost never used, except in a very few superior scripts.

Range of Vocabulary and Idiom

Question 2: The Letter

For the most part, candidates seemed to feel that this was the more manageable of the two options. There was good evidence of candidates having been exposed to much of the required vocabulary but often candidates seemed not to have taken the time to retain and/or reproduce the vocabulary accurately ** l'airport, le luggage, la plague, le martin, bon huere, pasque, mon masion, dans la campange, Mon chein/ chantier, Il amie manager ma chasseures*, etc.

Opportunities also existed for the introduction of a good range of idiom but these were lacking except in the very good scripts. Examples of idioms that could have been used include: (a) Travel vocabulary and idiom: ** Camille est arrivée sain et sauf* (agreements were more often than not, ignored); *'Le vol était en retard'*; *'Papa a pris son bagage'*; (b) Description of the house/household activities: *'Il est dans ma chambre qui est à côté de la salle de bains/qui donne sur le jardin'*; *'Il se lève de bonne heure'*; *'il aide ma mère à faire la vaisselle'*; *'il range* son chambre'*; *'C'est confortable'*. (c) Touristic/Travel activity: *'Nous avons visité un parc d'attractions avec beaucoup de * ménages'*; *'On a fait du tourisme'*; *'Mon frère et Peter ont fait du vélo ensemble'*; *'Nous sommes allés aux sites historiques'*. Better scripts however showed knowledge of Guadeloupe and in the final section used this to good advantage: *'Nous voudrions visiter le volcan Soufrière'*; *'Ma mère voudrais faire du shopping à Pointe-à-Pitre'*.

Question 3: The Composition

This question was answered by fewer candidates and seemed to offer them fewer opportunities to showcase a good range of vocab. (a) Description of the dog: Most candidates, in trying to be 'truthful' got into great difficulty here: ** il est un German Shepherd*; *'Mon chien est noire et blanche'*; *'Il * cheveux est brun'*; *'Il est petit mais il a grand les orielles'* etc. Even giving his/her name — Elle s'appelle est Belle — was often rendered incorrectly. (b) Describing the dog's preferred activities: Candidates seemed to have difficulty with using the third person here: **Il j'adore manager le poulet*; *'Il'* and *'Elle'* were used interchangeably in some scripts. Most candidates did not know the expression: *'s'en aller'* or *'s'échapper'*. As such, most used *'aller'*: *'Il *allé en lundi quand j'éte a l'école'*. (c) Reaction to his disappearance: *'J'ai regardé pour lui dans ma chambre'*; *'Chercher'* when used was also joined with *'pour'* and the use of *'trouver'* in the negative passé compose was also difficult: *'Je ne pas trouver Rover'*. (d) Future efforts to avoid a similar occurrence: Even in the better scripts, the use of *'laisse'* or *'niche'* was not seen. Most used *'petite maison'*: *'Je fait une petite maison pour sa'*. One candidate used the word *'corde'* for leash. Very little effort was made here to introduce any idioms of note.

Candidates' use of vocabulary/idiom was acceptable and as such, this area required greater attention.

Knowledge and Mastery of Essential Grammar

Questions 2 and 3

Many scripts were notably lacking in mastery of the use of the *passé composé* and since this is considered essential grammar at this level, such scripts, although showing a fairly good range of vocabulary could not rise to a satisfactory level given this. *Very importantly, candidates who could not consistently produce examples of their mastery of the passé composé could not be awarded a mark higher than moderate.* Some examples are: ‘**Nous allés a la police*’; ‘*Je quitté la port ouvri*’; ‘*mes frères et Patrice joué au fútbol*’; ‘*Elle a du ça Elizabeth et toi attend le circe et pretend etait clowns*’.

The use of the *imperfect* seemed confined to the pre-learnt expressions with *C’était* + adjective. When needed to describe what the dog was doing, when last seen or what the owner was doing before the dog’s disappearance or in the letter when the ‘funny story’ was being retold, it was rarely attempted. In some instances, there was a hybrid as in: ‘**j’été regarder la tele*’.

The *future tense/future proche* was also not properly rendered in most scripts. ‘**Ma famllie et je sont visiter Guadeloupe; maman dit que nous allons visiterai*’; Having to relate a ‘story within a story’ meant the use of the pluperfect but this tense was almost never used. ‘**Georg dit moi de temps quand mon oncle et tante allés a la plage*’; ‘*Brandon a parle a propos de le temps quand tu as mangé du pain en deux minutes.*’

Also, candidates seem not to have had enough time to practise correct usage in context: ‘**Nous lui adorons*’; ‘*Maman cuisine a grand repas pour sa*’; ‘*Nous prenons Jimmy au restaurant*’. ‘*Je cherche pour il pour un long temps*’; ‘*Rex ne ici pas*’; ‘*Ma mère a téléphoné la police*’.

Many of the usual problems surfaced, for example, incorrect use of possessive adjectives: ‘*Mon famille*’, ‘*Ton fille*’; indiscriminate use of pronouns: ‘**je couri apres il*’; ‘*reconnu son a l’aéroport*’, ‘*nous heureux a voir son*’; omission/inclusion of prepositions after verbs: use of ‘*pour*’ with ‘*chercher*’ and ‘*attendre*’, omission of *à* with *téléphoner* and of *de* after ‘*décider*’ and ‘*essayer*’: ‘*j’ai essayé trouver Rex*’.

Generally, candidates did not seem to use a technique in tackling these questions which included applying knowledge and synthesizing a body of given work. Candidates have to be taught techniques which will supplant those of word-for-word translation which do not serve them well here.

The following is a sample of a good letter

Toco, le 14 mai 2015

Chers oncle et tante,

Ça va? Marie est arrivée saine et sauve à Trinidad. Grâce à Dieu ! Toute la famille est allée à l'aéroport pour la chercher. Chez moi, elle partage la chambre de ma sœur aînée avec elle. Les filles ...

Tout d'abord, Marie aime beaucoup ce pays. On s'est bien amusé. On a visité le musée National pour voir les peintures de Leroy Clarke. On est allés aux plages comme Maracas Bay et bien sûr, on est allés à Pollo Tropical pour prendre le petit déjeuner. Marie aimait le parc pour la jeunesse le plus.

Aussi elle nous a raconté une histoire quand oncle Frédéric mettait un costume de canard pour sa sixième fête d'anniversaire. Quelle drôle. On a ri infiniment.

Finalement, ma famille et moi avons l'intention de vous rendre visite pendant les vacances de Noël. Peut-être on pourra chanter des chansons de Noël ensemble. Écrivez-moi vite!

Amitiés,
Jean-Paul.

Section III (Question 4 and 5) — Contextual Announcement or Contextual Dialogue

Many more candidates opted to do Question 5 than Question 4. Very few candidates did not attempt either option. However, there continues to be some candidates who attempt both the announcement and the dialogue.

Question 4: Contextual Announcement

This year's contextual announcement required that candidates know of specific vocabulary related to making a trip abroad (travel arrangements and requirements, hotel accommodation etc.) as well as information on tourist sites to be visited in a target destination, Martinique. The vast majority of candidates opted to compose the announcement in paragraph form, but still there were a few whose announcement was done in point form.

Generally, candidates doing this contextual announcement were able to accurately produce at least four out of the five required cues. However, not all cues were developed adequately as details about the agency were frequently omitted, so that there were instances where candidates could not achieve the requisite minimum of 70 words.

The majority of candidates did not display an excellent or even good level of competence in attempting this question. Only a small percentage scored above 15 points. Most responses were incoherent, disjointed, and lacked fluency.

Strengths

Most candidates were able to accurately express the cost of the return fare, using such expressions as *'aller-retour'* and *'les prix abordables'*. Similarly, there was accuracy in the rendering of dates; some used *'du ... au ...'* in specifying the dates. With regard to details about accommodation, candidates offered a variety of options, and some displayed their knowledge of accommodation, for example, *'hôtel quatre/cinq étoiles'*. Many candidates were able to use the future tense well for both dates and projected activities. Candidates also provided varying tourist sites and activities for amusement in Martinique. Some responses were typical and generic — *'les plages'*, *'le musée'* *'le centre commercial'* *'les sites historiques/touristiques'*, *'les monuments'*. Others were geographically and culturally accurate – *'La Montagne Pelée'* *'les ruines de St Pierre'*. There were several candidates who were able to use the imperative well to invite persons to sign up or to make contact with the travel agency, using such expressions as *'Venez nombreux'* or *'Contactez-nous'*

Question 5: Contextual Dialogue

Most candidates attempted this question. Some addressed all the cues in under 70 words, and there was not much development or expansion of cues. Generally, responses by candidates were fairly clear, logical and fluent. However, although weaker candidates who chose the dialogue were able to handle the first two cues, they omitted many cues and misunderstood the rest. Comprehension of the cues was absolutely essential, and often candidates did not read the cues carefully. Many of them sought to provide responses, without paying attention to what came in the next or even later cues. The best response would be one which considered what came before as well as after. Very weak candidates either copied the printed cues or left the spaces blank.

There were many details that were glossed over by candidates: the fact that the *'réceptionniste'* was a woman, so to address the person as *'monsieur'* was incorrect. Additionally, the clerk addressed the guests as *'monsieur-dame'* and greeted *'les enfants'*, suggesting in those words that it was a man and a woman and children present. The reservation, therefore, had to be made for more than three people.

Strengths

There was frequent use of such idioms to express complaint or displeasure with the arrangements as *'Quel dommage!'* *'Tant pis!'*, *'Mon dieu'*, *'C'est pas vrai'*, *'C'est pas juste!'*, *'Quelle horreur!'*, *'J'en ai ras le bol!'*, *'J'en ai assez'*, *'Bof!'*

Weaknesses for Questions 4 and 5

Vocabulary

There were several words of vocabulary that were not well known to candidates – these include *'retourné'*, *'une agence de voyages'*, *'un billet aller-retour'*.

Structure

Candidates continue to be plagued by inaccuracies in their use of tenses, prepositions before countries, the gender of nouns (*lit/chambre*), agreement and positioning of adjectives, agreement of verbs/conjugation of irregular verbs. They also confused *'avoir'/'être'* and *'aller'*, and incorrectly

used the demonstrative adjective (particularly before a masculine singular word that begins with a vowel).

Other structures that were generally inaccurately rendered were:

- The use of question forms including asking '*À quelle heure...*'
- The use of '*de*' after the negative as in '*Je n'ai pas de voiture*'.

Spelling

Words like '*hôtel*' and the parts of the verb *préférer* in the present tense were frequently misspelt.

Section IV Reading Comprehension

This section assessed candidates' ability to read and understand a short passage in French. The questions on the passage and candidates' answers were in English.

The reading passage for 2015 was well within the capability of 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 candidates' use of English. Although no penalty is applied for candidates' incorrect use of English, if poor English makes it unclear whether the candidate has understood the French, marks can be lost.

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.

Part (a)

Most candidates gave the correct answer (banker) but varied responses were seen here, for example, bank teller, accountant, cashier, someone who planned reunions, and even pilot.

Part (b)

This was particularly challenging because many candidates cited information regarding the activities of Mr Duclos' family instead of mentioning information about his immediate family. Some candidates thought the word '*chérie*' was the name of the daughter. Much irrelevant information was given here — the wedding celebration/family reunion/travelling.

Part (c)

While candidates recognized that there was some travelling involved, the word '*réunions*' was rendered as reunions instead of *meetings*. Some also failed to state that some were in his native country as well as in foreign countries/overseas.

Part (d)

The vocabulary item ‘*marre*’ was problematic but some substitutes were offered such as ‘*did not like very much*’. Travel schedule — candidates interpreted this as travelling with family/ travelling to the wedding etc. and not as his work schedule.

Part (e)

Most candidates were able to cite ‘*his daughter’s wedding*’ but the second reason was not clear to many.

Part (f)

The response was not well expressed or lacked logic — ‘He did not like how airports were assembled’. Some candidates simply gave answers drawn from their own experience rather than refer to the contents of the passage. The second element was cited correctly by most candidates.

Part (g)

Candidates were not thorough in that they mentioned one element — *looking forward to spending time with his family* — but many failed to mention the second element of *celebrating the happy occasion*.

Part (h)

It was surprising that some candidates did not score any marks here. Some gave the time as nine o’clock while others mentioned a.m. or p.m. alone.

Part (i)

A variety of incorrect answers was seen here: Mr Duclos took ill and died/the plane could not take off/the passengers had to leave/the plane crashed etc.

Part (j)

The justification was not always stated. It was noticeable that weaker candidates were able to state valid points to score full marks here but could not answer simpler questions like Part (h).

Teachers must encourage their charges to read thoroughly and pay close attention to the marks allotted to each question. Many marks were lost due to carelessness and the lack of sufficient information. Students must be given adequate practice in responding to higher order questions, forming opinions and supporting their conclusions. The importance of detail must also be emphasized.

Recommendations

- Students 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.
- Responses should be read over to ensure that they make sense in English and that no words are missing as this can distort the meaning of an answer.

- Students should be encouraged to respond concisely in order to avoid ambiguity.
- Candidates must note that reproducing French words from the passage will not gain them any 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; 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 very good/excellent. This year, examiners were generally not satisfied with the performance of candidates on the reading passages and suggested that more practice is 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 state that some candidates remain silent or respond 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 they 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 on the whole, candidates demonstrated that they were well prepared. They displayed a good degree of knowledge of the vocabulary required to communicate ideas appropriately and, on the whole, their responses were adequate. Many candidates manipulated grammatical structures with some degree of accuracy and used a range of idioms. However, several lexical deficiencies were mentioned by the examiners who noted that candidates need to learn how to rephrase their ideas whenever they encounter such a challenge.

Section II — Reading Passage

This year, most comments about the reading again 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.

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 idioms used.

Recommendations

Teachers are encouraged to continue exposing students to authentic samples of language and to simulate real-life situations in order for students to practise using the target language. Students should also be discouraged from requesting many repetitions of a question and from offering one-word answers.

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 2016

FRENCH

GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

GENERAL COMMENTS

Performance in the 2016 examination was slightly better than that of 2015. 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.

We encourage teachers 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. This performance continues to be comparable to 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 and required written responses. All situations drew on functions/notions and settings and topics, referred to in the syllabus, that should be within the experience of a 16-year-old candidate.

Candidates' performance in this question was better than last year, with more candidates gaining the maximum score in this question than in previous years. Overall, the performance here appears to have improved, with more candidates scoring 50 per cent and above. It was refreshing to see the significant number of candidates who displayed excellent mastery and control of grammatical structures and used a wide range of vocabulary and idioms to express themselves within the parameters set.

However, candidates must be reminded that for this question, it is important to be precise and concise with the language used in their responses. Too often, candidates lose marks unnecessarily with long, sometimes irrelevant, elements in their responses. They must also be taught to read carefully and identify the key elements required in each situation in order to respond appropriately. It must be noted that this question is designed to assess candidates' ability to function in real-life settings and as a result, they must be encouraged to put themselves in the situation in order to respond accordingly. Also, there is often more than one way to respond to a given situation, and candidates must be encouraged to use the structures and vocabulary at their disposal.

Situation (a)

In this situation, candidates were required to express birthday wishes and specify the age of the person to whom wishes were expressed. The performance on this part of the question was generally very

good. However, while many candidates scored full marks, a number of candidates found it difficult to state the age that the person in question was being congratulated for attaining. Those who were able to use ordinal numerical adjectives scored best.

An example of a correct response was:

- *Bon cinquième anniversaire.*

Situation (b)

Although this situation seemed to be very straightforward, many candidates found it challenging. Candidates were required to express a request from someone who delivers fruits and vegetables, and name two items. A large majority of candidates produced good responses to this question. The most common error was the use of non-grocery items such as clothing and stationery, for example, '*Je veux deux chemises vertes*'. Clearly, there is need for more careful reading by candidates. Many were unable to render appropriate expressions of quantity and the use of the partitive article. Many candidates were able to circumvent this by simply using numbers for the quantity, as in the following example: '*Je voudrais un kilo de mangues et deux pommes*'.

A few candidates, however, used the indicative *J'aime* as opposed to the conditional *J'aimerais* or *Je voudrais*.

Situation (c)

Here, candidates were required to express a reason for liking a particular feature of their school. Most candidates were able to give appropriate responses to this situation but showed difficulty in ensuring that the adjectives used agreed in gender and number with the noun (that is, the aspect of their school) that they were describing. For example:

- *J'aime mes professeurs parce qu'ils sont sympa et intelligent.*

Situation (d)

In this situation, candidates had to leave a note for their parents informing them of where they had gone and with whom. Most candidates performed excellently by responding appropriately and correctly.

An example of a correct response was:

- *Je suis allé au cinéma avec mon ami Jean.*

Situation (e)

For this situation, candidates were required to express regret and state how they would make up for the situation. The first element of 'regret' was almost flawless, with even the weakest candidates being able to accomplish this task. The second element, which required expressing how they would make amends, was also competently done. However, the issue of incorrect tense usage here again was evident. Many candidates, even some of the more proficient ones, tended to use the present tense where clearly some

form of the future would have been more appropriate. In addition, challenges arose with adjectival agreements and the placement of adjectives such as 'nouveau' and the exemption of object pronouns such as 'en':

- *Je suis désolé pour ton miroir. Je vais t'(en) acheter un nouveau.*

Situation (f)

Candidates were supposed to send a note to a visiting friend informing him/her of one thing that is prohibited during his/her visit. Much difficulty was experienced in the use of "*Il est interdit de...*" and "*Il est défendu de...*" which was required in responding to this item and was to be used in the context of the home.

An example of a correct response was:

- *Il est interdit de manger dans les chambres.*

Situation (g)

In this situation, candidates were required to explain to their teacher why and when they would be absent on a named day. Candidates grasped the requirements of this question but common errors included the absence of an excuse as well as failure to state when they would be absent.

The following errors were observed **le lundi* vs *lundi*; *sur lundi* vs *en lundi*; *au medecin* vs *chez le medecin* and *rendre visite* vs *visiter* (the latter being a common error).

An example of a correct response was:

- *Vendredi prochain, je ne vais pas venir à l'école parce que je dois aller chez le médecin.*

Situation (h)

This situation required candidates to identify an object and say where it was found. Candidates dealt with this item fairly well.

An example of a correct response was:

- *J'ai trouvé ton sac dans la bibliothèque.*

Situation (i)

Candidates were required to remind a person to attend a named function. Many candidates were unable to produce the required imperative structure (*ne pas oublier/n'oublie pas*) for this situation and as a result were unable to satisfy the 'reminding' aspect of the situation as opposed to merely informing about an activity. Candidates also tended to use the formal register '*vous*' for their fathers, as opposed to the more appropriate '*tu*', the informal register. Many candidates were unable to identify a school function such as '*une réunion*' or '*un rendez-vous*', inserting instead English nouns such as '*function*' or '*graduation*'.

An example of a correct response was:

- *Il ne faut pas oublier ma présentation à l'école à seize heures.*

Situation (j)

In this situation, candidates were required to express disappointment and give a reason for their disappointment. The problem here seemed to be the inability to express disappointment. Many candidates misinterpreted the item, giving an excuse for not helping a friend rather than responding to the friend's excuse.

An example of a correct response was:

- *Je suis déçu parce que j'ai pensé que tu étais mon amie.*

Recommendations

It is advisable for teachers to continue to guide students on how to approach the directed situations by identifying the function(s) 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 assesses candidates' ability to produce a piece of writing in French of about 130–150 words based on an outline given in English. Candidates have the choice of writing either a letter or a composition.

The topic of both questions appeared to be within the candidates' experience and provided fair opportunities for: (a) showcasing mastery of a range of tenses (present, passé composé, imperfect, pluperfect and future/futur proche tenses), (b) triggering the recall and application of a good range of high frequency vocabulary, (c) demonstrating the mastery of essential grammar and (d) the introduction of relevant, performance-enhancing idioms.

Based on comments from the examiners, the questions were at an appropriate level of difficulty. More candidates opted for Question 2, the letter, rather than Question 3, the composition. Where Question 3 was attempted, the quality of performance was generally low. Candidates may have avoided Question 3 because they did not know the word for 'trick'.

Knowledge and Mastery of Essential Grammar; Use of Vocabulary and Idioms

The majority of candidates demonstrated a moderate level of competence in relation to grammar, vocabulary and idioms. Teachers may need to continue to focus on helping them to deliberately raise the level of their writing from moderate to satisfactory, and thence to the good and excellent ranges. One of the most important ways of accomplishing this is by having them understand that without consistently good use of essential grammar, their writing will not be considered to be satisfactory. Therefore, teachers need to continue to pay attention to having students master, for example, the passé

composé; subject/verb agreement; use of prepositions in very high frequency expressions, such as, *beaucoup de, en France, à Paris*; noun/adjective agreement; use of possessive adjectives; and accuracy of spelling.

There are still too many candidates who are not respecting the rubrics as far as length of response is concerned. Please note that if the word limit is exceeded and all of the cues are not addressed by the cut-off point, an otherwise good response may be relegated to the satisfactory category.

On a more positive note, a significant number of candidates knew and used the names of the famous Parisian Museums, historic landmarks, and modern amusement parks and similarly were able to write of the volcanoes of both Martinique and Guadeloupe, and of the Bibliothèque Schoelcher with apparent ease.

However, there were many grammatical, spelling and structural errors that rendered the responses of a substantial number of candidates incoherent. The formation and use of the past tenses (passé composé and imperfect) remain an area for concern. In relation to the passé composé, candidates used the incorrect or no auxiliary verb, or used the passé composé where the imperfect should have been used instead. Some candidates tended to use the present tense where it was inappropriate.

Many candidates confused where or what Montreal was, while others thought that they were writing to a friend or another family member (sister). It is clear that candidates are not reading the instructions carefully or are not ensuring that all cues are addressed and developed well.

Teachers need to continue to exercise rigour in teaching the format of a French informal letter. Too many candidates either incorrectly formatted, or made no apparent attempt to format this response. Too few candidates were able to express themselves at a level that would be considered within the range of good to excellent. Those who did were able to use a wide range of idioms and vocabulary correctly and were able to express themselves in a coherent manner.

Specific Grammar and Vocabulary Problems Encountered:

- (1) 'Visiter' with people used instead of 'rendre visite à'. 'Visiter' used with the preposition à instead of the direct object with *le, la* or *les*, for example, **Je visite au musée*.
- (2) (a) Use of 'bien' instead of 'bon': **Paris était bien. *La cuisine est très bien*.
 (b) Frequent use of 'meilleur' where 'mieux' should have been used: **C'est un bon place pour parler meilleur le Français*.
- (3) The capitalization of the initial letter in the adjective of nationality, for example: **J'aime le Français*; **un pays Français* – thus changing the word into the noun (the Frenchman) – where an adjective was needed.
- (4) Too little consistency in the use of the passé composé. At times in the same response, perhaps a few sentences away, there was evidence of this lack of mastery: **Je suis allée avec ma mère; *Nous avons allés au ciné*. The auxiliary verb was more often than not omitted in the responses of candidates of more moderate or limited ability, while candidates appeared to have forgotten some frequently used past participles, which led to the production of errors such as: **J'ai appris...; *Sa pere a veni chercher moi; *Je suis part le pays lundi. *Je suis veux des tigres...*

- (5) Too many candidates demonstrated less than satisfactory knowledge of the correct use of accents, often omitting them where they were required and inserting them where they were not, for example: **tres; a la plâge; en ete vacances; en pimiere juillet; C'était; l'annee dernier.*
- (6) Using the incorrect preposition with names of countries and cities: **au France; *en Paris; *dans Martinique.*
- (7) Confusion in the use of 'pays' and 'campagne' and 'temps' and 'fois': **Un temps, je suis allé...; en France pour la premier temps.*
- (8) Inability to express the date correctly: **Je suis resté de le 15 à le 20 de mars.*
- (9) Use of 'travailler' instead of 'voyager': **Je travaille par l'avion.*
- (10) (a) *Beaucoup* was often misspelt and the preposition 'de' inflected in one way or another: *Je mange *beacoup des croissants;*
 (b) This preposition was also not properly used before a preceding adjective: **Il y a des belles campagnes!*
- (11) Subject/verb agreements often evidenced lack of mastery: **Les étudiants dois sortir au Martinique; *tu aime va en Guadeloupe avec moi? *La Tour ...et L'Arc... était très, très grand; *Nous faisait des activites amusant; *Tout l'élèves devons allé;*
- (12) Noun/adjective agreements also provided evidence of similar shortcomings; and attempts to use the superlative were often fraught with difficulty: **Paris est le plus meilleur pays dans le monde!* Also, after *C'est* and *C'était*, candidates tried to make adjectives agree with a previously mentioned noun: **Paris, c'était la plus belle pays a la monde!*
- (13) The expression: 'a French-speaking country' also presented difficulties: *...*un pays que parle français.* Although, even in some poorer scripts, one could see that students were taught '*un pays francophone*' even when it was not accurately rendered.
- (14) The use of the subjunctive after impersonal expressions: *C'est important que...; Il faut que...; Il est nécessaire que...* Many candidates tried to use these expressions but did not manage to render correctly in the subjunctive the verb that followed.

The following is a sample letter

Chère Alice

Salut! Comment vas-tu? J'espère que tout va bien. J'écris cette lettre de te dire des détails de mon voyage à la Guadeloupe pour l'été.

C'était magnifique ! J'y suis allé avec ma famille et on y est resté pour trois semaines. J'ai pris l'avion. J'ai voyagé à la Guadeloupe parce que c'était ma passion. J'ai voulu d'éprouver de la culture française.

Là, j'ai fait beaucoup des choses. J'ai fait du tourisme. J'ai vu des théâtres, des cascades, des villages, des parcs à thème et des parcs de monument. J'ai aimé aller à la plage le mieux. Quand je suis arrivé là, j'ai pensé qu'il n'y avait rien à faire mais ensuite je l'ai adoré. Je pense que le pays est magnifique!

Il faut aller à un pays francophone si vous étudiez le français parce que vous pouvez apprendre plus de la culture française.

J'ai hâte de te revoir

*Amicalement
Trevon*

The following is a sample of a good composition that displayed correct use of tense and good use of vocabulary.

On voulait faire une blague à Jimmy parce qu'on était très ennuyés, on pensait que ce serait très drôle, et Jimmy dormait. Nous avons mis du picant extrêmement chaud dans son sandwich et on a attendu jusqu'au déjeuner. Tout le monde le regardait pendant qu'il mangeait, et après d'avoir pris son premier morceau il a sauté et crié. Il s'était brûlé hyper fort. Sa langue était inflammé et il pleurait beaucoup. Quelques minutes plus tard on a été appelés à la direction. L'école a appelé une ambulance aussi pour emmener Jimmy à l'hôpital, son visage était rouge. Je promets maintenant de ne jamais faire une blague comme ça à nouveau, parce qu'il s'est fait très mal et le directeur et nos parents nous ont grondés beaucoup.

Section III (Questions 4 and 5) – Contextual Announcement or Contextual Dialogue

The general opinion was that both questions were manageable and candidates seemed at home selecting either exercise. In spite of the questions being apparently manageable, however, many candidates did not gain high scores.

Question 4: Contextual Announcement

The overall performance in this question was satisfactory.

Most candidates did not know the French for “exchange programme”. Some were able to find suitable alternatives. Several candidates did not understand that an exchange programme entailed travelling to another country. The age group was probably the best attempted cue. Some got the “*du...au*” correct or “*entre...et ... ans*”. Many candidates did not remember to use ‘avoir’ when giving age. This cue was also well attempted. Several candidates expressed their knowledge of famous monuments and tourist sites such as *La Tour Eiffel*, *le musée comme Le Louvre* and *La Montagne Pelé*. Contact details, for example, *Téléphonez/Appelez le ...* ; *Contactez-nous au...* frequently caused problems for some candidates. Some candidates used websites or email addresses and some were not consistent with their use of *tu/vous*.

The question seemed very clear and straightforward and did not require competence that was beyond the scope of the CSEC French syllabus. However, based on the candidates' responses, it was clear that several of them did not read or comprehend the term, “exchange programme”, so that many of them

wrote about a trip to a French-speaking country, in many cases omitting, therefore, the entire context. Several candidates who did not know how to express the term, “exchange programme offered various anglicized versions of the term. Many candidates also had difficulty stating the ages for which the programme was intended, using “*agé*” incorrectly and often omitting “*ans*”. The stronger candidates were able to handle the activities and the expected benefits of the trip well, and in addition to provided the required contact information. It was noted that many candidates were switching between the registers “*tu*” and “*vous*”. Most candidates were able to reach the word limit but it was a source of concern that they were confusing the imperfect tense with the future and the conditional.

Question 5: Contextual Dialogue

Most candidates attempted the dialogue but the majority scored under 50 per cent. Almost all candidates got the initial greeting but many did not realize that they needed to respond to how they could be helped.

This was the best attempted cue, although many did not realize that they were given the name Etienne. The details of the problem provided the greatest challenge for candidates. Reasons ranged from, ‘they’re hungry’, ‘the food made them sick’, ‘they don’t like the food’ to ‘they’re looking for a restaurant’. Some of these reasons were made to fit with some effort but most times they did not fit in with the rest of the dialogue. In response to whether the family ate in the evening, the majority listed erroneously what they ate. With regard to the last two utterances, many candidates did not understand the negative “*ne...que*”. Many candidates simply wrote *Ok* or *D’accord*.

The first two cues of the dialogue were generally handled very well by the majority of candidates since they tested very basic French. However, most candidates struggled to understand what the dialogue was about and also seemed to not have taken the context into consideration. While stronger candidates were able to figure out that dinner time was the issue, some came up with very creative responses including that they couldn’t find the school, their siblings were annoying them and they were feeling sick. Only stronger candidates were able to interpret the last two statements by the professor, resulting in many of them using snippets of it in their response as an attempt to supply an answer. A number of candidates failed to respond. It was noted that several students fell short of the word limit and wrote 60 words as opposed to the required 80. This was possibly because many of them did not expand their responses, although in some cases, it was clear that the candidate did understand the dialogue.

The following is a sample contextual dialogue

Professeur: Bonsoir, comment est-ce que je peux vous aider?

Elève: Bonsoir Monsieur. J’ai un problème avec la famille que je reste avec

Professeur: Ah, bon. Tout d’abord votre nom, s’il vous plaît?

Elève: Je m’appelle Etienne Tardieu.

Professeur: Et quel âge avez-vous Etienne?

Elève: J’ai seize ans.

- Professeur: Et c'est votre premier séjour à l'étranger?*
- Elève: Non, mais c'est mon premier séjour dans un pays anglophone sans mes parents.*
- Professeur: Bien. Alors quel est le problème?*
- Elève: Le problème est avec les repas surtout le soir.*
- Professeur: Est-ce que la famille mange le soir.*
- Elève: Oui, la famille mange le soir. Cependant les personnes mangent avec les mains*
- Professeur: Vous n'avez donc qu'à faire la même chose?*
- Elève: Non, chez moi, ma famille pense que les mains sont très sales*
- Professeur: Oui, c'est comme ça que plusieurs familles ici mangent le soir. Vous n'avez qu'à faire comme eux.*
- Elève: D'accord je comprends. Je vais aller parler avec la famille. Merci mille fois pour ton aide. Au revoir.*

The following is a sample contextual announcement

Attention ! Est-ce que vous voudriez aller à un pays francophone ? C'est votre rêve ? Puis, c'est possible sans doute ! La classe de langues vivantes organise un voyage à la Guadeloupe pendant les vacances de Pâques. Vous devez avoir dix-huit ans pour vous inscrire. Pendant le voyage, nous visiterons les monuments historiques, le musée de Basse Terre et il y aura une réunion avec l'Alliance française. Vous pourrez vous relaxer et apprendre la langue importante. Aussi vous apprendrez l'histoire de la Guadeloupe et de la France. Grâce au voyage vous aurez la capacité de communiquer et souhaitez en français. Vous allez rencontrer avec beaucoup d'autres personnes qui étudient le français comme vous. Si vous voyagez avec nous, vous réussirez aux examens de français. N'hésitez pas ! Vous pouvez nous envoyer un courriel à voyageàguadeloupe@collège.com ou nous téléphoner. Noter numéro de téléphone, c'est 552-1980. A bientôt !

Section IV – Reading Comprehension

This section assesses candidates' ability to read and understand a short passage in French. The questions on the passage and the candidates' answers are in English.

The reading passage for 2016 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 achieving scores ranging from good to excellent. Some answers submitted were ambiguous owing to limitations in the candidates' use of English. Although no penalty is applied for candidates' use of incorrect English, if poor English makes it unclear whether the candidate has understood the French, marks may be lost.

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.

Part (a)

Although this question was well managed by candidates, there was a failure on the part of many of them to be specific. Instead of stating that he took a bath/shower, dressed and went to the bus stop to wait for the bus, many said he got ready and went to catch the bus.

Part (b)

This question was fairly well managed by candidates and the responses given in the majority of cases were very appropriate.

Part (c)

The expression "au fond" was totally misinterpreted to mean 'in front' and so this question was not well managed by a large majority of the candidates.

Part (d)

Many candidates were unable to fully answer this question. They were able to say that the phone was a recent model but failed to say that it was brand new.

Part (e)

Many candidates gave weak responses to this question and used the incorrect tense. Instead of stating that he thought he would never find his phone because someone would take it, they stated instead that he thought that he lost his phone because someone stole it.

Part (f)

This question was well done by most candidates.

Part (g)

This question was answered correctly most frequently. The majority of candidates were able to state that Jean's day at work was long and difficult.

Part (h)

Candidates were not specific with the responses provided and many did not achieve full marks. They often stated that he met a bus driver; that someone called out to him but failed to say that it was the driver of the morning.

Many candidates had problems answering this question. Instead of relying on the title of the story to help, many candidates said that the driver had taken his phone; that someone had found his phone and kept it, or other inappropriate responses.

Few candidates were able to obtain full marks on this question. Most of them missed out on at least one mark out of the maximum three for this question. The most frequently missed point was that of realizing that there were honest people living in the country. Many stated that the incident changed Jean's perception but did not go on to state that it was his perception of his fellow citizens.

Teachers must encourage their charges to read thoroughly and pay close attention to the marks allotted to each question. Many marks were lost due to carelessness and giving insufficient information. Candidates must be given adequate practice in responding to higher-order questions, forming opinions and supporting their conclusions. The importance of detail must also be emphasized.

Recommendations

- Candidates must be reminded that they should draw inference 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.
- Responses should be read over to ensure that they make sense in English and that no words are missing as this can distort the meaning of their answer.
- Teachers should continue to encourage candidates to respond concisely in order to avoid ambiguity in their response.
- Candidates must note that they will not gain credit for reproducing French words from the passage.

Paper 03 – Oral Examination

This paper assessed candidates' ability to (i) produce appropriate oral 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 very good and excellent. This year, examiners were generally satisfied with the performance of candidates for the reading passages. 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 state 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 they 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 generally performed creditably. One could observe that they were well prepared and had a good grasp of vocabulary and idioms. Nonetheless, it must be noted that candidates should read the situations carefully. Too many candidates do not pay attention to the fact that there were two items where the responses were from the same person. The term 'air conditioning unit' seemed to pose a problem for many.

Section II – Reading Passage

This year, once again, 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 reexamine the amount of time and the methods used to foster good performance in this section. There were a few errors which were noted in all participating countries. These were:

- The vowel "e" with and without various accent marks (for example, *obésité, kilomètre, diabète, classe, même, élève, journée, données*)
- The diphongs "ai" (*mais, livraison*), "eu" (*peu, jeunes*), "au" (*aux, journaux*)
- Final consonants (for example, *cours*)
- The letter "g" used in the combinations "gn" (*ligne*) and before various vowels (*obligatoire, obligé*)
- The letter "j" (*jeunes, déjà*)
- The ending "tion" (*éducation*)
- The 'er' verb (or other part of speech) ending (for example, *monter, inviter, courier*)
- Apostrophized words beginning with, for example, l', m'
- Liaisons (*en écrivant, aux environs, des effets*)
- High frequency words, such as "et" and "mais"

Section III — Guided Conversation

While candidates' language production was very limited, their comprehension was at an acceptable level and even near excellence. In most cases, they were able to give simple answers and sometimes one-word answers that required very little manipulation of the language.

The following problems were the most prevalent noted in their production:

- The almost universal omission of articles (definite, indefinite, partitive) before nouns as in *'Je mange thé et tartines; *Je fais football.
- Poor use or non-use of possessive pronouns or (*mon maison", *mon famille, *je 'l'acteur favori, * je l'école s'appelle).
- Poor word order/syntax (for example, *mon s'appelle école).
- Omission of subject pronouns.
- Limited verb use, little knowledge of basic verbs like "être and avoir; confusion of "faire" and "aller".
- Use of Spanish: *porque* for *parce que*, *famillia* for *famille*.
- Confusion of "préfère" and "préfére"

Recommendations

Teachers are encouraged to continue exposing students to authentic samples of language and to simulate real-life situations in order that students may practise the target language. Students should also be discouraged from requesting many repetitions of a question and from offering one-word answers.

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 2017

**FRENCH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY**

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Performance in the 2017 examination was not as good as 2016 but better than 2015. 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.

Teachers are 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. Emphasis is placed on the use of electronic sources, as teachers 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 1 (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 a 16-year-old candidate.

Overall, candidates' performance in this question this year was not as good as in 2016. In spite of this, it was still pleasing to read the work of those candidates who displayed mastery and control of grammatical structures and used a wide range of vocabulary and idioms to express themselves within the parameters set. Candidates must be reminded however, that for this question, it is important to be precise and concise with the language used in their responses. Too often, candidates lost marks unnecessarily because of long, sometimes irrelevant elements in their responses. Teachers must also ensure that they teach students to read carefully and identify the key elements required in each situation in order to respond appropriately.

This question is designed to help candidates function in real-life settings and as a result, they must be encouraged to put themselves in the situation in order to respond accordingly. Given that there is often more than one way to respond to a given situation, candidates are encouraged to use the structures and vocabulary at their disposal.

Situation (a)

In this situation, candidates were required to state one thing which they would like to do during the holidays and say why. Candidates were required to state the preferred activity and to give a reason. The performance here was generally very good; this was one of the better performing questions in this section. An example of a correct response is shown in the following:

Je voudrais aller à la plage comme il n'y a pas de plage près de ma maison.

Situation (b)

For this situation, candidates were required to state two things to be done with a correspondent when he/she visits. It was expected that candidates would state two shared activities which would take place in the future. Whereas candidates were quite able to state the activities, an issue arose with how to express the future. Very few candidates were able to use the simple future tense; the immediate future tense also presented a challenge. An example of a correct response is shown in the following:

Nous ferons/allons faire le tour de l'île, nous irons/allons aller au centre commercial.

Situation (c)

Here, candidates were required to produce a note for a younger sibling instructing him or her not to wait for him and giving a reason. A significant number of candidates had difficulty using the negative familiar command with the direct object pronoun, for example, *Ne attends pas pour moi*. Many simply used a positive command, for example, *Allez au collège seulement* but in this case, few seemed to know *sans moi*. The formation of the command form as well as the question of familiar vs formal register presented problems. Candidates were required to use *tu* and the use of *vous* was considered a grammatical error. Candidates need to be reminded of when to use the familiar and the polite form in French. An example of a correct response is shown in the following:

Ne m'attends pas/ Pierre, il faut aller à l'école tout seul/car j'ai une réunion aujourd'hui.

Situation (d)

In this situation, candidates were required to write the response made by a French guest who had been asked to leave a note saying what he/she would like to eat and drink for breakfast. The function here was stating a preference. Where this was correctly addressed, there was good evidence of knowledge of foodstuffs although some items may have been considered inappropriate as a breakfast dish, for example, *Je voudrais du poulet et du riz*. Too many candidates did not realize that they also needed to mention a drink item. An example of a correct response is shown in the following:

Je voudrais du thé avec du pain au chocolat.

Situation (e)

For this situation, candidates were required to state in an email, two reasons why they failed an English examination. The function here was providing reasons. While this is a basic function that is well within the range of candidates at this level, many were unable to score full marks. Most candidates struggled to use the negative of the passé composé, for example, *Je ne fais pas etudie* but found two reasons for the failure. The use of *passer* in the negative presented the problem of a partial response, since the meaning in French was the opposite of what was required. An example of a correct response is shown in the following:

Je n'ai pas étudié et le professeur est nul.

Situation (f)

Candidates were required to state two qualities they look for in a friend. This was well done by many candidates, with a significant number scoring full or almost full marks. An example of a correct response is shown in the following:

J'adore une personne gentille et bien élevée.

Situation (g)

In this situation, candidates were required to offer an apology to a classmate whom they had been invited to visit but who, on arrival, found that they were not there. Candidates were also required to give a reason for his/her absence. This was handled quite well as most candidates were able to provide the apology. Candidates were less successful in giving the reason. An example of a correct response is shown in the following:

Je suis désolé d'avoir été absent. J'ai eu une panne/j'ai eu un accident de voiture.

Situation (h)

This situation required candidates to write the note left by a mother asking for an explanation as to why a specific task was not completed. The functions here were asking why and stating an activity. This was another case where the polite form *vous* was considered a grammatical error, since the situation involved a mother speaking to a child. Some candidates did not remember the question word *pourquoi* and where it was remembered, it was often spelt incorrectly. Some candidates also focused on answering the mother's question. An example of a correct response is shown in the following:

Pourquoi n'as-tu pas fait la vaisselle ?

Situation (i)

Candidates were required to provide advice to someone visiting Canada for Christmas. This was a challenging situation for candidates. Candidates were required to offer advice/make a suggestion and state items of clothing. Candidates were also expected to note the elements of the situation. They should have therefore indicated that it was Christmas and taken the weather into consideration.

Responses were mixed with some candidates clearly seeing what was required and making an appropriate suggestion whereas others did not understand the situation at all. An example of a correct response is shown in the following:

Il faut porter un manteau. Il faut porter une cravate.

Situation (j)

In this final situation, candidates were required to point out to an individual the information on a sign indicating that smoking was not permitted. The functions here were prohibition and the stated activity in this case was smoking. It was thought that this would have been an easy one but it presented a challenge to a number of candidates. Candidates seemed unfamiliar with the language of signage and the prohibition was often not stated. An example of a correct response is shown in the following:

Il ne faut pas fumer ici. Défense de fumer.

Recommendations

Teachers are encouraged to train students 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 unnecessary material in their answers.

Section II (Question 2) — Letter

This was the first year in which candidates did not have a choice between the letter and the composition. Candidates were required to write the letter only. The performance was slightly below that of the previous year. In the past, the letter tended to be the more popular of the two items.

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. The majority of candidates were able to demonstrate adequate competence in all the areas mentioned above. As always, there were quite a few whose mastery of the above skills was questionable and did not make the passing grade. However, there was a small number of candidates who displayed superior mastery of the required skill areas.

Generally, candidates responded fairly well to this section. It was not very challenging, but candidates did have some difficulties.

Based on the report of the examiners the topic of the question was well within candidates' experience and provided fair opportunities for: a) showcasing mastery of a range of tenses (present, passé composé, imperfect); b) triggering the recall and application of a good range of high frequency vocabulary; c) demonstrating the mastery of essential grammar; and d) introducing relevant, performance-enhancing idioms.

The Letter

You have just completed your exams and got a summer job. Write a letter to your cousin in France. Be sure to include

- (i) details of the job (what it entails, salary, hours)
- (ii) what you like and do not like about the job
- (iii) a description of your first day on the job
- (iv) what you will do with your salary.

Candidates were instructed not to use their real names and addresses but include the date in FRENCH and use the appropriate beginning and ending.

Knowledge and Mastery of Essential Grammar; Use of vocabulary and idioms

The majority of candidates demonstrated a moderate level of competence in relation to grammar, vocabulary and idioms. Teachers are encouraged to continue focusing on helping students to deliberately raise the level of their writing from moderate to satisfactory, and thence to the good and excellent ranges. One of the most important ways of accomplishing this is by having them understand that without consistently good use of essential grammar, their writing will not be considered satisfactory. Teachers need to continue to pay attention to having students master, for example, the passé composé, subject/verb agreement, use of possessive adjectives and accuracy of spelling.

It is rare to find candidates who consistently use the passé composé and use it well. The auxiliary *je allé* is often left out and even where the auxiliary is included, agreement is often omitted with *être* verbs, for example, *nous sommes allé*. More often than not *avoir* is used with all examples of the passé composé. Irregular verbs and *être* verbs, particularly in the past tense, gave some candidates much trouble. However, regular verbs in the past tense seem to have been well learned and recalled where necessary.

The imperfect tense is rarely used and only exceptionally good candidates produced sentences along the lines of *Mon premier jour était agréable*.

Vocabulary for the most part was not a problem. Candidates knew what to write even if in the odd case correct spelling of specific words eluded a few. In those instances where candidates did not know the appropriate vocabulary, they did attempt to convey the idea using other vocabulary. There were a few instances where English words were used to try to convey an idea. For example, many candidates wrote *Je suis 'cashier'* not remembering or not knowing how to spell *caissière*.

In the letter, for example, many candidates had difficulty expressing the hours worked and instead of saying *De neuf heures à cinq heures* wrote *A neuf heures à cinq heures*. There were a few instances where English words were used to try to convey an idea.

Idiomatic expressions continue to worry too many candidates. Candidates should learn them at the earliest opportunity and practise using them in context frequently. This would be a successful strategy to ensure words are learned and committed to long-term memory. Other expressions which make very good written assignments stand out from the ordinary ones were not as widespread as one would have hoped. Candidates are still bunched together in the moderate to low satisfactory category, scoring between 11 and 15 marks. The work of these candidates is described in the following way:

May not have addressed and developed all the points. Shows general weakness in grammar, vocabulary and structure. Lacks coherence and clarity of expression but is comprehensible.

It would be encouraging to have candidates in the upper satisfactory to good category with scores of 16 to 19 or higher.

The following is a sample letter

Bridgetown, le 14 mai 2017

Cher Jean-Paul,

Comment vas-tu ? Moi je vais bien. Je viens de finir mes examens et j'ai un job pour l'été. Je travaille dans un supermarché. Je travaille de huit heures à cinq heures et mon salaire est \$400 par semaine. Je mets les achats des clients dans des sacs et puis je les porte à la voiture. Quelquefois le client me donne un pourboire. J'aime surtout les pourboires et j'aime bavarder avec mes collègues pendant le déjeuner. Je n'aime pas quand les sacs sont lourd et puis le client ne me donne pas un pourboire. Le premier jour je suis arrivé en retard et le manager n'était pas content. Un garçon qui travaille dans le supermarché m'a montré ce que je dois faire et nous avons déjeuné ensemble à midi. Avec l'argent que je reçois je vais acheter un nouveau i-pod et quelques articles pour l'école. Je vais mettre l'argent sur la banque aussi. Ecris-moi pour me dire comment tu passes ton été.

Amitiés,
Marlon

Section III (Question 3) — Contextual Dialogue

This is the first year where candidates did not have the choice of a dialogue or an announcement. Instead, candidates were required to produce a dialogue only.

Contextual Dialogue

Use 80–100 words to complete the dialogue between you and the landlord, by giving your responses in FRENCH.

Your friend informs you that there is an apartment available for rent in the neighborhood and you call the landlord to enquire about it.

Responses to ALL of the cues listed below MUST be included in the dialogue.

- (i) Greetings and salutations
- (ii) Date the apartment is available
- (iii) Information on the rooms
- (iv) Arrangements for viewing

This question was a challenge for all candidates with very few persons performing exceptionally well. The performance this year was well below that of last year no doubt because, in the past only candidates who felt confident enough to do so would tackle this question. Candidates who perceived the dialogue to be difficult would usually opt to write the announcement. Nevertheless, candidates were prepared to attempt the question, so there were very few who did not offer a response.

In this question, comprehension of the cues is absolutely essential but often candidates did not read the cues carefully. Many of them sought to provide responses without paying attention to what came in the cue immediately following or even later ones. The best responses are always those where consideration is given to what comes before as well as after. This way, the candidate has an understanding of the full dialogue.

Use of cues

Cue #1: Most candidates got the basic greeting but did not know the verb *louer*. Most did not recognize that they needed to give a response either in the affirmative or the negative. Too many candidates showed a lack of knowledge of the cultural register, thereby using *tu* instead of *vous* when addressing the landlord.

Cue #2: Many candidates did not know the word *disponible* and several of those who did, misspelt it. Candidates seemed unable to think of an alternative, for example, *Quand est-ce que je peux avoir l'appartement*. Some candidates did not appear to remember the question word *quand* and several of

them confused question words. Few candidates recognized the need for the verb to be in the future tense if the word *disponible* was used.

Cue #3: This cue was well used. Many candidates used *décrivez*, however, there were errors related to accent or register. Some candidates mixed up the question words *comment* and *combien*. The response should have been either *comment est l'appartement?* or *combien de pièces...?* Too many candidates misspelt *appartement* which was actually mentioned in the dialogue. With regard to the number of bedrooms, most candidates used *avec* and *de* instead of *à*.

Cue #4: Only some candidates recognized that a question in the affirmative or negative was required to get the response *oui, vous pouvez le voir...* Candidates need to be reminded of the difference between *ça coûte combien* and *ça fait combien* when asking the cost of the apartment. The penultimate response gave problems because candidates did not seem to know what could precede *c'est bon*. However, many understood the meeting time although they had problems saying 'we will meet' and so they used *retrouver*, *rencontrer* and even *rendre* often without the required reflexive.

Recommendations

This is a question for which candidates need guidance. It is critical that candidates carefully read the cues, read the entire passage through in terms of understanding the entire dialogue and pay attention to the cues coming before and after each response. The content is, as was demonstrated this year, well within the grasp of the average candidate and the vocabulary and grammar well within their reach. The issue appears to be technique and not ability. With more careful attention, this is a question on which candidates can perform very well and demonstrate what they have learnt.

The following is a sample contextual dialogue

CONTEXTUAL DIALOGUE

Propriétaire: Allô, bonjour. Puis-je vous aider?

Vous: ***Oui madame, bonjour. Avez-vous des appartements à louer?***

Propriétaire: Oui, j'en ai deux mais il y en a un qui est encore occupé.

Vous: ***Alors, quand est-ce qu'il va être disponible?***

Propriétaire: Eh bien, en principe, à partir de la fin de juillet.

Vous: ***Ça m'arrange bien. Je dois quitter là où je suis avant le début d'août. Il y a combien de pièces?***

Propriétaire: Alors c'est un appartement de 5 pièces : 2 chambres à coucher, la cuisine, le salon et la salle de bains.

Vous: *Oh là là! Nous sommes quatre et je cherchais un appartement à trois chambres.*

Propriétaire: Trois chambres! Alors il y a un autre mais ce n'est pas à cet endroit.

Vous: *Donc, c'est où et puis-je le voir?*

Propriétaire: Oui, vous pouvez le voir demain et c'est situé à 3 km d'ici.

Vous: *Mais c'est combien le loyer et c'est quoi les conditions du contrat?*

Propriétaire: Monsieur, c'est 950 Euros par mois et l'eau, l'électricité et le chauffage sont compris.

Vous: *C'est raisonnable. Donc demain à 9h ça vous va ?*

Propriétaire: C'est bon. Notre rendez-vous c'est à 9h.

Vous: *Rendez-vous à 9h précises. A demain alors.*

Section IV (Question 4) — Reading Comprehension

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 2017 was well within the capability of candidates and the topic was familiar to them. This was evidenced by a performance which was better than that of 2016. Most candidates performed satisfactorily, with a small number of them scoring good to excellent marks. Although no penalty is applied for candidates' incorrect use of English, if poor English makes it unclear whether the candidate has understood the French, marks can be lost.

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.

For Part (a), most candidates responded correctly. Some failed to include the word 'oral' in their response.

Part (b) was particularly challenging. There was some confusion between entering the class/the exam or going before the examiner. Candidates also had difficulty expressing location, whether in front the room/ in front of the room/at the front of the room. There was also confusion in deciding whether the papers were given in the exam or were brought by the candidate for revision.

Most candidates responded correctly to Part (c) although some were not familiar with the expression *passer un examen*.

For Part (d), a large number of candidates were able to correctly state why Nicole rushed into the exam room. However, many candidates misinterpreted the verb *demander* for demand so instead of stating that she rushed into the exam room to ask the examiner to explain the instructions, they stated that she rushed into the room to demand... Many candidates erroneously stated that 'she was five minutes late', misinterpreting *cinq minutes plus tard*.

There was mixed performance on Part (e). Some candidates attempted to analyse the type of response (emotional/vex/upset/mad/negative) rather than give the response required (scream/shout/even angry and was being disturbed).

Part (f) was partially answered by many candidates. Many correctly stated that the examiner stopped the exam but failed to state the other things that were done.

For Part (g), very few candidates were able to state that Brigitte broke down in tears. However, many were able to state that she told the examiner the problems she faced.

Part (h) was handled well though some candidates could not accurately express that Brigitte did not have enough time to study. They stated instead that 'she could not study' or 'does not study' or 'did not study'.

Part (i) was handled fairly well although some candidates answered partially. They stated that the examiner helped Brigitte but did not continue to say that he helped her to search for professional help.

Part (j) was a high-order question, the type of question that continues to pose a challenge for candidates. Instead of explaining why the examiner's attitude toward Brigitte changed, they stated how it had changed, for example, 'He felt sorry for her.'

Teachers must encourage students to read thoroughly and pay close attention to the marks allotted to each question. Marks were lost due to carelessness and giving insufficient information. Students must be given adequate practice in higher order questions, forming opinions and supporting their conclusions. The importance of detail should also be emphasized.

Recommendations

The following points cannot be overemphasized:

- Candidates must be reminded that they should draw inference from the comprehension alone and beware of offering answers based on personal experiences.
- Candidates must note the marks allotted to a question and use that to guide themselves regarding the number of necessary elements required in their response.
- Responses should be read over to ensure that they make sense in English and that no words are missing, as this can distort the meaning of an answer.
- Candidates should be encouraged to respond concisely in order to avoid ambiguity in their responses.
- Candidates must note that reproducing French words from the passage will not gain marks.

Paper 03 — Oral Examination

This section has not been included as no oral exam reports were provided.

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 2018

FRENCH

GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Performance in the 2018 examination was about the same as that of 2018. 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.

The need for teachers to expose students to authentic samples of language cannot be overstressed and teachers should take advantage of the multiplicity of sources available to them especially the use of technology in and especially out of the classroom. Every effort must be made to ensure that language learning is relevant, personal and meaningful if our students are to succeed in this subject.

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 better than that of 2017 but not as good as 2016.

Paper 02 — Free Response

Section 1 (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 a 16-year-old candidate.

Overall, candidates' performance on this question was better than in 2017. It was encouraging to read the work of those candidates who displayed mastery and control of grammatical structures and used a wide range of vocabulary and idioms to express themselves within the parameters set.

Part (a) required candidates to provide an exact location for their house on their street. Many candidates did not take note of the word *exactly* and some believed that they had to first invite the friend to the house, then give directions. As such, candidates gave directions without saying exactly where the house was. Even in doing so, they failed to make correct use of expressions for directions. For example, some used expressions such as "*allez à le gauche*" or "*au gauche*". Where the response was deemed appropriate, candidates failed to make agreement with the noun and the qualifying adjective (*maison bleu, devant le bâtiment noire*). Additionally, the use of the wrong definite article was often noted (*derrière la supermarché*). An example of a well written response produced by candidates follows.

Ma maison est la troisième maison à gauche, à côté de la boulangerie.

For Part (b), candidates were expected to state two qualities that were required to be class prefect.

Many responded very well to this situation, although some focused on physical descriptions rather than qualities. Where some candidates were unable to accurately identify the word for the qualities, they

provided descriptions of the particular quality which was acceptable in this instance. For example, "*Il doit travailler bien.*" In some responses it was noted that candidates failed to ensure that there was agreement of the adjectives used (for example, *Elle doit être gentil*). Excellent responses noted include the following:

On doit être responsable et patient.

A mon avis, la personne doit être travailleuse et compatissante.

Tu dois être carrément responsable et en plus, il ne faut pas être incertain, il faut être confiant.

Part (c) posed great difficulty for many. Candidates were required to express congratulations to someone on attaining leadership of a particular school activity. While many candidates did not mention any aspect of leadership, some opted to offer congratulations for a promotion or to compliment the individual. Some candidates simply extended congratulations but failed to mention that one became a leader.

Many candidates were able to offer congratulations using the expression *Félicitations* or other expressions such as *Bon travail* but a much fewer number were able to name the specific leadership position. Some candidates who used the word 'captain' used the English word. There were also frequent errors with the use of the indefinite article, for example, *de + le*. Candidates therefore, wrote expressions such as "*président de le club de football*" instead of *président du club de football*.

In responding to Part (d), candidates were expected to produce a response wishing someone (a brother) well as he would be travelling. Responses varied greatly but this section of the question was generally well handled. Those candidates who successfully completed this response gave replies such as *bon voyage, bon séjour, bonne chance*. Additionally, some candidates failed to recognize that *chance* is feminine and wrote "*bon chance*" instead of *bonne chance*. In other instances, *voyage* was incorrectly identified by candidates as being feminine. Examples of good responses are as follows:

Au revoir et bon voyage.

Luc, bon voyage et amuse-toi bien.

Part (e) required candidates to indicate a preference for a particular weekend activity. Some candidates handled this section of the question quite well; however, many did not recognize the need to express preference clearly and simply said what they were going to do. Additionally, the appropriate form of the verb *préférer* posed a challenge to many. Very good responses noted were as follows :

Je préfère que nous allons au ciné.*

Quant à moi, je voudrais aller à la plage parce que j'aime être en plein air.

In order to fully respond to Part (f), candidates were required to write two ways in which they could make up for something wrong that was done. This section of the question was interpreted in two ways. Some candidates wrote as if they were speaking to their sister and used the imperative or used "*tu dois écrire une lettre*". A very good example was *tu dois t'excuser pour ton comportement et tu peux aider avec les activités d'école*. Several others wrote as if they were writing to the principal stating what their sister could do to make things better (for example, "*Elle nettoiera la salle de bains*"). Most candidates were able to give two things that the sister could do.

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

What posed difficulty for students was their misuse of the word “*désolée*”. With the expression “*je suis désolé*”, candidates failed to structure the statement well. For example, one noted, “*parle je suis désolée*” instead of *dis que tu es désolée*.

Many candidates found Part (g) difficult. It required that they write two possible consequences of engaging in a negative activity. Most candidates were able to give a response to the two consequences. Many gave responses such as the mother would be angry, “*Ta mère sera furieuse*” or that the person would hurt himself/herself, “*Tu peux tomber et tu peux mourir.*” Some identified various issues and corresponding consequences. Nevertheless, there were some who stated positive results as opposed to negative consequences. Additionally, some candidates expressed *why* someone should not do something, rather than giving the two consequences.

Challenges were also noted when candidates tried to state the negative activity. In doing so, many errors of grammar or sentence structure were observed. Moreover, candidates did not make correct use of the verb *pouvoir* by either employing the incorrect conjugation or by conjugating the verb following *pouvoir*. In cases where the future tense was used, verb endings did not match the subject pronoun (for example, *Tu irai à l’hôpital*).

Part (h) required candidates to indicate the inability to assist, indicating a reason for not being able to do so. Many candidates fell short by substituting an expression of apology for an expression of their inability to assist. Some candidates stated that they could not help and gave the reason why. Others directly stated what activity they could not do and stated why. Two examples include *Je ne peux pas t’aider car je suis très malade* and *Je ne peux pas t’aider parce que je ne suis pas forte en anglais*. Those candidates who chose an activity gave responses such as *Je regrette mais je ne peux pas venir parce que je suis malade*.

Many candidates had problems using the direct object *te* and therefore they often used “*tu*” or “*toi*” to say I cannot help you. (For example, “*Je n’aider pas tu*” instead of *Je ne t’aide pas*).

In some cases, candidates failed to give a reason for their inability to assist. Some used the English word “sorry”, “*je suis sorry*” in responding. Furthermore, candidates conjugated the verb following *devoir* (for example, *Je dois va au supermarché avec ma mère*).

Many candidates responded very well to the situation in Part (i). They were generally able to invite their neighbour to the activity; however, there were many grammatical problems noted in response to this part of the question. Candidates experienced difficulty using the verb *inviter* as they had difficulty with the direct object and could not say *Je t’invite/Je vous invite*. In general, “*tu*” was placed after the verb “*inviter*” which was also conjugated (for example, “*Je voudrais invite tu ...*”). They also did not include the preposition *à* after the word *inviter*. Those candidates who used the verb *vouloir* had difficulty with its conjugation (for example, “*Voudrai-tu regarder un film*”). Further, many candidates demonstrated an inability to express possession, (for example, saying “*ma mère anniversaire*” instead of *l’anniversaire de ma mère*. Partial responses were also noted in some cases (“*viens à ma maison*”). An example of a very good response follows.

Est-ce que vous voudriez dîner avec ma famille et moi ce soir?

In order to attain full marks for Part (j), candidates needed to write requesting permission to engage in an after-school activity. Many candidates had difficulty with this section of the question. There were many grammatical errors identified in their responses. In general, they attempted to make their responses too

complex and wound up making many errors. Many candidates said “*Peux-je*” instead of *Puis-je* quite often, along with “*attendre*” for *assister*. Additionally, incorrect grammatical structures such as “*puis j’aller*” instead of *puis-je aller* were noted. A very good response to this section of the question was

Est-ce que je pourrais aller à une partie de foot après les cours?

Recommendations

Candidates’ responses to this section ranged from very proficient to very weak. It is important that candidates are trained to respond to this part of the examination. Some candidates respond with extremely lengthy answers. When this occurs, they are much more likely to make more grammatical errors and thus lose points even though their answers may be appropriate. A few candidates interpreted writing a note literally and added additional information such as “Good morning; how are you etc.” Responses to the directed situations should be limited to one sentence and candidates should avoid writing extremely long answers.

Overall, some candidates were able to adequately communicate the required elements of the responses. However, given that responses were sometimes replete with grammatical and spelling errors, candidates lost marks or scored zero marks based on the number of errors in their responses. In this regard, greater emphasis needs to be placed on the strengthening of grammar and spelling in order to boost performance.

Candidates used many English words in their responses. There were cases of direct translations with incorrect sentence structures, grammar, and vocabulary, such as the placement of adjectives before nouns and past participles being used in the place of infinitives.

Teachers should devote more time to vocabulary building exercises. Candidates must be exposed to a wider range of vocabulary as some frequently used English words to substitute for basic French words such as beach and house. One suggestion is that candidates engage frequently in translation as a means of building their language skills. Additionally, they need to pay closer attention to the requirements of each situation. It is also crucial that candidates review tenses and the appropriateness of expressions.

Greater emphasis must also be placed on the proper use of adjectives; good accentuation; expressions for preference; suggesting a course of action, the inability to do something, giving reason; and seeking permission.

Some candidates were able to offer particularly impressive responses; however, they lost marks for the number of errors in their answer. On the other hand, certain candidates offered responses where they did not pay attention to instructions — writing more than one sentence.

Candidates should pay attention to instructions and underline key words or expressions in the situations. Teachers should teach candidates alternative expressions when completing the function identified in the syllabus.

Section II (Question 2) – Letter

This was the second year in which candidates did not have a choice between the letter and the composition. In the past, candidates wrote the letter only. Candidates have tended to perform well on the letter and this year was no exception.

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.

The majority of candidates was able to demonstrate adequate competence in all the requisite areas. As always, there were quite a few candidates whose mastery of the skills did not make the passing grade and a small number of candidates who displayed superior mastery of the skill areas.

Knowledge and Mastery of Essential Grammar; Use of vocabulary and Idioms

Generally, candidates were able to construct logical responses to most of the points. Most of the answers were within the word limit. There were a few that were very short and just a handful that were too long. There were very few candidates who did not attempt the question. This was encouraging and an improvement over 2017. The assigned marks spanned all the sections of the mark scheme — from excellent to poor. There were just a few candidates who scored in the extremities of excellent and poor, as most candidates' work fell into the limited, moderate and satisfactory ranges. Some of the best responses demonstrated more proficient use of the language with such expressions as *Je suis certaine que cette expérience m'aidera à réussir à mon examen* and *Ce voyage coûtera un bras donc nous voudrions l'aide de ton père*. It was very pleasing to see the accurate use of the future tense across most scripts.

However, there were several common errors noted. Many of the candidates did not construct the following ideas correctly:

Error	Correction
<i>J'epere tu vas bien/j'espere tu va bien (missing accents/sujet/verb agreement)</i>	<i>J'espère que tu vas bien/J'espère que tout va bien</i>
<i>une tour/un trip</i>	<i>Un tour/un voyage</i>
<i>Un tour d'éducation/un tour educational</i>	<i>Un tour éducatif</i>
<i>Votre père/ton père aider</i>	<i>L'aide de ton père</i>
<i>Assistance financial/aider avec les finances</i>	<i>De l'aide financière</i>
<i>Nous voudrons</i>	<i>Nous voudrions</i>
<i>Le 14 de mai</i>	<i>Le 14 mai</i>
<i>Je suis ecrire ce lettre</i>	<i>J'écris cette lettre</i>
<i>Sur le voyage</i>	<i>Pendant le voyage</i>
<i>Le tour est le 5 juin a le 5 julliet</i>	<i>Le tour sera du 5 juin au 5 juillet</i>

More Specific Errors

The use of the partitive and agreement:

D'argent vs de l'argent vs du argent

Y sera poulet et riz poulet et frites et des sandwiches.

Pluralization with time as well as the spelling of some numbers

Douse heure vs douze heures

Quince heure

Tres heure

Prepositions

The preposition *de* and the rules of agreement

De + vowel
De éducatif

Beaucoup des vs Beaucoup de

The preposition *à* with countries

Je vais à Martinique.
Nous allons à France.

Agreement rules with adjectives

Dessins vieilles
Les artistes meilleur

Incorrect verb or vocabulary

The verbs *aller* and *avoir*

Candidates confused *allons* with *avons*, used *travailler* instead of *voyager* and *le travail* or *le trip* instead of *le trajet* or *le voyage*.

On a Day

Most candidates translated *on* as *sur*, then added the indefinite article *the*.

Nous allons sur le samedi.

Use of demonstrative adjectives especially *cet*.

Ce Cette Ces Cet
Cette tour
Cet pays

Recommendations

Guidelines for the format of the letter, beginning and ending should be reviewed; the format for the date seemed to be a challenge this year (*Barbade le 6 avril* and not “*le 6 de avril*”).

Some candidates were not clear as to the uses of *tu/vous, votre/ton*. They therefore addressed their friend as *vous* and consequently referred to the father as “*votre pere*”. The letter, in this case, is an exchange between friends so candidates should use the familiar form.

Many spelling errors were made due to missing accents. Teachers must continue to reinforce the fact that the correct spelling of words includes the correct placement of accents.

Some candidates wrote the details of the trip in the past tense, where the conditional should have been used (*Nous sommes allés*, instead of “*Nous voudrions aller*”).

The majority of candidates demonstrated a moderate level of competence in relation to grammar, vocabulary and idioms. Teachers may need to continue to focus on helping students to deliberately raise the level of their writing from moderate to satisfactory, and thence to the good and excellent ranges. One of the most important ways of accomplishing this is by having students understand that without consistently good use of essential grammar, their writing will not be considered to be satisfactory.

Section III Question 3 (Contextual Dialogue)

This is the second year where candidates did not have the choice of a dialogue or an announcement. Candidates were required to produce a dialogue only. There was general improvement seen in the quality of the responses which was encouraging. The focus on one question should give teachers more time to prepare students in the future and should lead to responses of a better quality.

Candidate Performance

Based on the appropriateness of candidates’ responses, there appeared to be a general understanding of what the official was saying. Some candidates managed to use almost all the cues effectively and were able to achieve a natural flow in the dialogue. There seemed to be a greater attempt to use idioms and idiomatic expressions as well as efforts to expand sentences. There was generally good use of the conditional and future tenses and good use of linking/transition words and phrases (*au contraire, donc, aussi, de plus, cependant, de temps en temps*).

Cue # 1: Greeting and Salutation

Most candidates provided appropriate responses to this cue, producing an appropriate greeting. Although some candidates had issues with asking for the visa, others produced creditable responses. Some responses worthy of note included the following:

Bonsoir, j’ai besoin de recevoir un visa parce que j’ai l’intention de visiter la France.

J’aimerais obtenir un visa.

J’ai besoin d’obtenir un visa.

Je voudrais un visa français

Cue # 2: Reasons for Seeking the Visa

This cue was fairly well attempted, with most candidates understanding that the marriage ceremony needed to be mentioned. Some candidates, however, did not indicate that it was the sister's marriage, but mentioned other relatives.

With regard to the date of the marriage ceremony, most candidates gave a date, but were unable to add a follow-up comment that would be linked to the official's response of *Quelques mois!*

Some very good responses to this cue included the following:

Ma sœur va se marier et je voudrais être à la cérémonie du mariage.

Ma sœur et son fiancé se marient et je voudrais assister à la cérémonie.

La cérémonie du mariage aura lieu le 16 juillet.

Cue # 3: Responses about the relevant documents

This cue was fairly attempted. Candidates generally were able to enquire about the documents needed. With regard to identifying which documents they did not have, many candidates produced good responses, such as not having a job and therefore no money or no letter from their employer. Noteworthy responses included the following:

Quels sont les documents nécessaires?

Quels sont les documents dont j'ai besoin?

Je n'ai que mon passeport.

J'ai la lettre de ma sœur, preuve des finances et mon passeport est en cours de validité mais je n'ai pas de boulot.

Je suis au chômage et je ne peux que vous donner la lettre de ma sœur.

Cue # 4: Benoit's Intentions while in France

Candidates produced a variety of appropriate answers for this cue. They ranged from working to visiting monuments, shopping. Some examples are provided below.

Je vais avoir un petit boulot quand je suis en France.

Oui, je voudrais visiter la tour Eiffel, faire du shopping et trouver l'amour.

Cue # 5: Reaction to not Getting the Visa

Many candidates handled this cue quite competently, producing creditable answers with varying reaction. Candidates were challenged, however, to find an appropriate question for the official's response of '*Je ne sais pas*'.

Examples of good language included the following:

Quel dommage/Quel désastre/Quelle catastrophe!

Qu'est-ce que je vais faire ?

Comment je vais assister à la cérémonie du mariage de ma sœur maintenant ?

*Comme c'est absurde! Je voudrais parler avec votre patron.
Quoi! Pourquoi pas? Mais le mariage de ma sœur, monsieur! J'ai besoin de voyager en France!*

There continue to be errors in the following:

1. Agreement (specifically the interrogative *quel*, as well as the possessive) and position of adjectives
2. Format of writing the date in French (including the capitalization of the months of the year)
3. The conjugation of common irregular verbs (for example, *être*, *avoir*, *aller*, *pouvoir*)
4. The use of question words and the structuring of questions
5. The use of negative constructions including the partitive becoming *de* after a negative
6. The use of a preposition after verbs like *chercher*, *regarder*, *demande*, *payer*
7. The use of the relative pronoun *dont*.

Other suggested areas of focus for teachers include the following:

1. *parce que* vs *à cause de*
2. *alors* vs *donc*
3. *quand* + future tense vs *quand* + present tense
4. *alors/donc* vs *pour que* + subjunctive (occurs because « that » can be omitted in English)
5. *qu'est-ce que* vs *quel*
6. The inversion of *pouvoir* in questions

Recommendations

The following are some suggestions for improving performance on this question:

- Candidates should be encouraged to thoroughly review their responses, paying attention to the spelling of words (especially those that occur in the question itself).
- Candidates will benefit tremendously from reading the entire dialogue first before attempting to write any response.

This is perhaps the most challenging question on the paper but with careful preparation it is possible for candidates to produce a good, even an excellent response.

Section IV Reading Comprehension

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 comprehension passage for 2018 was well within the capability of candidates and the topic was familiar to them. Most candidates performed satisfactorily, with a small number of them scoring good to excellent marks. Although no penalty is applied for candidates' incorrect use of English, if poor English makes it unclear whether the candidate has understood the French, marks can be lost.

The passages used for testing comprehension are generally between 130 and 150 words. There is therefore little room for redundancy with this restricted content. In classroom practice, candidates 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 Responses

Nearly all candidates answered Part (a) correctly, although some candidates misinterpreted the meaning of *français*. Some responded that the girls planned to visit France. Most candidates were able to receive the full two marks for Part (b), but many left out one element of the answer.

Most candidates gave the correct response for Part (c), but several misinterpreted the question. Some gave the duration of the flight or the time of arrival at the airport, rather than the number of hours the girls arrived before the flight. Most candidates were able to gain two or three marks in Part (d), but quite a few thought that *départ* meant “department” rather than *departure*. Answers included “department store”, “department” or “department room”.

There were many varied responses given to Part (e). Some erroneous responses included that she realized that “She needed to get some euros”. “To change the money she took to euros”; “She forgot to take euros from her credit card” and “She forgot to change her money”. The correct response was *she forgot her money and credit card*.

In Part (f), many candidates were able to indicate that she went to a bank or somewhere else that she could obtain money. However, too many candidates did not know that *cents* means *hundred*. Most candidates were able to answer Part (g) adequately.

Part (h) was challenging for many candidates. Most were able to note in some way that she was angry, but many were not able to gain the second mark.

Part (i) was fairly well done, as candidates noted that she was *embarrassed/ashamed, sorry, apologetic*, etc. in some form.

Part (j) appeared to be the most challenging question for candidates, with most gaining only one mark out of three. Many misunderstood what the question was asking and repeated responses for Parts (h) and (i), rather than giving an explanation for the change in attitude.

Recommendations

The following points cannot be overemphasized:

- Teachers must encourage their charges to read thoroughly and pay close attention to the marks allotted to each question. Marks were lost where insufficient information was provided. Students must be given adequate practice in higher order questions, forming opinions and supporting their conclusions. The importance of detail must also be emphasized.
- Students must be reminded that they should draw inference from the comprehension alone and should beware of offering answers based on their personal experiences.
- Students 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 no words are missing as this can distort the meaning of their answer.
- Students should be encouraged to respond concisely in order to avoid ambiguity in their response.
- Students must note that reproducing French words from the passage will not gain marks

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 2019

**FRENCH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY**

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Performance in the 2019 examination was not as good as that of the two preceding years. A small number of candidates displayed fair to excellent levels of linguistic competence, spontaneity and grammatical accuracy. Most were less successful in demonstrating mastery of the target language.

The need for teachers to expose students to authentic samples of language cannot be overstressed and teachers should take advantage of the multiplicity of sources available to them, especially by way of technology, in and out of the classroom. Every effort must be made to create an environment in which language learning is 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) to 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 average performance here was just below that of 2018 and 2017.

Paper 02 — Free Response

Section 1 (Question 1) — Directed Situations

Section I required candidates to provide written responses in the target language to a series of situations described in English. The range of questions challenged candidates, but were within the expected objectives of the syllabus. Generally, an average number of candidates handled the situations fairly well. However, common errors were noted across the region.

Part (a) required candidates to provide an exact location for their house on their street. Many candidates did not take note of the word *exactly* and some believed that they had to first invite the friend to the house, then give directions. As such, candidates gave directions without saying exactly where the house was located. Even in doing so, candidates failed to make correct use of expressions for directions. For example, some used expressions such as '*allez à le gauche*' or '*au gauche*.' Where the response was deemed appropriate, candidates failed to make agreement with the noun and the qualifying adjective (*maison bleu, devant le bâtiment noire*). Additionally, the use of the wrong definite article was often noted (*derrière la supermarché*). An example of a well-written response produced by candidates follows.

Ma maison est la troisième maison à gauche, à côté de la boulangerie.

For Part (b), candidates were expected to state two qualities that were required to be class prefect. Many responded very well to this situation, although some focused on physical descriptions rather than qualities. Where some candidates were unable to accurately identify the word for the qualities, they provided descriptions of the particular quality which was acceptable in this instance. For example, *Il doit travailler bien*. In some responses it was noted that candidates failed to ensure that there was agreement of the adjectives used (for example, *Elle doit etre gentil*). Excellent responses noted include the following:

- *On doit être responsable et patient.*
- *A mon avis, la personne doit être travailleuse et compatissante.*
- *Tu dois être carrément responsable et en plus, il ne faut pas être incertain, il faut être confiant.*

Part (c) posed great difficulty for many candidates. This section of the question required candidates to express congratulations to someone on attaining leadership of a particular school activity. While many candidates did not mention any aspect of leadership, some opted to offer congratulations for a promotion or to compliment the individual. Some candidates simply extended congratulations but failed to mention that one became a leader. Many candidates were able to congratulate using the expression *félicitations* or other expressions such as *bon travail* but some were able to name the specific leadership position. Some candidates who used the word *captain* used the English word. There were also frequent errors with the use of the indefinite article for example, *de + le*. Candidates therefore wrote expressions such as '*président de le club de football*' instead of *président du club de football*.

In responding to Part (d), candidates were expected to produce a response wishing someone (a brother) well, as he would be travelling. Responses varied greatly but this section of the question was generally well handled. Those candidates who successfully completed this response gave replies such as *bon voyage*, *bon séjour*, *bonne chance*. It was noted, however, that there was a general weakness in candidates' use of the subjunctive mood and in using commands. Additionally, some candidates failed to recognize that *chance* is feminine and wrote '*bon chance*' instead of *bonne chance*. In other instances, *voyage* was incorrectly identified by candidates as being feminine. Examples of good responses are as follows:

- *Au revoir et bon voyage.*
- *Luc, bon voyage et amuse-toi bien.*

Part (e) required candidates to indicate a preference for a particular weekend activity. Some candidates handled this section of the question quite well; however, many candidates did not recognize the need to express preference clearly and simply said what they were going to do. Additionally, the appropriate form of the verb *préférer* posed a challenge to many candidates. A very good response was as follows:

Quant à moi, je voudrais aller à la plage parce que j'aime être en plein air.

In order to fully respond to Part (f), candidates were required to write two ways in which they could make up for something wrong that was done. This section of the question was interpreted in two ways by

candidates. Some candidates wrote as if they were speaking to their sister and used the imperative or used *tu dois écrire une lettre*. A very good example was '*tu dois t'excuser pour ton comportement et tu peux aider avec les activités d'école*.' Several candidates wrote as if they were writing to the principal stating what their sister could do to make things better (for example, *Elle nettoiera la salle de bains*). Most candidates were able to give two things that the sister could do.

What posed difficulty for candidates was their misuse of the word *désolée*. With the expression *je suis désolé*, candidates failed to structure the statement well. For example, '*parle je suis désolée*' was used instead of *dis que tu es désolée*.

Part (g) posed difficulty for many candidates. It required that they write two possible consequences of engaging in a negative activity. Most candidates were able to give a response to the two consequences. Many gave responses such as the mother would be angry, *Ta mère sera furieuse* or that the person would hurt himself/herself, *Tu peux tomber et tu peux mourir*. Some identified various issues and corresponding consequences. Nevertheless, there were some who stated positive results as opposed to negative consequences. Additionally, some candidates expressed *why* someone should not do something, rather than giving the two consequences.

Challenges were also noted when candidates tried to state the negative activity. In doing so, many errors of grammar or sentence structure were observed. Moreover, candidates did not make correct use of the verb *pouvoir* and either employed the incorrect conjugation or conjugated the verb following *pouvoir*. In cases where the future tense was used, verb endings did not match the subject pronoun (for example, *Tu irai à l'hôpital*).

Part (h) required candidates to indicate the inability to assist, indicating a reason for not being able to do so. Many candidates fell short by substituting an expression of apology for an expression of their inability to assist. Some candidates stated that they could not help and gave the reason why. Others directly stated what activity they could not do and stated why. Two examples include *Je ne peux pas t'aider car je suis très malade* and *Je ne peux pas t'aider parce que je ne suis pas forte en anglais*. Those candidates who chose an activity gave responses such as *Je regrette mais je ne peux pas venir parce que je suis malade*. Many candidates had problems using the direct object *te* and therefore they often used '*tu*' or '*toi*' to say I cannot help you (for example, '*Je n'aider pas tu*' instead of *Je ne t'aide pas*).

In some cases, candidates failed to give a reason for their inability to assist. Some candidates used the English word *sorry* '*je suis sorry*', in responding. Some candidates conjugated the verb following *devoir* (for example, *Je dois va au supermarché avec ma mère*).

In Part (i), many candidates responded very well to the situation and were generally able to invite their neighbour to the activity. However, there were many grammatical problems noted in response to this part of the question. Candidates experienced difficulty using the verb *inviter* as they had difficulty with the direct object and could not say *Je t'invite/Je vous invite*. In general, *tu* was placed after the verb *inviter*, which was also conjugated (for example, '*Je voudrais invite tu ...*'). They also did not include the

preposition *à* after the word *inviter*. Those candidates who used the verb *vouloir* had difficulty with its conjugation (for example, they wrote '*Voudrai-tu regarder un film*'). Further, many candidates showed that they did not know how to express possession (for example, they wrote '*ma mère anniversaire*' instead of *l'anniversaire de ma mère*). Partial responses were also noted in some cases ('*viens à ma maison*'). An example of a very good response follows.

Est-ce que vous voudriez dîner avec ma famille et moi ce soir?

In order to attain full marks for Part (j), candidates needed to write requesting permission to engage in an after-school activity. Many candidates had difficulty with this section of the question. There were many grammatical errors identified in candidates' responses. In general, they attempted to make their responses too complex and wound up making many errors. Many candidates did not seem to be able to use the structure *Puis-je*. '*Peux-je*' was used instead of *Puis-je* quite often, along with '*attendre*' for *assister*. Additionally, poor grammatical structures such as '*puis j'aller*' instead of *puis-je aller* were noted. A very good response to this section of the question was as follows.

Est-ce que je pourrais aller à une partie de foot après les cours?

Recommendations

It is important that students are trained to respond to this part of the examination. 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 by including unnecessary material in their answers.

Some candidates respond with extremely lengthy answers. When this occurs, they are much more likely to make more grammatical errors and thus lose points even though their answers may be appropriate. A few candidates interpreted writing a note literally and would add additional information such as 'Good morning; how are you.' This is not required. *Responses to the directed situations should be limited to one sentence and candidates should avoid writing extremely long answers.*

Overall, some candidates were able to adequately communicate the required elements of the responses; however, given that responses were sometimes replete with grammatical and spelling errors, candidates lost marks or scored zero marks based on the number of errors in their responses. *In this regard, greater emphasis needs to be placed on the strengthening of grammar and spelling in order to boost performance.*

It is also recommended that teachers devote more time to vocabulary building exercises. Students must be exposed to a wider range of vocabulary as some frequently used English words to substitute for basic French words such as beach, exciting, house etc. One suggestion is the use of translation exercises as a means of building language skills.

Greater emphasis must also be placed on the proper use of adjectives, good accentuation, expressions for preference; suggesting a course of action; the inability to do something, giving a reason; and seeking permission.

Candidates should pay attention to instructions and underline key words or expressions in the situations. Teachers should teach students alternative expressions when completing the function identified in the syllabus.

Section II (Question 2) — Letter

This was the third year where writing the letter was compulsory. 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.

The topic of the question was well within candidates' experience and provided fair opportunities for (a) showcasing mastery of a range of tenses (present, passé composé, imperfect), (b) triggering the recall and application of a good range of high frequency vocabulary, (c) demonstrating the mastery of essential grammar and (d) the introduction of relevant, performance-enhancing idioms.

Candidates who attempted this question did their best to develop the points to be included and a few went a little beyond, which made for interesting reading. For example, a few candidates turned the event into a charitable cause while fulfilling the cue of it being for the foreign students. In the end the question proved to be challenging, with most candidates scoring in the moderate range.

Letter

Your French Club is hosting an event for a group of visiting students from Guadeloupe. You are one of the main organizers of the event. Write a letter to your French correspondent about the activity. Be sure to include

- (i) details of the event (date, time, venue)
- (ii) the reason for the event
- (iii) a description of some of the preparation activities
- (iv) information about why one of the special guests has been invited.

(Do NOT write your real name and address, but include the date in FRENCH and use an appropriate beginning and ending.)

Knowledge and Mastery of Essential Grammar, Use of Vocabulary and Idioms

Candidates displayed knowledge of the Francophone world through the cities, first names and French celebrities used in their letters (Lyon, Jean-Pierre/Jean-Luc, Kylian Mbappé). Candidates also used the 24-hour clock in their letters.

There were in some instances good use of idiomatic expressions and other fixed expressions relevant to writing a letter in the French language such as the following:

- City and date written correctly (Lyon, le 12 juin 2019/deux mille dix-neuf)
- Appropriate salutations (cher/chère)
- Appropriate openings (comment ça va, j'espère que tout va bien.)
- Appropriate closures (écris-moi vite, gros bisous, grosses bises, cordialement.)
- Appropriate ending (Quant à moi, j'attends ta réponse avec impatience.)

Candidates employed the tenses and moods required according to the most recent syllabus. These include the indicative — present, future, perfect and imperfect, conditional mood, subjunctive as well as the imperative mood. The following responses which made use of the subjunctive mood stood out.

- *Il est essentiel que ...*
- *Il est important que ...*

There were some good introductions, opening and closing statements. These included the following:

- *Quoi de neuf ?*
- *Je dois terminer ma lettre ...*
- *Ça fait un bail*
- *Je profite d'un instant de repos pour ...*
- *Je t'écis cette lettre*
- *Devine quoi?*
- *Je suis l'organisatrice d'une activité*
- *On va faire un petit concours de sports pour les gens qui vont participer.*
- *Il aura lieu à l'auditorium*
- *Pour accueillir les étudiants ...*
- *Je profite d'un instant de repos pour t'envoyer cette lettre.*
- *Je te prie d'excuser mon long silence mais j'ai été occupé.*

There was, unfortunately, more evidence of incorrect usage than correct usage.

Candidates had problems with the formation of the present, past and future tenses. The conditional tense was often used for the future tense while writing about the preparations for the event. For example,

candidates wrote we would play football, '*nous jouerions au foot*' in places where they should have written we will play football, *nous jouerons au foot*.

Candidates interpreted the cue pertaining to the preparations for the event differently. Some of them understood the preparations as the activities planned for the students who would be visiting, so they listed activities that the students would be doing such as a party, a dinner, football. Others understood the preparations as the work to be done before the event such as reserving a room or cooking the food.

Some candidates attempted to take information from the comprehension passage, often doing so incorrectly. Candidates also struggled with stating the reason for the activity. They were many different structures attempted. In structures with *I would like* or *We would like* a subjunctive was necessary but often, this was not included as in the following example:

- *Nous voudrions aimer que ils voir et connaitre votre culture et nous aimerai parlé beaucoup avec les correspondents.*

Specific Errors

- *Parce que* was made one word.
- *Une journée* was required where candidates used the word '*jour*'.
- The conjugation of *espérer* posed a challenge.
- *Espérer* was often followed by the subjunctive and not the present or future. The *que* after it was also often missing.
- *Difficile* was oftentimes incorrectly spelt.
- Expressing someone's name posed a challenge for a few: '*Il s'appelle est ...*'
- 8 p.m. was expressed as '*huit heures de la nuit*' and not *du soir*.
- *Et demie* was used with time expressed with the 24-hour clock.
- Object pronouns were often incorrectly used: '*pour voir vous*'.
- Expressing an invitation was problematic: '*Je suis inviter x à venir*'.
- '*Les estudiants*'/'*l'étudiants de Guadeloupe*' was used instead of *les étudiants*.
- '*Je suis écrit*'/'*écris parler toi*'/'*tu sur*' was used instead of *j'écris*.
- '*Il y a sera*'/'*fera*' was used instead of *il y aura*.
- *En le 9 juin* was used instead of *le 9 juin*
- '*J'espère tu va*'/'*es bien*' was used instead of *j'espère que tu vas bien*.
- '*À la stade*' was used instead of *au stade*.

Recommendations

As is done in the teaching of writing in English classes, teachers can use the writing process to get students to improve their writing. This may help students to appreciate the importance of editing and revising

before producing a final draft. This strategy also gives the teacher the opportunity to provide students with feedback throughout the writing process until a final product is achieved.

As with any writing exercise, practice is important. In addition to the strategy mentioned above, students can be encouraged to read simple passages in French and to emulate the style of their writing. Students should be encouraged to and ought from as early as possible to get into the habit of writing short passages, which gradually increase in length and complexity as they move through school. Writing should not be left to the final years of study. Students can be encouraged to keep simple journals to be reviewed by the teacher from time to time, as they grow as language students. These skills apply equally to writing in English.

This is one skill which students should seek to master as it is one of those activities that they will be called upon to perform either in their personal lives or in the world of work.

The following is a sample letter.

Kingstown, le 17 mai, 2019

Chère Brigitte,

J'espère que tu vas bien, toi et ta famille. Je t'écris cette lettre pour te parler d'un événement organisé par le Club de français de mon école. C'était une soirée qu'on a fait le 27 avril dans l'auditorium de notre école. La soirée a commencé à 19 heures et a fini à minuit. C'était pour souhaiter la bienvenue à St Vincent à un groupe de jeunes du Lycée de Pointe-à-Pitre en Guadeloupe. Ils étaient venus à St Vincent pour pratiquer l'anglais et visiter les sites. Chaque élève avait quelque chose à faire. Certaines élèves ont préparé à manger et à boire et les autres ont décoré la salle. L'invité spéciale de la soirée était John Boy un jeune rappeur de St Vincent dont le père est martiniquais. Il a même chanté en créole et les Guadeloupéens ont beaucoup aimé.

Ecris-moi pour me parler de ce que tu fais.

Ton amie Lisa

Note that the letter is 158 words. The maximum length allowed is 170 words.

Section III (Question 3) — Contextual Dialogue

This is the third year where candidates did not have a choice of a dialogue or an announcement. Candidates were required to produce a dialogue only. As with the letter, performance was below that of 2018.

Contextual Dialogue

Use 80–100 words to complete the dialogue between you and the landlord, by giving your responses in French.

You and a friend have gone shopping in Pointe-à-Pitre and you have bought an article of clothing from a store. On arriving home you realize that you have been given the wrong item. You return to the store to have it exchanged.

Responses to ALL of the cues listed MUST be included in the completed dialogue.

- (i) Greeting the employee
- (ii) Explaining what item you bought and the problem you have encountered
- (iii) Finding out what the alternatives are
- (iv) Expressing what your preferences are
- (v) What you accept by way of resolution

This question produced very few scripts in the excellent to very good category. Candidates were able to complete the dialogue using all cues but without the need for wide and proficient use of vocabulary, idioms and structures.

Knowledge and Mastery of Essential Grammar, Use of Vocabulary and Idioms

Some candidates used expressions and idioms that added zest to their dialogues.

- (i) When debating with the employee about the shirt given the following were seen:

<i>Vous avez tort</i>	<i>Vous vous êtes trompé</i>	<i>je suis d'avis que ...</i>
<i>C'est trop serré</i>	<i>alors pour commencer ...</i>	<i>à vrai dire ...</i>

- (ii) When making the new request to the salesman the following were seen:

<i>Vous pouvez m'apporter une chemise rouge ...?</i>	<i>Vous devez échanger ...</i>
<i>Je préfère celle-là.</i>	

(iii) In response to there being no more red medium-sized shirts the following were seen:

Mon dieu!

Quelle déception!

Quel dommage

(iv) In stating their preferences the following were seen:

Puis-je prendre ce pull blanc en coton soie rayé

(v) In reacting to being given two items the following were seen:

Vraiment?

Quelle bonne surprise!

Fantastique!

Types of Errors

- Many candidates did not recognize that the attendant was male.
- There was confusion with the use of the formal and familiar registers.
- The preposition following some verbs were incorrect.
- Incorrect grammar, for example, *Puis-j'ai une chemise rouge/Puis j'avoir une chemise rouge ...*
- There was incorrect inversion of *je peux*.
- Incorrect position of object pronouns.
- Misspelling of words (even those given in the text).
- Inaccurate use of relative pronouns *qui* and *que*

Reason for Errors

- Carelessness in spelling and structures.
- Ignorance of some basic grammar rules.
- Inadequate consolidation (where candidates seemed not to have been able to build on what was taught earlier in their learning of the language) and insufficient practice with this type of question (Contextual Dialogue).

Recommendations

Vocabulary building activities can help students to move scripts from *Good* or *Moderate* to *Very Good* to *Excellent*. It is further recommended that students be allowed to *practise using fillers and other conjunctions* to make the dialogue more interesting/real and also to give it a more natural flow. *More writing activities are encouraged.*

Students must be urged and reminded *to read and study the entire dialogue first before beginning to insert responses*. Students should also be encouraged to analyse and draw a conclusion as to what question/statement could have solicited a specific response. This is a question for which candidates need

guidance. They need to carefully read cues, to read the entire passage through to understand the entire dialogue. Reading the cues coming before and after each response is critical. The issue here appears to be technique and not ability. With more careful attention, this is a question on which candidates can perform very well and demonstrate what they have learnt.

The following is a sample contextual dialogue.

Employé: Bonjour madame/monsieur, je peux vous aider?

Vous: **Bonjour, oui je voudrais échanger cette chemise que j'ai achetée ce matin s'il vous plaît.**

Employé: Ce matin? Pourquoi voulez-vous l'échanger?

Vous: **Parce que ce n'est pas la chemise que j'ai demandée.**

Employé: Comment ce n'est pas la chemise que vous avez demandée. Je vous ai servi et vous avez demandé une chemise bleue de taille petite!

Vous: **Ah non, vous vous trompez, c'est mon amie qui a demandé la chemise bleue, de taille petite, pas moi.**

Employé: En fait madame/monsieur, vous avez sans doute raison. Excusez-moi. Alors que puis-je faire pour vous?

Vous: **Eh bien vous allez me l'échanger. Vous allez me donner la rouge, de taille moyenne que j'avais essayée.**

Employé: Alors, sans problème madame/monsieur on va vous le faire ... oh là là je suis désolé madame/monsieur mais il n'y a plus de chemise rouge de taille moyenne. Accepteriez-vous autre chose à la place?

Vous: **Je vois là-bas une veste noire qui me plaît. Est-ce que je peux l'avoir à la place de ma chemise rouge?**

Employé: Oui tout à fait mais cela coûte beaucoup moins.

Vous: **Je peux prendre quelque chose d'autre avec?**

Employé: Oui bien entendu. Qu'est-ce que vous allez prendre ?

Vous: **Je vois un t-shirt blanc pas trop cher que j'aime. Je peux l'avoir?**

Employé: Très bien madame/monsieur on accepte. Vous pouvez prendre les deux.

Vous: Oui je les prends.

Employé: Alors, c'est bon. Merci et au revoir madame/monsieur.

Vous: Au revoir monsieur. (94 words)

Section IV (Question 4) — Reading Comprehension

This section assesses candidates' ability to read and understand a short passage in French. The questions on the passage are in English and candidates are also expected to respond in English.

The reading passage for 2019 was well within the capability of candidates and the topic was familiar to them. Even if candidates do not play cricket, almost everyone knows of cricket and a prize-giving ceremony. This question was generally handled well by most candidates even though not many of them scored full marks. The last question, (j), continues to pose problems for candidates.

For Part (a), candidates were generally able to identify that the event was a prize-giving ceremony for the schools' cricket league. However, many did not know the expression for prize-giving ceremony, *la cérémonie de remise des prix*. About 50 per cent of candidates did not get the full two marks for this question. Some spelt *prizes* as 'prices' and spelt *trophée* incorrectly.

Part (b) was done very well. A few candidates did not know the meaning of the word *stade*.

In Part (c), the majority of candidates translated *ministre* as 'ministry' and not *minister*. This part, however was generally, well done.

For Part (d), candidates understood that there was a waiting period and most knew *mon moment de gloire*. A few of them were able to understand *discours* which was quite good since the majority did not. The phrases *l'attente* and *j'attendais* were confused with the English 'to attend'.

In Part (e), most candidates did not know the word *bientôt*.

In Part (f), candidates misunderstood *équipe*, thinking it meant equipment/maintenance. They did not understand the reference to 'teams'.

For Part (g), the majority of responses were done well. Most candidates scored two out of three marks.

Part (h), was also done well. The problem candidates encountered was the gender of the person. They believed that Michel was a girl. Seventy-five per cent of the candidates gave the correct answer *one of his friends*.

Part (i), was generally well done.

Candidates found Part (j) challenging. A few of them, however, scored full marks. Most candidates got this part wrong. The word *soulagement* posed a challenge, even though some candidates knew what it meant.

Recommendations

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.

Teachers should encourage students to *read thoroughly and pay close attention to the marks allotted to each question*. Students must be given adequate practice in higher order questions, forming opinions and supporting their conclusions. The importance of detail must also be emphasized.

Candidates must be reminded that they should draw inference from the comprehension alone and beware of offering answers based on their personal experiences. Candidates should also 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 no words are missing as this can distort the meaning of their answer.

Candidates should be encouraged to respond concisely in order to avoid ambiguity in their response. They should also note that reproducing French words from the passage will not gain marks.

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**

JULY 2020

**FRENCH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY**

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Performance in the 2020 examination was much better than in 2019 and on par with performances in 2017 and 2018. A small number of candidates displayed fair to excellent levels of linguistic competence, spontaneity and grammatical accuracy. Most others were less successful in demonstrating mastery of the target language.

The need for teachers to expose students to authentic samples of language cannot be overstressed and teachers should take advantage of the multiplicity of sources available to them with the use of technology both in and out of the classroom. Every effort must be made to create an environment in which language learning is 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. There was general improvement here compared to the performance of 2019.

Paper 02 — Free Response

Section 1 (Question 1) – Directed Situations

Paper 02, Section I required candidates to provide written responses in the target language to a series of situations described in English. The range of questions challenged candidates but were within the expected objectives of the syllabus. The mark scheme was accommodating and considerate to the language level of candidates. Generally, an average number of candidates handled the situations fairly well. However, there were common errors noted across the region.

Comments on Individual Situations

Part (a)

Your mother leaves you a note asking for help with a particular task. What does the note say?

Most candidates stated the task without the request for help. Many others preferred to use the imperative and some did not pay attention to the appropriate form of speech to employ. Using *Tu peux*

m'aider or *Aide-moi* posed a problem for several candidates; some candidates only used the command and did not indicate a request; however, others used it well.

Part (b)

You are asked to state, with one reason, your opinion about a new movie. What do you write?

A fair number of candidates were challenged with the second requirement and failed to meet the demands of the question in terms of justifying their opinion. Others believed that two adjectives would fulfil the two requirements.

Part (c)

You send a greeting card to your friend wishing her a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. What do you write?

Most candidates demonstrated knowledge of the specific French terms for Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. The correct spelling of the words *Noël* and *Année* presented a challenge for some candidates. Quite a few candidates did not know how to wish someone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. This resulted in the following incorrect responses:

- *Bonne Noel et à Heureure annee*
- *Bon anniversaire et félicitations*
- *Feliz Noël et Bonne Année*
- *Felic Christmas et Contenté Année Nouveau*
- *Bon Vorage est Bon Nevidad*
- *Merry Christmas et content neuvette anne*

Part (d)

Your brother leaves a note for your parents indicating why he would be late returning home. What does the note say?

Many candidates only gave the reason. Many understood how to indicate that they would be late but some struggled with the expression *être en retard* and 'I have to', in French. A common error was '*Je serai retourner*'. Some candidates had difficulty with the verb *aller* in both the present and past tenses.

Part (e)

You are a witness to a robbery and are asked to provide a written description of the person you saw. What two things do you write?

Most candidates responded to this question with great ease. A common error was the failure to display noun and adjective agreement based on gender and number.

Part (f)

The editor of a student magazine provides a forecast for the weather next week. What does he/she write?

Most candidates had knowledge of some weather expressions in the future tense. Although the use of the French for 'next week' was not a key component, candidates who chose to include it, struggled with the relevant vocabulary.

Part (g)

Your father leaves you a note with two specific items that he would like you to purchase. What does the note say?

This question proved to be a challenge for many candidates. The structures *Je voudrais que tu achètes* or *Je veux que tu achètes* were not widely known and *Je voudrais t'acheter* was incorrectly used in many instances. The placement of the accent on the conjugation of *acheter* and the use of the partitive articles also posed difficulty.

Part (h)

At the restaurant, your friend leaves a note for the waitress thanking her for her service. What does the note say?

Candidates generally responded with great ease to this guided situation. There was a general error of the inappropriate use of the familiar form *Merci pour ton service/ aide*.

Part (i)

Your mother writes a message for your brother indicating a particular task that he must do. What does the message say?

Most candidates stated the task to be done without the obligation. Some candidates used the imperative and the French for 'now' and 'before I return' to express obligation, for example, '*Fais la vaisselle avant que je retourne*'.

Part (j)

Your teacher writes one of your school rules on the board expressing something that is forbidden in school. What does he/she write?

Generally, candidates responded to this question very well. Most candidates appropriately used expressions to indicate that something was forbidden, for example, *Il est interdit de* and *Défense de*. There was moderate use of the imperative form also. There were a few cases of direct translation to French and some candidates invented words such as '*bané*', '*prohibité*' and '*non fumez*'.

Many candidates used short phrases that responded exactly to the requirements of the situation. Some used the language naturally and attained full marks. Although many candidates used adjective and noun agreement correctly, there were still too many lapses in this area.

Good Responses

- (a) *Est-ce que tu peux m'aider à passer l'aspirateur ?*
Peux-tu m'aider à faire le linge, s'il te plaît ?
- (b) *J'aime beaucoup le nouveau film parce que c'est plein d'émotions et j'adore ça.*
Lion King est triste parce que Scar est jaloux de son frère qui est le roi.
- (c) *Je te souhaite un Joyeux Noël et Une Bonne Année.*
- (d) *Je serai en retard car je dois aller au cinéma avec mes amis.*
J'arriverai en retard parce que la voiture est tombée en panne.
- (e) *C'était un homme qui portait un chapeau noir et une boucle d'oreille.*
Le voleur était très grand et il a les cheveux noirs.
- (f) *Il y aura du brime et il pleuvra des cordes la semaine prochaine.*
La semaine prochaine, il fera du soleil tous les jours.
- (g) *Je voudrais un kilo de pommes et une livre de fromage.*
Est-ce que tu peux acheter une livre de pommes et deux boîtes de thon, s'il te plaît ?
- (h) *Merci bien pour votre service, mademoiselle.*
Je vous remercie pour votre service.
- (i) *Il faut faire la vaisselle, Mathieu.*
Tu dois ranger ta chambre tout de suite.
- (j) *Défense de manger dans la salle de classe.*
Il est interdit de manger dans la salle de classe.

Errors/Recurring Errors (Grammar, Vocabulary, Structure)

- *Je te acheter / je voudrais te acheter/ je voudrais m'acheter*
- *puis-je me aider/ nettoyer etc. /Tu peux aider-moi*
- Use of *les vaisselles* instead of *la vaisselle*

- More than one sentence in a response. Responses are too wordy.
- Omission of *à* in expressing *avoir à* + infinitive
- Inclusion of English and Spanish words in responses.
- Using the polite form where the familiar should be used
- Incorrect placement of colours and other adjectives
- Subject and verb agreement
Vous est très sympa./ Tu peut m'aider
- Incorrect formation of passé composé and other tenses
Je pensé/J'ai allé
- Adjectival agreement
Il est grande /Il a les cheveux noir
- Incorrect use of accents – omitting them when necessary, adding them when not required or using the incorrect accent
annee, mènage, trés, servicé, chére, dèfense, allee etc.
- Failure to use the correct construction to express “I want you to (do something). Often times, the subjunctive was not used
Je voudrais tu fait/Je voudrais tu aller en ville/Je voudrais t'acheter
- Expressing “I would like”
Je voudrais aime/amie
- In most instances *avant que* was written simply as *avant*
avant j'arrive
- Use of *parce que* instead of *à cause de*
Le film, Avengers est plus intéressant parce que les acteurs.
- Use of incorrect possessive adjectives, including Spanish *tu*
Tu/ta service or Tons frère
- Incorrect pluralization of nouns and adjectives ending in *-eux* in the plural form:
Yeux/cheveux/délicieux
- Expressing ‘can you’ in French. Several candidates wrote either *puis-tu* or *puis-je*
- Incorrect expression of ‘next week’ in French:
La prochain semaine, Demain semaine, Dernier semaine, La semaine prominer
- Use of the verb *travaille* instead of the noun *travail*
- Fairly widespread use of Spanish words:
Cine, el hombre, tú, feliz
- Use of *vous* when *tu* was required and vice versa
- Using subject pronouns with the imperative – *Vous ne mangez pas...*
- Use of incorrect articles: *l'hommes, le chambre, le homme, la film*
- In some cases, modal verbs were not followed by the infinitive, for example, *Peux-tu aides*
- Omission of the preposition *à* in the structure *aider à...*
- Candidates used the *passé composé* when giving their reason for being late in Part (d)
- Partitive articles were often omitted or incorrectly used when the request to purchase two items was made.

- Frequent spelling errors included the following:
 - *Vaisselle: vaiselle, vaissielle/vasielles*
 - *Cheveux: chevaux*
 - *En retard/tard: un retarde/retarde/tarde*
 - *Joyeux: joyex/jouyeux/joyeas*
 - *Beaucoup: beaucoupe/beacoupe etc.*
 - *Mercredi: mecredi*
 - *Parce que: pas que*
 - *Année: ané/anne/annee/anné*
 - *Ennuyeux: enneyeux/ennuie*
 - *Merci: merci/mes*
 - *Noël: noelle/nöel/noell*
 - *Madame: madam/madamn*
 - *Film: filme*
 - *Semaine: semein/semain*
 - *Intéressant: interstant/interesante*
 - *A mon avis: dans ma vie / à mon avie/avi*

Recommendations

- Overall, teachers should stress the proper use of adjectives, good accentuation, expressions for obligation, making requests, prohibition and giving reason for something. Students should be encouraged to read situations carefully so that they can respond appropriately and fully, covering all required parts of the response. In addition, they should be advised to keep responses succinct, as the more they write the more mistakes they are likely to make, resulting in loss of marks. For example:
 - In response to Part (a): *Bon nuit Chloé ! Je voudrais ta aider sortir la poubelle, ton père est à travaille et j'ai allé à la supermarche.*
 - In response to Part (b): *Le film nouveaux appelle Trollz était dans le cinema hier. As-tu vu ça ? C'était très drôle et amusant parce que j'adore les dessin animés.*
 - In response to Part (e): *Le personne porté une blanche et noire rayé chemise et un bleu pantalon avec un roux sac à main en ton bras.*
- Whenever possible, students should be guided in and encouraged to review and practise grammar rules, vocabulary, and structures taught in previous years so that they come readily to mind.
- Candidates need to pay closer attention to the formation of commands especially the verb *acheter* that has an accent.
- Candidates need to pay attention to accents, that is, the direction of the accent and the inclusion or omission of same, for example, 'mère' and 'père'.
- Candidates need to review tenses — present versus future; *passé composé* versus imperfect
- Candidates need to read questions properly and answer only what is required.

- Handwriting is posing a problem for examiners. Candidates need to become more conscious of their handwriting as it makes it difficult for the examiner to read and interpret. Additionally, they should avoid writing in the margins and writing in pencil and then tracing over it in pen, as these practices pose many challenges when the paper is scanned.

Section II (Question 2) – Letter

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. The topic of the question was well within candidates' experience and provided fair opportunities for

- showcasing mastery of a range of tenses (present, passé composé, imperfect)
- triggering the recall and application of a good range of high frequency vocabulary
- demonstrating the mastery of essential grammar
- using relevant, performance-enhancing idioms.

Candidates made a good effort at this question, even the weaker ones. There were a few instances where nothing was written or there were very short answers.

The Letter

You have just returned from a holiday in a French-speaking country. Write a letter to your host parents in which you include

- (i) greetings and expression of gratitude
- (ii) how you benefited from your stay
- (iii) one activity that you really appreciated, giving details
- (iv) an invitation to visit you in your country.

Candidates were instructed not to write their real names and addresses but include the date in French and use an appropriate beginning and ending.

Knowledge and Mastery of Essential Grammar, Use of Vocabulary and Idioms

Candidates scoring in the Satisfactory, Good, Very good and Excellent categories showed their knowledge of the grammar rules and wrote with coherence. The better ones demonstrated their skill in manipulating the language. Oftentimes, the work of the best candidates appeared natural and did not seem to include too many pre-learned phrases and expressions, although such idiomatic expressions do impress when used correctly. The best candidates knew the right prepositions to use after certain verbs, used *vous* as required, used object pronouns well, wrote enough and were logical.

Examples of Good Usage

- *Je vous écris pour dire merci pour votre gentillesse pendant mon séjour chez vous*
- *Merci pour tenir en compte mes activités préférées*
- *Je vous garantis que vous allez adorer mon île.*
- *Je n'arriverai jamais à exprimer suffisamment ma reconnaissance*
- *...rester quelque jours chez nous ici à Trinidad, quand vous aurez le temps, bien-sûr*
- *Je vous remercie encore pour les deux semaines incroyables chez vous*
- *J'avais l'occasion de faire du tourisme avec vous et je l'ai adoré. Je voudrais vous dire merci mille fois pour votre hospitalité.*
- *J'ai vraiment adoré quand nous avons visité le Tour Eiffel*
- *Mes chers parents d'accueil*
- *Chère/Cher....Salut!/Comment ça va?/Comment allez-vous?*
- Object pronouns, direct and indirect, were correctly positioned, for example, *Je vous écris pour vous dire merci/pour vous remercier de.....*
- Correct usage of the *passé composé*, for example, *J'ai bien reçu votre lettre/Je suis arrivé(e)) chez moi sain et sauf/saine et sauve....*
- It was pleasing to see some candidates using expressions such as *à mon avis, malheureusement, à l'avenir, se porter bien, cependant, d'abord, tout d'abord, puis, ensuite, finalement, enfin.*
- *Appropriate greetings and closing remarks in the polite form, for example, Comment allez-vous? J'espère que vous allez bien. En attendant votre réponse.*
- Improvement noted in the use of and formation of the *passé composé*, particularly the verbs which use the auxiliary verb *être*, for example, *Nous sommes allés, je suis retourné.*

Some Examples of Errors

- *Quitter* being used instead of *partir*
- *Juillet* being spelt incorrectly
- *Reste* being used instead of *séjour*
- *Parce que* being used instead of *à cause de*
- The incorrect form of *cher* being used for 'dear'
- Many candidates did not know the phrase for host family *famille d'accueil* and instead used 'parents'
- Many candidates could not form the *passé composé* and also omitted the auxiliary verb *je allé*
- Many candidates did not know the proper format for writing the date
- Many candidates switched between the *tu* form and the *vous* form in their letters
- The capitalization of days of the week and months of the year
- Misspelling of the month
- Incorrect spelling of common words: Pays became 'pay' or 'paye'; Eiffel became 'Effiel' or 'Effeil'; chaussures became 'chassures' or 'chasseures'; fromage became 'formage'

- Making the adjective feminine after *c'est* or *c'était*, for example, '*La Tour Eiffel, c'est grande et belle.*'
- The lack of agreement with the preceding direct object, for example, '*Les fleurs exotiques que j'ai vu*'
- Use of the intensifier *très* with adjectives such as *fantastique*, *excellente*, *super* etc.
- Using '*parce que de*' to express 'because of'
- Using *tôt* and *bientôt* interchangeably
- Forgetting to change learned expressions to *vous* since the letter addressed more than one recipient, for example, '*J'attends ta réponse avec impatience*'
- Using '*voyage*' where *séjour* was needed
- Adding the letter '*c*' to *pratiquer*
- The past participle of *apprendre* was often rendered incorrectly as '*apprendu*'
- Not being able to differentiate between *visiter* and *rendre visite à*
- Failure to utilize the infinitive form of the verb that followed the preposition *à* when *à* was used with *apprendre*, for example, '*apprendre à faire*'
- The use of '*depuis*' where *pendant* or *après* might have been needed
- Confusion between the adverb *mieux* and the adjective *meilleur*
- Using the incorrect form of the reflexive verb, for example, '*J'ai m'amusé* or *je suis m'amusée*

Recommendations

In an effort to strengthen their writing skill, it is suggested that students be introduced to the French letter and letter writing earlier in their high school years. This can be done as reading comprehension exercises initially and then the preparation of very short letters/emails to friends and family. From as early as possible, students should be encouraged to get into the habit of writing short passages and increasing their writing in length and complexity as they move through school. Writing should not be left to the final years of study. Teachers should encourage students to keep simple journals to be reviewed by the teacher from time to time; this practice should continue as they grow as language students. This early exposure would provide them with ideas on how to structure their own emails/letters in a more authentic French way. More practice will allow them to improve upon their corrected work which should improve the overall performance in this section of Paper 02.

We return to the suggestion for teachers to use the writing process. This may assist students in appreciating the importance of editing and revising before producing a final draft. This strategy also gives the teacher the opportunity to provide students with feedback throughout the writing process until a final product is achieved. To this we add the suggestion of the use of graphic organizers which may assist students with organizing their thoughts during the writing process. This would assist them in attacking the content requirement for the letter writing rubric.

Within the context of the language programme, as long as there is a question of this nature on the paper, teachers should, especially in the latter part of the programme, devote a significant amount of time to

this exercise. It will strengthen grammar and vocabulary skills and allow for an even better response on Sections 1 and 4 of this paper.

Sample letter

Bridgetown, le dix mai, 2017

Chers Natalie et Lucas,

Bonjour. Je suis de retour à la Barbade. J'espère que vous allez bien. Merci beaucoup pour mon séjour avec vous. C'était super et vous étiez très sympas.

J'ai beaucoup appris pendant mon séjour. Je parle mieux le français. Je comprends mieux quand les gens me parlent et j'ai même appris quelques mots en créole.

J'ai adoré aller aux restaurants. La nourriture était fantastique et j'ai rencontré des amis qui habitent en Martinique. Pour le petit déjeuner j'ai mangé des gaufres avec des framboises et du café au lait. Pour le déjeuner j'ai mangé un croque-monsieur et j'ai bu un jus d'orange. Au dîner j'ai mangé du canard avec des frites et j'ai bu un coca. Comme dessert j'ai pris une glace au chocolat.

Je vous invite à visiter la Barbade. Vous l'aimerez. Elle est très jolie avec de très belles plages. Ecrivez-moi bientôt.

Votre amie
Laura-Anne

Note the letter is 155 words long; the maximum allowed length is 170 words.

Section III (Question 3) – Contextual Dialogue

In this section, candidates are required to produce a dialogue of 80–100 words using the prompts and outline provided. There was a slight improvement over the performance last year but this question continues to pose a challenge to candidates across the region.

The Contextual Dialogue

Your brother has just bought a new car and you have decided to drive it to the mall. After spending some time inside the mall, you return to the parking garage to realize that the car is nowhere to be found. You go to file a report at the security counter.

Responses to all of the cues listed below must be included in the completed dialogue.

- (i) Greeting the security officer

- (ii) Explaining what happened with the car
- (iii) Providing a detailed description of the car
- (iv) Expressing concern about the safety of vehicles at the mall
- (v) An apology when it is realized that the car was parked on another level

Knowledge and Mastery of Essential Grammar, Use of Vocabulary and Idioms

The majority of candidates fell in the Good, Satisfactory and Moderate categories, with an increase in numbers in the Satisfactory category. Very few candidates were in the Excellent band. Those candidates who scored in the Limited or Poor ranges, demonstrated a lack of comprehension of parts of the conversation and were unable to respond appropriately; in some cases, no response was given at all.

Some candidates were able to successfully use the passé composé and the present and future tenses in their dialogues; for others this posed a challenge. For example, some candidates insisted on the vehicle being parked at Level B, even after the security guard had already indicated that the vehicle was not stolen and that the driver had simply forgotten where he had parked the car. Many candidates never said the car was not theirs until after the guard asked for confirmation that the vehicle did not belong to them. Many candidates were not aware that the conversation was taking place between two males and therefore used *Madame* or *Mademoiselle*; this impacted on their formation of the passé composé.

Some candidates did not pay attention to the rules of politeness and therefore they used the informal 'tu' when addressing the security guard instead of the polite form *vous*.

These are some expressions used by candidates which demonstrated a wide and proficient use of idioms and vocabulary.

- *A vrai dire, je soutiens que...*
- *aux grands maux les grands remèdes*
- *avoir une peur bleue*
- *coûter les yeux de la tête*

Use of Cues

The cues proposed gave candidates of all levels an opportunity to gain marks. Candidates were generally able to give a varying range of responses to the questions. Several candidates had good vocabulary and used expressions which were more colloquial and authentic. It is to be noted, however, that some candidates experienced difficulty organizing the dialogue using the cues. Many candidates did not include all of the cues or used them in the wrong spaces. Some others inserted responses which were not logical considering the response by the *Agent de sécurité*. It shows a lack of understanding of some of the responses in the dialogue and a lack of understanding of the sequence of events.

The weaker and average candidates were able to greet the security officer, describe the car and give the apology. The other two cues proved to be difficult to render in French.

Cue #1 – The Greeting

Almost all candidates rendered this cue accurately, since it is the most basic of interactions.

Cue #2 – Explaining What Happened with the Car

Not many students gave sufficient detail about what happened to the car. They simply focused on the fact that they couldn't find it or that it was stolen. Candidates in many instances also did not mention that the car did not belong to them. The majority of candidates omitted the sequence of events (as described in the question) that explained what happened to the car; this was critical since it formed the basis of the report. The main error was linked to the question *Qu'est-ce qui est arrivé exactement?* An overwhelming majority of candidates interpreted it to mean the exact time that they arrived at the mall. This showed that they didn't know that the verb *arriver* also means 'to happen'. Maybe, too, they did not recognize the question phrase used.

Cue #3 – Description of the Car

The descriptions given for the car were generally acceptable. Candidates indicated the colour (interior and exterior), size and make of vehicle, plate numbers, colours or numbers of windows, patterns or designs on the vehicle and items left in the vehicle. While there was good adjectival agreement with the car by those who recognized that the word 'car' was feminine, some neglected to show agreement regarding the colours. For example,

- *à pois blancs*
- *cette voiture n'est pas la mienne*
- *il y a une photo de chien sur le capot*
- *la voiture n'est pas la mienne.*

Cue #4 – Concern about the Safety of Vehicles at the Mall

This cue posed a challenge to candidates, and was often neglected. Those who did recognize the need to ask about the security at the mall did so, but many candidates had difficulty expressing this in a grammatically correct and logical manner. Also, candidates in many instances did not mention that the car did not belong to them or that they were parked on Level B at the mall. A few candidates were creative in the manner in which they expressed their concern for the safety of vehicles at the mall.

- *Je m'inquiète pour les voitures.*
- *Vous racontez des salades.*

- *La sécurité des véhicules me concerne.*
- *Quel malheur!*
- *Il faut avoir la meilleure sécurité au centre commercial donc les clients peuvent être à l'aise.*
- *Je pense que le centre commercial a besoin d'améliorer leur sécurité avec les voitures.*
- *Est-ce que la sécurité est bien équipée?*
- *Quel désastre!*

Cue #5 – An Apology

The apology was well attempted although there were repeated spelling and/or agreement errors with *désolé(e)*, especially regarding the accents.

- *Je suis désolé de vous avoir dérangé pour aucune raison*
- *autant pour moi*
- *J'ai du pain sur la planche*

Types of Errors

- Passé composé — *avoir* versus *être* ; agreement with preceding direct object; negative form
- Present tense — negative and question forms when the word 'do' is used in English
- Passive voice — past participle used as an adjective
- Expressing possession
- Direct and indirect object pronouns — form and position
- Structuring questions using inversion or *est-ce que*
- Verbs that are governed by the infinitive — use or not of prepositions
- Confusion in use of *laisser/partir/quitte/sortir*
- Confusion in use of *regarder/voir/trouver/chercher*
- Agreement of adjectives with noun especially when *c'est* is followed by masculine singular adjectives
- Sequence of tenses

Recommendations

- Students should be exposed to adequate comprehensible input to solidify the acquisition of French.
- Teachers need to review the procedure for responding to the contextual dialogue with students, teaching them to read the entire dialogue first and then to pay attention to the responses before and after the spaces which they need to reply to. Perhaps added practice of contextual dialogues would help improve performance in the dialogue.
- There should be constant reinforcement and opportunity to use those grammatical concepts that continue to prevent accurate French expression.

- Teachers should point out useful vocabulary so that students can include it in their written expression.
- To help students with recall and to reinforce grammar and vocabulary, teachers can use the following activities: songs, quizzes, puzzles or any other fun activities and follow French grammar pages (*A Cup of French*, *french_sylv*, *_frenchfamily*) on social media. They are also encouraged to visit YouTube pages, for example, *Français avec Pierre*. Pages such as that one explain the differences in grammar and uses scrambled sentences, dictation and reading aloud as tools to help students learn French in an engaging way.
- Students can create their own flashcards with not only new vocabulary but grammar points for personal study outside of the classroom. More exam-type practice questions, like past papers, may also be used.
- Exposing students to more everyday situations such as losing an item or making a report can help them acquire specific vocabulary and express opinions more freely. In such cases, they would get much practice apologizing, expressing what has gone wrong, asking for help and more.

The following is a sample contextual dialogue.

Agent de sécurité: Bonjour Monsieur, je peux vous aider ?
Vous: **Oui, monsieur. Quelqu'un a volé la voiture (de mon frère) ! (7)**
Agent de sécurité: Il faut rester calme, monsieur. Qu'est-ce qui est arrivé exactement ?
Vous : **J'ai stationné la voiture (de mon frère) au niveau B à environ 3h cet après-midi et quelqu'un l'a volée. (18)**
Agent de sécurité: Cet après-midi ? Pouvez-vous la décrire s'il vous plaît ?
Vous: **C'est une Citroën. Elle est bleu foncé et les sièges sont en cuir blanc. (14)**
Agent de sécurité: Et ce n'est pas votre voiture, vous dites ?
Vous: **Non Monsieur. C'est la voiture de mon frère.
Comment est-ce que cela peut arriver ? Evidemment vos méthodes de sécurité sont insuffisantes. (14)**
Agent de sécurité: Nous utilisons les équipements de sécurité les plus modernes, Monsieur.
Vous: **Expliquez donc pourquoi la voiture n'est pas à l'endroit où je l'ai laissée. (13)**
Agent de sécurité: La voiture n'est pas stationnée au niveau B, monsieur. Après vérification, la voiture est en réalité au parking principal, niveau C.
Vous: **Personne n'a volé la voiture ? (5)**
Agent de sécurité: Non Monsieur ; La voiture n'a pas été volée, vous avez tout simplement oublié où vous l'aviez garée.
Vous: **Qu'est-ce que je dois faire maintenant ? Puis-je partir ? (9)**
Agent de sécurité: Oui, vous pouvez partir, mais étant donné que la voiture n'est pas la vôtre, nous devons notifier votre frère de ce qui est arrivé aujourd'hui.
Vous: **Oui, je comprends. Je suis très désolé pour la confusion. (10)**
Agent de sécurité: Pas de problème, monsieur. La prochaine fois il faut noter exactement où vous avez stationné votre voiture.

Vous: **Certainement. J'avais de la chance aujourd'hui, non ? (8)**
Agent de sécurité: Oui, monsieur. Vous êtes très chanceux. Au revoir.
Vous: **Au revoir, monsieur. (3)** **(95 words)**

Section IV (Question 4) — Reading Comprehension

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 passage for 2020 was well within the capability of the candidates and the topic was familiar to them. The subject fell in the category of School and Career and the vocabulary would have been familiar to all candidates. Part (j) continues to be a challenge for candidates.

Part (a) — What was the relationship between Victor and the narrator?

Most candidates were able to give a correct response for the question. A few of them were not specific with their response, stating that the narrator and Victor were family or relatives. A few others incorrectly stated that Victor was the narrator's nephew.

Part (b) — What stage of life is Victor about to embark on?

A large majority of candidates were able to give the correct response for this question. A few incorrectly stated that Victor was turning forty years old/entering the working world/completing his university education.

Part (c) — What does Victor hope to do during this phase of his life he is about to embark on?

Many candidates were able to give correct partial or complete responses to this question. A few candidates were confused by the mention of the word *Afrique* and incorrectly stated that Victor was going to embark upon a trip to African speaking countries.

Part (d) — Why did Victor never want to be a teacher?

For their responses to this question, many candidates were able to gain full marks. Many candidates were also able to give partial responses, which stated that teaching was difficult or that he didn't think he had the patience. Many candidates stated this information as if this was Victor's actual experience, for example, 'Victor thinks it is difficult and he doesn't have enough patience'.

Part (e) — What tasks did Victor not find attractive about the profession?

This question was reasonably handled, with most candidates being able to gain at least two out of the three allotted marks. Most candidates who didn't score full marks did not seem to understand the expression *copies à corriger* and instead interpreted it to mean that Victor had to make copies of work for his students. Also of note was that some candidates interpreted *enfants* as infants.

Part (f) — What did Victor study at university?

The majority of candidates responded fully and correctly to this question. A few either only stated one language, stated none by responding that Victor studied modern languages or missed the mark entirely by stating that he studied foreign affairs or business subjects.

Part (g) — In what areas did Victor seek employment?

Many candidates misinterpreted the information required for the response of this question. Several did not get foreign affairs, interpreting the expression as 'stranger affairs' or 'working with strangers'. Some stated incorrectly that 'he sought employment with international/foreign businesses'. More problematic was the interpretation of *lignes aériennes*. Many candidates did not know the meaning of this and offered several interpretations including call centers and language centers. For this response, some offerings were quite interesting. One candidate even stated that '[Victor] is hoping to have affairs with strangers.'

Part (h) — How did Victor end up in the teaching profession?

Many candidates were able to respond correctly by stating that a friend invited him to teach at his school. However, some missed the mark by stating that Victor ended up teaching because he wasn't successful at university.

Part (i) — What did Victor's students call him and why?

Many candidates were able to give a correct response for this question. Mr Good/Sir Good/Good Teacher/Sir the Good/ were accepted. The Best Teacher/Sir Excellent were not accepted. Most were able to give the reason that he was kind/gentle/nice.

Part (j) — What lesson do you think Victor learnt from his teaching experience?

This question usually poses difficulty for most candidates to score full marks. Some were unable to score any marks because they did not state what lesson he learnt, instead offering commentary on what qualities he developed. A good response was *I think Victor learned that he should not judge a profession so quickly without having experienced it, because you might end up being good at it and enjoying it.*

Recommendations

- 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.
- Teachers must encourage students to read thoroughly and pay close attention to the marks allotted to each question. Students should also be given adequate practice in higher order questions, forming opinions and supporting their conclusions. The importance of detail must also be emphasized.
- Candidates are reminded that they should draw inference from the comprehension passage alone and beware of offering answers based on their personal experiences.
- Candidates must note the marks allotted to a question and use this as a guide to the number of necessary elements required for their response.
- Responses should be read over to ensure that they make sense in English and that no words are missing as this can distort the meaning of the answer.
- Candidates are encouraged to respond concisely in order to avoid ambiguity in their responses.
- Candidates must note that reproducing French words from the passage will not gain marks.

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”.

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 cumpliaños 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 **orgulloso** and **contento**, 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. Dipthongs 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 próximosemana***, **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.

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 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 **a 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 ***proyecto, *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 ***proyecto**.

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**.

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 major 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**.

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect item.

- 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 / veinte**
- Use of double s especially in ***professor/a necessities**
- 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.

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.

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, ***professora** 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 basura 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. Anglisized vocabulary items such as ***cummunidad**
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 huracán, 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**s” would be rendered as “**camina**s” and the stress of “**adema**s” 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 siento**, ***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**
- i i . ***Puedo used for sé** (I can - I know how to)
- i i i . ***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 ‘**ursos**’ 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.

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**

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 apocope *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 (*apocope*) 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 los 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 haberlas 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 “*así*”

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 vuelto</i>	–	flight
<i>Nosotros viaje</i>	–	our trip
<i>Allí</i>	–	their (instead of su)
<i>Rato en vacaciones</i>	–	while on vacation

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>piloto</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 (*flamenso*)
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 – ferías
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.

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 ítem es mío/la bolsa es mía*”.

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.

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

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. occasion, excursion). 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 - *comienzá**
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 nuoveas'.

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

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 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 hacio un pastel.* Mis padres me dicieron*, mis amigos venieron.* Mi mama 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 digame**
*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

Responses to Situations

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>c<u>o</u>ltural*</i>
<i>multicolores</i>	<i>m-<u>o</u>lticolores*</i>
<i>procede</i>	<i>proc<u>i</u>de*</i>
<i>celebra</i>	<i>cel<u>i</u>bra*</i>

- Some cognates were completely mispronounced, for example, *mayo*, *ingredientes*, *colonización*

These were anglicized.

- Diphthongs were not properly pronounced

<i>Dieciocho</i>	<i>dic<u>i</u>o<u>i</u>cho</i>
<i>Bautizo</i>	<i>bautiz<u>o</u>* </i>
<i>Riquezas</i>	often pronounced with an English Z sound.
<i>Territorio</i>	pronounced <i>ter<u>i</u>torio</i>

- Words with accents were stressed on the wrong syllables

<i>*práctica</i> was rendered as <i>pract<u>i</u>ca</i>	
<i>*tomándola</i> was rendered as <i>tomand<u>o</u>la</i>	
<i>*foàaneos</i> was rendered as <i>foran<u>e</u>os</i>	
<i>*significa</i>	<i>sign<u>i</u>fica</i>
<i>*encontró</i>	<i>en<u>c</u>ontro</i>

- Vowel sounds were mispronounced. For example, *europeos* 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?**

* An asterisk represents an incorrect item

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 escíbeme 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 encuenden 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?**

- 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...
permítame 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 diversión,* 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?

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*'

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 2009

SPANISH

SPANISH
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*, * *feliz*, **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)*

Bueno 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 mayores 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 mi*” instead of “*para mi*” 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*, *

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

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 darme 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.

* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

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 – anecdote

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*
quija 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 mama*, 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*.

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.

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

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: *carbohidratos* 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 ‘*satisfacen*’.
- 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.

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*, *gastar*, *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.)

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

**SPANISH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY**

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*, **interesante*, **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 *algun*, 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.

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.*

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.

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*, **attencion* 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*

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 (*intelligente, 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) *quise 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.)

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*
regresar 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*.

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.

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.

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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 **adventaje* 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 puedas*.

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*.

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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*

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

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...*

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.**)

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

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 profesor*, 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 (*mathematicas*, *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

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

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 *juguetero*. 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*
 - *alquilar/ 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 prefriere 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*

Corso 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 *interesante/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 ...*

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

- 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

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*

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

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)*
- *Inteligente (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*

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

- *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*
- *concursantes*
- *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.

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

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*, *ejercios*, *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.

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

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.

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 *tortuguistas* 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.

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, senor, senorita*

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**

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*.

- 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

- i. who gave you the gift and for what occasion
- ii. a description of the gift
- iii. why you do not like the gift and what you plan to do with it
- iv. 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 gift*; 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 *anticuado*).
- 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*
oportunidad 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**

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/fotografias/ 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 fabor*', '*por favour*', '*pro favor*'
- Other spelling errors were *querio* for *quiero*, *auydar*, *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/nesequito* 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 *graduaccion* 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 / huracan / storma / storne / 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:
“Seleccioné” 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/primero/uno*
- Poor/lack of use of *saber* to express the ability to do something ('*Puedes bailar*' instead of '*Sabes 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 dieciséis 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 empiézé a cantar'*/'*El introdució me...'*/'*Yo fuí...'*/'*Yo tuvé/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.brighthouseeducation.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 visitor*
- *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 jovenes/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 espanol*)
- 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*, *económicamente* 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.

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 2015

**SPANISH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2015 May/June examination had 13 386 candidate entries compared with 13 311 in 2014. There was an improvement in overall candidate performance with 68 per cent achieving acceptable grades (I–III) compared with 67 per cent in 2014. Candidates' performance showed marginal improvements for Paper 01 and Paper 02 in 2015 over 2014, while performance on Paper 03 was similar to 2014.

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.

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.

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 2015 was marginally better than 2014.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section I (Question 1) – Directed Situations

This question required that candidates read carefully the directions regarding each of ten situations described in English and then provide appropriate written responses in Spanish to each situation. Candidates' knowledge of Spanish vocabulary, inclusive of idiomatic expressions and Spanish grammar rules and structure were key elements used to assess their competencies in tackling this question. Marks were awarded if the response included all details in the situation and adequately communicated meaning. Responses were categorized as appropriate or partially appropriate and were awarded marks accordingly, with penalties for errors in quality of language. Inappropriate responses were awarded no mark even if the language of expression was perfect.

Candidates' Performance

Generally candidates performed reasonably well on this question, with some exceptions on both ends of the spectrum. Most candidates understood/recognized the function which needed to be addressed and attempted to provide an appropriate response.

Candidates' Strengths

Based on the quality of responses, it seemed that some candidates were well prepared. These candidates apparently followed through in the examination honing the lessons learnt and applying them accordingly to each situation. They obviously understood the requirements of the question and showed great ingenuity in answering questions that called for more than a straightforward answer. The range of vocabulary used was impressive. Many candidates followed the rubric and answered in one complete sentence.

Candidates' Weaknesses

There were many candidates who would have earned better scores if they had not made careless errors especially with regard to spelling. There was blatant disregard for the use of accents and the tilde, and candidates were penalized where the absence or inclusion of these affected the meaning for the context (such as *que/qué*, *cual/cuál*, *mi/mí*, *llegaras/llegarás*, *como/cómo*, *tu/tú*). Other spelling errors include 'professor' for *profesor*, 'barrato' for *barato*, 'compleanos' for *cumpleaños*.

Word order was another area of weakness for some candidates and also the writing of the date and time in Spanish. Some candidates interchangeably used *tu* and *tú* to mean 'you' (*compraré tu un regalo*).

Other areas of concern shown in responding to this question were: sequence of tenses, distinguishing between the use of *por* and *para*, *ser/estar*, *lo siento/me siento/siento*, *salir a/salir para*, *qué/cuál*.

The use of the subjunctive was often overlooked. Some candidates were also not cognizant of the familiar and polite forms of address, using *usted* and *tú* inappropriately.

An area of challenge for many candidates was in converting what would be an appropriate answer in English to Spanish. In the process general grammar and vocabulary errors were noted. Some examples include:

A el instead of *al*

Lo siento olvido (It is worth noting that too many candidates used this phrase to mean 'I am sorry' and therefore continued with whatever regret they had. Using the phrase '*lo siento*' proved challenging for many candidates.)

Further to the errors above, there were candidates who misinterpreted what they were expected to do with the information in the situation described, and therefore neglected to include all the elements required for a full response.

Comments on Individual Situations

Situation (a)

You wish to request a favour from your teacher. Write a note making the request. (Function: Requesting)

Suggested Response: *Profesora, ¿puede ayudarme con el proyectopor favor?*

Most candidates attempted to give an appropriate response but did not address the favour needed from the teacher. One of the most frequently occurring errors was the use of the familiar *puedes* instead of the polite *puede*. Some candidates who used *puede* were too general with *puede ayudarme* only. The more able candidates were able to seamlessly merge both elements of the situation.

Situation (b)

Write a note inviting a friend to an activity, stating the date on which it will be held. (Function: Inviting)

Suggested Response: *Te invite a la fiesta de mis padres, el 9 de abril.*

Many candidates did not render a complete response to the item. They attempted to include the venue, which was not necessary, and did this incorrectly — *a mi casa* instead of *en mi casa*. There was also great difficulty expressing the date: many candidates had *en* before the date or before the day of the week. It was evident that candidates had a challenge formulating dates. Some candidates who chose to include the time in their response expressed it with *en la noche* instead of *de la noche*. Some errors were made in the placement of *te* which was sometimes incorrectly substituted with *tu*.

Situation (c)

You have missed your friend's party. Write the note of apology you send, stating how you will make up for this. (Function: Apologizing)

Suggested Response: *Lo siento Esteban, te compraré un regalo.*

Invariably, candidates did not do as well as was expected on this item: merging the apology with a supporting clause posed problems for some candidates. They did not handle *siento* correctly, writing *lo siento por no venir/lo siento por no vengo*. Some candidates who attempted to use *venir* in the preterite tense did so incorrectly, using *veni*.

The object pronoun was not always properly used in the responses given. Instead of the correct *Te compraré un regalo*, many candidates wrote *compraré tu un regalo*.

The stronger candidates were able to use the expression *Lamento no venir, iremos al cine el sábado*.

Situation (d)

You have lost an item. Write the note you put on the school's 'Lost and Found' board informing of your loss with a description of the item. (Function: Describing)

Suggested Response: *Perdí un bolígrafo de oro.*

Many candidates did not specifically relate to the first part of the situation ('You have lost an item'), but were able to describe the item, some with errors of noun and adjective agreement. Another common error in this item was that candidates often confused the verbs *perder* and *pedir*, and so, some wrote *Pedí un libro azul*. Candidates also used the verb *volver* and *regresar* to mean to return an item. Another error in vocabulary was the use of *buscar* instead of *encontrar*, for example, *Perdí un cuaderno azul, si tú lo buscas por favor llamame*.

Some candidates did not indicate that they lost an item but made a general comment such as *no tengo mi libro*.

Situation (e)

Alejandro is seeking your opinion on a particular issue. Write the e-mail you receive from him. (Function: Seeking opinion)

Suggested Response: *¿Qué piensas de las reglas de usar celulares en clase?*

This was probably the item which posed the greatest challenge for many candidates. Many candidates did not address the issue and misinterpreted the function, giving their opinion on an issue or asking for help, or asking for choices/preferences between two items. A common error was the faulty structure *Qué es tu opinion en* instead of *Cuál es tu opinion de*.

It was clear that many candidates were lacking in the vocabulary needed for this situation.

Situation (f)

You have to meet your cousin. Write the e-mail you send suggesting the time that the two of you can meet. (Function: Suggesting)

Suggested Response: *¿Podemos reunirnos a las tres de la tarde?*

Many candidates were not familiar with the appropriate verb to express 'to meet' in this context. Some used *encontrar* instead of the reflexive *encontrarse*, and did not conjugate it well, forgetting that it is a stem changing verb in the present tense. A large percentage of candidates tended to use *son las* instead of *a las* to express 'time at which'.

Situation (g)

Your friend has invited you to lunch at a particular restaurant. Write the e-mail you send to your friend, expressing your preference with a reason. (Function: Expressing preference)

Suggested Response: *Prefiero el restaurante “Spinners” porque la comida allí es muy sabrosa.*

This item was well handled by most candidates. Some difficulties with noun/adjective concord, use of demonstrative pronouns and the correct spelling of *restaurante* were apparent.

Many candidates went into detailed explanations about why they were not able to go, and tried to give too many details about the restaurant, causing them to make a greater number of errors.

Situation (h)

Write the card you send to your Aunt Rita expressing gratitude and mentioning something she did for you. (Function: Expressing gratitude)

Suggested Response: *Muchas gracias por enviarme los libros que necesito.*

Many candidates were able to respond to this item providing all the information required. The proper expression of gratitude proved problematic, with candidates using *por* instead of *para* to express what they were thankful for. Further, candidates tended to forget the use of the infinitive after the preposition (*gracias para comprando me un reloj*). Surprisingly, there were difficulties with the spelling of *gracias*.

The stronger candidates were able to use the phrase *Te agradezco comprarme la bolsa*.

Situation (i)

Your sister overseas is unable to visit for the Christmas vacation as planned. Write the e-mail your mother sends to her expressing how she feels and suggesting an alternative arrangement. (Function: Expressing feelings)

Suggested Response: *Estoy triste, pero puedes venir este verano.*

Many candidates had problems responding to this item with the majority of them being unable to appropriately respond to how the mother felt or the alternate arrangements, and in some cases both. They misinterpreted who was supposed to be the author of the letter. A very common error was the use of the verb *ser* with *triste*. There were difficulties with regard to the use of the subjunctive after expressions of emotion.

Faulty constructions such as *soy lo siento, lo siento* instead of *siento que* appeared frequently.

Situation (j)

A member of your sports club has broken one of the rules. Write the note that the coach leaves for him or her warning of the consequences of the offence. (Function: Warning)

Suggestion Response: *Si no llegas a tiempo para practicar, no jugarás en el partido.*

Many candidates had great difficulty responding to this item, and most of the responses did not contain all the information required. Most responses addressed the consequences only, and it became very apparent that candidates had issues expressing warning. The use of the correct tense to express the action done in the past was not utilized.

Further Comments and Recommendations

The situations required vocabulary and grammatical structures well within the candidates' abilities. Candidates should observe that they are required to provide their responses in one sentence only, so providing extended responses are not encouraged, as candidates run the risk of losing more marks by making errors in their lengthy responses. Keeping answers to the point and brief is more advisable. The focus should be on addressing all the elements required in a fully appropriate response. Candidates should therefore be trained to keep sentences uncomplicated while using idioms correctly.

Additionally, candidates must pay attention to correct spelling as marks can be lost through careless omissions of accents. Candidates should be encouraged to learn and use common expressions which can satisfy the requirements of a range of situations likely to be presented. Simple verb structures such as *ir a + infinitive*, *poder + infinitive*, *tener que + infinitive* are very useful for almost all types of situations.

It is important that candidates read the question carefully, be specific to the information required and recognize the function which is required. In guiding students' writing, teachers should emphasize the need for students to underline the key words and phrases in the situation so that they do not omit important information when constructing the responses.

Section II (Question 2/Question 3) – Letter/Composition

Candidates were required to write either a letter or a composition using appropriate language structures, tenses, idioms and vocabulary, with a limit of 130–150 words. They were evaluated on their use of language (grammar, vocabulary and idiom) as well as on their coherence and clarity of expression.

Further Comments/Demands of the Questions

This year there was a greater effort on the part of the candidates to respond to the topics given. The topics were within the candidates' capability and the clearly outlined cues were not misinterpreted. The letter was the more popular choice. There were fewer responses which were totally in English but emphasis on accuracy of grammar still needs to be addressed.

Letter

You participated in an annual competition. Write a letter to your Mexican friend about the experience. Be sure to include

- (i) What kind of competition you entered
- (ii) How participants normally prepare for this competition
- (iii) What you learnt from the experience
- (iv) What competitions you plan to enter next year and why.

Candidates' Strengths

Candidates generally understood what was expected of them. They adhered to the cues and rendered the format correctly. The opening and closing lines contained good grammatical structures: *Gracias por tú última carta que me ha dado mucha alegría ... hace dos años que no nos vemos*. Many wrote the date correctly: *22 de mayo de 2015*. The more competent candidates used appropriate vocabulary, grammatical structures and idioms. The use of the subjunctive was seen: *Espero que tú y tu familia estén bien ...*

There was an attempt even on the part of weaker candidates to use the appropriate tenses. Some candidates varied their vocabulary with the word competition *el concurso*, *la competencia* and *la competición*.

Other examples of good structures are:

*lo bueno que
no importa que
espero poder tener
los concursantes*

Candidates' Weaknesses

Vocabulary Deficiency

*Contesto/contesta for competición
Jugar/juegue for juego or partido
Tocar for tomar
Precio for premio
Bien for bueno
Muy for mucho
Ustedes for ellos*

Poor Gender Agreement

*Querido amiga
El competición
El música*

Incorrect Use of Ordinal Numbers

Primero premio

Misuse of the Definite Article

Había mil las personas

Omission of Accents

*Habia
Competicion
Como estan tu y tu familia
Mas
Tambien
Futbol*

Misspelt Words

*Apprendido
Competacion
Quierda
Volleyball
Basebol*

Clumsy Expressions

Tenía mucha divertida

Ser vs Estar

*Estaba una competición
¿Cómo es tu familia?
Soy escribiendo*

Inappropriate Use of the Gerund

Mi bailando clase
Mi clase de nadando
El bailando

Incorrect Tense Format

Aprendé
Comprendé
Aprendaba
Yo juegué

Nouns Used as Adjectives

El baile competición

Subject and Verb Agreement

Los participantes preparamos
La gente preparan
Yo tuvo
Mi familia y yo practico

Omission or Incorrect Placement of Preposition

Entré una competición
Aprendí bailar bien
La competición que participé en

Incorrect Placement of Pronouns

La experiencia permitiome

There was a lack of use of idiomatic expressions. Some candidates mentioned all the cues but failed to develop them.

Composition

Your school has just celebrated an annual event. Write a composition for your Spanish class in which you include

- i. details of the event (type, date and location)
- ii. how this year's celebration differed from those of previous years
- iii. the crowd's reaction to the appearance of a surprise guest
- iv. suggestions for improvements in future celebrations.

Candidates' Strengths

Candidates were able to write about any event of their choice. Candidates managed to include all the points. Those who chose this question were able to find more vocabulary to express themselves.

The more proficient candidates used very good language:

El aniversario de mi escuela fue el lunes de la semana pasada
Comenzó en el auditorio de mi escuela

The use of idiomatic expressions helped to embellish the compositions:

En un abrir y cerrar de los ojos, Enrique Iglesias apareció
Nos divertimos a más no poder

The preterite tense was often rendered correctly:

Jennifer López cantó sus canciones populares

La celebración tuvo lugar en mi escuela

Some candidates remembered to use the subjunctive:

Yo sugiero que compremos ...

Candidates' Weaknesses

Vocabulary Deficiency

Sorprendido for *sorpresa*

Huesped for *invitado*

Emocionado for *emocionante*

Mucho for *muy*

Bien for *bueno*

Beberes for *bebidas*

Tomar lugar for *tener lugar*

Atender for *asistir*

Guesto for *invitado*

Cantadores for *cantantes*

Clumsy Expressions

Tuvimos un buen tiempo

Tuvieron mucho divertido

El año ayer

El año cerca

El año próxima

Todos el año

Cada el año

Subject and Verb Agreement

Mi familia y yo bailé

La gente bailaron y cantaron

Agreement of Possessive Adjectives

Mi amigas y yo

Nuestro escuela

Agreement of Adjectives

Estábamos contento

Los estudiantes estaban alegre

Omission of Accents

Mas

Tambien

Incorrect Rendition of the Negative

Hay no música

No muchas personas vinieron

Omission of *a*

Invitamos Rihanna

Vi mos Celine Dion

Comenzaron gritar y cantar

Use of *en* in the Date

La celebración fue en el 12 de mayo

Use of *a* to Indicate Place

La celebración fue a la escuela

Ser vs Estar

La fiesta estuvo el viernes

Nosotros fuimos bailando

Incorrect Rendering of the Possessive

Ella amiga

Mi escuela celebración

Recommendations

The following is recommended

- More practice is needed with written exercises from very early, emphasizing accurate grammar, appropriate vocabulary as well as correct spelling and punctuation.
- Native speakers or speakers who are proficient orally in the language must be given more practice in producing correct written language especially with spelling and accents.
- Build vocabulary with word games — cognates and ‘*falsos amigos*’
- Work with word families. For example: teachers can give a noun and have students find the other related parts of speech — verbs and adjectives.
- Encourage students to spend more time on learning vocabulary.
- Focus on guiding students in the development of their points.
- Encourage students to critique their own work with a view to eliminating errors.
- Examples of excellent scripts should be made available to students.
- Continue to use technology effectively to promote learning. Teachers can create websites and place exercises, games etc. for practice.
- Encourage other teachers to read the reports on the CSEC examinations.

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 contextual dialogue were in keeping with the information outlined in the syllabus and therefore within the scope of candidates’ ability.

Contextual Announcement

Use the following information to write an announcement of about 80–100 words in Spanish.

Your Spanish class is hosting an activity in honour of students who are visiting from a Spanish-speaking country. Write an announcement to be placed on the school’s notice board to inform the remainder of the school’s population of the activity.

Responses to ALL of the cues listed below MUST be included in the announcement.

- (i) The activity being hosted
- (ii) Venue, date and time of the activity
- (iii) Details on the visiting students
- (iv) How the activity will benefit everyone
- (v) A request for help/support to make the activity a success

Candidates' Strengths

Most candidates observed the rubric of the question and attempted to address all of the cues. There was a fairly good manifestation of sound grammatical competence and good vocabulary. Examples of good usage of language included:

- *Dar la bienvenida*
- *Se informa a todos que la clase de español estará llevando ...*
- *Estar ubicada en ...*

Some of the better candidates used a wide range of tenses including the subjunctive. For example:

- *Es importante que se apoyen esta actividad*
- *Vengan para que sea un éxito*
- *Los estudiantes quieren que ustedes asistan a la fiesta*

Evidence of knowledge of Hispanic culture was shown when students incorporated Spanish-speaking countries and Hispanic music and dance into their responses.

Candidates' Weaknesses

Some candidates who attempted this question did not show a solid command of grammar and knowledge of relevant vocabulary and structures. Examples of errors included:

- *'Estará' for habrá*
- *Son van a ayudar*
- *La visitando estudiantes*

Errors in Grammar:

- Omission of the preposition *a* after *ayudar*
- Incorrect use of *por* and *para*
- Incorrect positioning of adjectives

Errors in Vocabulary:

- *'El tiempo' for la hora*
- *'El tripo' for el viaje*

There were few instances where candidates completely disregarded the instructions or misinterpreted the cues. Either they wrote their responses in English or the responses that were given in Spanish did not address any of the cues. There were instances where the candidate just advertised an activity that the school was hosting and as such, the information given in cues (iii), (iv) and (v) were not relevant to the question.

Also, spelling presented a challenge for some candidates. Evidence of this was seen in the spelling of numbers, months — *'estudiantes' for estudiantes*, *'escula' for escuela*, *'alludar' for ayudar* and *'acer' for hacer*.

Contextual Dialogue

Use 80–100 words in the INSERT provided to complete the dialogue between you and the student, Amelia, who is assigned to you, by giving your responses.

Your class has travelled to a Spanish-speaking country on an annual educational trip and the host school has organized a ‘meet and greet’ activity.

Responses to ALL of the cues listed below MUST be included in the dialogue.

- (i) Greetings and introductions
- (ii) Purpose of the visit to the country
- (iii) How you and your classmates worked to raise the funds to make the trip possible
- (iv) Information about your school
- (v) What you and your classmates will do to ensure that the objective of the trip is met

Candidates’ Strengths

Most of the candidates observed the rubric and made a valiant attempt to address all of the cues and some used their cultural knowledge and experiences to enhance their responses. Some examples of good usage of language include:

- *Es un viaje escolar*
- *Para reunimos con personas hispánicas*
- *Tener que/tener ganas de + infinitive*
- *Es el ambiente ideal para aprender ...*
- *Hacer senderismo*
- *Espero que nos disfrutemos*
- *Es costoso pero vale la pena*
- *¡Sin duda! España es como una joya: su belleza no puede ser olvidada.*

Candidates’ Weaknesses

For the first cue, some candidates were confused as to how to respond to Amelia because they interchanged the informal (*tú*) and formal (*su*) modes of address. Generally, candidates showed difficulty with cue number (iii), *How you and your classmates worked to raise funds to make the trip possible*. Most of the candidates failed to realize that the speaker represented his/her class and therefore, the first person plural form of the verb should have been used. The other cue that was not handled well was cue number (v), *What you and your classmates will do to ensure that the objective of the trip is met*. Again, candidates did not use the first person plural to effectively communicate their ideas.

Some difficulty was also highlighted where candidates were unable to manipulate the tenses required, used poor grammatical structures and misused vocabulary items.

Examples of errors were:

- ‘Me llama es ...’ for *Me llamo ...* or *Mi nombre es ...*
- Verbs — nonconjugation of verbs: ‘*nosotros visitar*’; using ‘*tener*’ instead of *haber* to form the perfect tense — ‘*tenemos vendido*’
- Poor agreement of nouns and adjectives — ‘*bueno/excelente profesores*’
- Use of ‘en’ with days and dates — ‘*en lunes*’ and ‘*en el 23 de mayo*’
- Incorrect use of ‘*ser*’ and ‘*estar*’ and ‘*por*’ and ‘*para*’
- Poor formation of the preterite tense
- The use of ‘*tu*’ to express the English ‘to’
- Scant regard for accents
- Spelling — candidates substituted ‘b’ for v, ‘s’ for c, s and z and dropped the h at the beginning of a word.

- Direct/literal translations to communicate responses — ‘*Hay iendo ser*’/‘*Es yendo ser*’, ‘*yo planeo a tienda*’, ‘*en Costa Rica culturía*’

Vocabulary was also an area of concern because it distorted candidates’ ability to express themselves accurately. Some obvious errors were:

- ‘*Salé de tortas*’ for *cake sale*
- ‘*Funraso*’ for *fundraising*
- ‘*Expensivo*’ for *caro*
- ‘*Llegamos*’ for *queremos*
- Confusion of ‘*hora*’, ‘*vez*’ and ‘*tiempo*’ — ‘*dos tiempos*’, ‘*pasar buen hora*’

Recommendations

Candidates need to read instructions and ensure that they read the questions properly and include all of the relevant details.

Students need to be given more practice in the preparation and writing of the contextual announcement and dialogues as well as oral practice, reflecting themes and format. Also, the reading of dialogues and advertisements from texts, newspapers and magazines should be encouraged.

Candidates need to be encouraged to avoid writing in English and then translating, when writing in and out of the classroom.

Candidates need to be exposed to and learn idioms, synonyms and antonyms in the target language in order to incorporate these in their writing.

Section IV (Question 6) – Reading Comprehension

This question tested a 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. The level of vocabulary was such that candidates should have been able to understand the passage and answer the questions in English.

Most candidates showed that they had the necessary vocabulary skills in order to achieve full comprehension of the passage. As the general context of the passage proved easily comprehensible for the majority of candidates, this enabled them to achieve full marks. However, for the weaker candidates, lack of knowledge of certain key vocabulary items in the passage, proved to be challenging. While over the last two years we have seen a decrease in the number of candidates who ignored the instructions to answer in English, this year there was regression with too many candidates delivering their responses in Spanish and thus being penalized for doing so.

Candidates’ Strengths

Questions (a), (b), (c) and (d) proved to be relatively easy to answer for most candidates.

There has been some improvement generally in sentence construction and spelling. Most of the candidates are to be complimented for adhering to the instructions and for making use of the extra spaces in the booklet for corrections to answers already written. Quite a number of candidates were able to employ contextual guessing accurately and thus were able to link answers to questions and extract the appropriate information required.

Candidates’ Weaknesses

Questions (e) to (j) were challenging on various levels for candidates and it was more a matter of vocabulary.

There were candidates who lacked knowledge of certain items of vocabulary and this made it difficult for them to achieve full marks. Many of the weaker candidates made no attempt to establish a link between the passage and the questions and so they created brand new storylines.

For questions (i) and (j) which were valued at three marks, too many candidates offered only one or two points thereby denying themselves the full marks.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question (a)

Describe Javier's routine before he leaves home.

Suggested response: He shaves and has breakfast before leaving home.

Incorrect response: He wakes up, gets ready and goes to buy the newspaper.

There were two issues here that need to be noted. The question asked what Javier did before he left the house, so that buying the newspaper was not part of the answer. The other issue was candidates' forgetting/not knowing the meaning of 'afeitarse'.

Question (b)

Why does Javier buy the newspaper?

Suggested response: He buys the newspaper to look for work.

Incorrect response: He buys the newspaper to take to work.

Most candidates did not have a problem with this question. Those who did ignored 'buscar', saw the word 'trabajo' and just made a link between that word and the previous question and answer and thought he was taking the newspaper to work.

Question (c)

What was significant about March 15?

Suggested response: Javier had an interview for a post as an engineer.

Incorrect response: It was his graduation day.

The majority of candidates handled this one well. Those who thought that it was his graduation day indicated that 'entrevista' was a stumbling block for them.

Question (d)

Which suit did Javier wear on that day?

Suggested response: Javier wore his graduation suit.

Incorrect response: Javier wore his school suit.

There were only a few candidates who did not understand 'graduacion'.

Question (e)

Explain why Javier was concerned on his journey.

Suggested response: He was concerned because there was a lot of traffic and he was afraid of being late for his appointment.

Incorrect response: He was worried about getting the job as he had no experience.

This is the first question that presented major problems. Candidates who did not know the meaning of *embotellamiento* ignored that part of the response completely. The second part of the response revealed two weaknesses:

- Not knowing the meaning of *temía*
- Not understanding *cita* in the context

Question (f)

Why did the lady in the parking lot call out to Javier?

Suggested response: The lady in the parking lot had difficulty parking her car.

Incorrect response: She called out to Javier because he was not focusing on what he was doing and he was acting irresponsibly.

This question was not handled very well. A number of candidates thought Javier was having the problems perhaps linking it to the previous question. Some candidates did not specify what the difficulty was for the lady, others said she had trouble starting/moving her car, perhaps in an effort not to admit that *estacionar* was not known to them.

Question (g)

What was Javier's response to the lady?

Suggested response: He told her that if she did not know how to drive, she should not be in the parking lot.

Incorrect response: His response to the lady was 'yes, I am here'.

Where candidates answered incorrectly to the previous question, they followed through with incorrect responses here. There were, however, many candidates who understood Javier's disrespectful attitude to her.

Question (h)

What did Javier do immediately after he entered the building?

Suggested response: Javier took the elevator and went up to the third floor.

Incorrect response: He took the escalator and went to the secretary.

Weaknesses in responding to this question were two-fold. As in Question (a) where candidates did not read the question properly and ignored *before*, here they seemed not to see *immediately* in the question. Thus, some had Javier going directly to the secretary. Also, some candidates did not know the meaning of *ascensor*.

Question (i)

Describe Javier's behaviour when he entered the office.

Suggested response: He began to tremble, was nervous and felt like crying.

Incorrect response: He shook, got nervous and cried.

This was where many candidates lost out on full marks. They supplied only some of the items. Many candidates scored two only as they stated that Javier cried, not knowing the meaning of *con ganas de*.

Question (j)

Why did Javier behave that way?

Suggested response: Javier behaved that way because the interviewer was the same lady he had insulted in the parking lot.

Incorrect response: Javier behaved that way because he remembered what happened that morning.

A good many candidates were vague in their responses as indicated above. They needed to be specific in their answers.

Further Comments and Recommendations

To candidates:

- It is important that attention be paid to handwriting and the kind of pen that is used to write the examination.
- Avoid including Spanish in responses.
- Read to develop an active appreciation for sentence construction, widen knowledge base and stimulate imagination to the extent that all three of these elements will come together. As a result, your answers will be more easily understood.
- Try not to let unfamiliar words sidetrack you. Read the sentence/paragraph where they exist and try to place them in context.

To teachers:

Refer to the Internet and past reports for recommended websites. Also refer to <http://takelessons.com/blog/spanish-reading-comprehension> for help with improving Reading Comprehension.

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 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, providing very intuitive and interesting answers.

On the other side of the performance spectrum, many candidates performed weakly in this section. They showed very little command of grammar and vocabulary to handle the examination competently. While there was some attempt to produce a response which could be rewarded for appropriateness, the language was severely flawed with grammatical inaccuracies and poor vocabulary. Many candidates seemed stumped by the questions and struggled to put their ideas together in Spanish, which often led to a number of Anglicisms.

Many candidates opted not to provide a response and skipped 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, where a situation required candidates to ask a question, many candidates responded with a statement instead.

Most functions were not well known nor answered correctly.

Examples of functions badly used:

- Expressing sympathy: *lo siento*
- Suggesting: *Tú vas ...*
- Reassuring: *no problema*
- Promising: *promiso*
- Expressing disappointment: *es malo*
- Warning: *tú no vas*
- Reminding: *no recordas*

Examples of responses which highlight weaknesses in language (grammar and vocabulary) include:

- Inability to use imperatives. Examples:
 - *No jugar*
 - *Lavar los platos/sacar la basura*
- The use of the verb ‘*ser*’ to show location and temporary condition. Examples:
 - *Mi casa es en el campo*
 - *¿Adónde es la playa?*
- Incorrect subject–verb agreement. Example: *yo comes pizza*
- Incorrect noun–adjective agreement. Example: *mis zapatos blanco*
- Use of the conjugated verb after ‘*poder*’. Example: *¿puedo tengo?*
- Incorrect position of the object pronoun. Example: *puede me ayudar*
- Incorrect use of ‘*gustar*’. Examples:
 - *Yo gusto los zapatos*
 - *Me gusta las manzanas*
 - *Te gusto*
- Not applying the double negative rule. Example: *recibo nada*
- Misuse of subjunctive. Example: *recomiendo que tú ir*
- Incorrect use of *por* and *para*. Example: *gracias para la invitación*
- The use of ‘*muy*’ for *mucho*. Example: *hay muy trafico*
- No knowledge or very poor knowledge of the subjunctive after expressions like *sugiero que ...*, *es necesario que ...*. In cases where the subjunctive was needed, candidates used the present tense, the infinitive or some invented form of the verb. For example:
 - *Recomiendo que tú ir*
 - *Sugiero que Tú llama*
 - *Los sugiero que jugo*

Other Examples:

- Common misuse of sound vocabulary and general improper use of infinitives include the following:
 - ‘*Calza*’ for *talla*
 - Improper use of *tener*. For example, ‘*Tengo estudiar*’
 - Confusing *salir* and *dejar*. For example, *salí mi libro en casa*
 - Misuse of *haber* and *tener*. For example, *He un regalo*
 - *Yo promesa (prometo)*
 - ‘*Necesito*’ for *necesario*. For example, *Es necesito ir ...*

It should also be noted that some candidates responded to the situations by using reported speech instead of direct speech as required.

Recommendations

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. Students must be encouraged to use more complex vocabulary structures and idioms and move away from cliché expressions and words.

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 dismally weak. Excellent readers manifested 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 continued 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 producing very disjointed reading. They showed no knowledge of the importance of intonation and started and ended their reading passage in the same tone. Passages were not phrased correctly and so meaning was lost. Also, punctuation such as commas and full stops were not observed.

The following are some of the problems which candidates presented.

- Most candidates stumbled on words containing one or more of the following letter combinations:
 - *que: equilibradas*
 - *qui: cualquiera*
 - *gue: Guerra*
 - *qua: aguantarse*
 - *z: zona, confianza*
 - *h: hacer, hacer, humillada*
 - *ge: gente, agente, escogen*
 - *gi: digitales*
 - *gue: juguete*
 - *je: aprendizaje, paisaje*
 - *au: aula,*
 - *ch: chiringa, chile*
 - *ae: aeropuerto*
 - *ll: humillada, castillo*
 - *ee: posee*
 - *jue: juega*
 - *ie: nadie*
 - *u: Cancún, turístico, burlas*
- Words such as *violencia*, *fundamental* and *digitales* which resembled their English equivalents were pronounced with the English accent and intonation.
- Verbs conjugated in the third person were almost always mispronounced, with the stress on the last syllable. Noted errors were: *incluyen*, *sufren*, *sienten*. Here the stress was placed on the last syllable instead of the second to last.
- Candidates had problems with pronouncing words that contained three and four syllables. For example, *paradisíaco*, *alimenticio*, *indiscutible*, *paisajes*.

Problematic Words

Passage 1

Turísticos, restaurantes, paisajes, pesquero, huracanes, preocupaciones

Passage 2

Deformidades, propagación, humilladas, suicidarse, continuos, manejo, consejero, confianza

Passage 3

Paradisiaco, indiscutible, crecimiento, paisajes, complejos, reggaetón

Passage 4

Barillete, papagayo, volantín, chiringa, diversidad, variedad, extremadamente

Passage 5

Aprendizaje, complementado, enseñanza, tecnología

Passage 6

Alimenticios, autoestima, equilibrada, saludablemente

Recommendations

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. There is a great need for exposure to authentic listening activities from the target culture.

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 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 constant request by candidates to have the questions repeated was a clear indicator that there was limited comprehension of the questions asked. Many candidates did not focus on the structure of the question or the interrogative used in the question and, as a result, answered incorrectly.

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
- Very little knowledge of the subjunctive
- The verb *gustar*
- Confusing the words *más*, *muy*, *mucho*

- Using the word *en* with days of the week

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 candidates 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. For 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?* (not understanding 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 fairly well although some did not understand the words *se encuentra* in Question 1.

For opinion questions such as Question 3: *¿Qué piensas de tu clase de español?*, not many details were given. Stock words like *interesante bueno etc.* were used.

In Question 5 where they were asked for an explanation, many candidates could not give one.

Question 5 — *Explica cómo usas el internet para ayudarte en tus estudios* — got responses on how the candidate generally uses the internet, not focusing on the studies part.

Again for questions where more information was needed or where candidates were expected to be a bit adventurous in their responses, only the more able gave proper responses.

Sports and Recreation

Candidates encountered some difficulty with some of the questions in this section because they lacked the necessary vocabulary to answer fully. Very few candidates knew the word *papagayo*. Examiners had to often reword using the more common word *cometa*.

Question 7, *¿Piensas que es importante pasar tiempo con los amigos/la familia?* frequently got a *sí* or *no* answer. Candidates could not follow up with explaining why.

Only the more able candidates provided an acceptable response to Question 8: *Describe un día de fiesta con tus amigos/tu familia*. Many did not know what *was día de fiesta*.

Travel

This topic was the most challenging for candidates. Many did not understand the words *al extranjero* in Question 1 and *¿Con qué frecuencia?* in Question 2.

Questions 5 and 6 also posed problems mainly because the vocabulary to answer these was lacking. Also in Question 6, *ventajas* was not understood.

Only the more able candidates responded satisfactorily to Question 8: *Describe las vacaciones de tus sueños*.

Recommendations

Teachers must ensure that the communicative approach to language is adopted in the classroom. As far as possible, they 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. Students must be encouraged to pay attention to the details which are required in the questions and listen carefully to identify 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 2016

**SPANISH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

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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 and vocabulary as prescribed in the CSEC syllabus. The performance on this paper in January 2016 was significantly improved over the previous year

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.

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 candidates' grasp. Overall, candidates' performance ranged from satisfactory to good.

Candidates' Strengths/Weaknesses

Below are suggestions of correct answers as well as examples of candidates' strengths and weaknesses

Situation (a)

You are concerned about a problem at your school. Write the email you send to the principal suggesting a solution. (Function: Making a suggestion to a specific problem/situation)

Suggested response: *Por qué no solicitamos dinero para arreglar la cancha de futbol?*

Most candidates were able to score two points for this question. One of the most frequently occurring errors was the use of the familiar *puedes* instead of the formal *puede*. Some candidates who used *puede* did not remember that an infinitive should come next. There were many candidates who even used *puedo* instead of *puede*. Many stated the solution only or identified the problem only, thus producing responses which merited only a partial mark, for example, '*Necesita hablar con el ministerio de educación*'.

Many candidates made sensible recommendations but the production was marred by their misuse of the relevant structures, misspelling of *sugiero* and the absence of the subjunctive after *recomendar*.

Situation (b)

You saw the latest movie of your favourite actor and you were disappointed. Write the email you send to your best friend expressing how you felt about the movie and why. (Function: Expressing negative feeling with a reason)

Suggested response *No me gustó la película, era muy aburrida.*

In many of the responses provided, there was general failure to use the past tense. Also, the corresponding adjective did not agree, for example –...*era aburrido*.

Situation (c)

Your neighbour would like your help with a project but you are unable to assist. Write the note of apology you send him, suggesting who he can ask. (Function: Apologizing and Suggesting)

Suggested response: *Siento no poder ayudarte, pero pregúntale a María.*

Invariably, candidates did not do as well as was expected with questions requiring an apology: Students did not handle *siento* correctly, writing **Lo siento por no asistir tú* – or **Yo soy lo siento*. Most candidates did not know *ayudar* [*asistir* should NOT be used here] and many who did, spelt *ayudar* incorrectly. The majority of the candidates did not use the *personal a* after *pedir* or *preguntar*. In addition, as in situation (a), candidates incorrectly used *puedo* instead of *puedes*, suggesting the person to provide help was often ignored.

Situation (d)

There is a poetry competition at your school and you would like to participate. Write the email you send to the organizer expressing your interest in participating, giving a reason. (Function: Expressing desire/interest with a reason)

Suggested response: *Quisiera participar en el concurso de poesía, porque escribo poemas desde hace cuatro años.*

Most candidates had problems with the use of *gustar* and *participar*, and many used the English words *poetry* and *poem*.

Situation (e)

Your grandmother is very sick. Write the note that you send her, expressing how you feel about her and wishing her a speedy recovery. (Function: Expressing feelings and wishing a speedy recovery).

Suggested response: *Abuelita, te quiero mucho y deseo que te mejores pronto.*

Most candidates failed to secure a point for this situation. They incorrectly gave their feelings about the grandmother's illness instead of how they feel about the grandmother herself and had great difficulty handling the structure for expressing hope for a speedy recovery

Situation (f)

You have made plans to go somewhere with your friend this weekend but unfortunately you have to cancel. Write the message you send to your friend apologizing and giving a reason. (Function: Apologizing and giving reason).

Suggested response: *Lo siento mucho, pero este fin de semana yo tengo que visitar a mi abuela.*

As has been observed before, many candidates had difficulty expressing an apology. As in situation (c), *siento* was not used correctly. For example some candidates incorrectly wrote '*Soy muy lo siento*'

some even wrote *ciento* and others expressed '*lo siento*' as one word: '*losiento*'. Many candidates also failed to answer BOTH elements of the situation – apologizing and giving a reason.

They wrote only one, for example, '*Voy al cine*' or '*lo siento*'.

Situation (g)

You used your father's car without his permission. Write the note he leaves you warning you of the consequences of repeating this act. (Function: Warning and stating consequences)

Suggested response: *Si usas mi coche otra vez sin mi permiso, voy a castigarte.*

As with the other situations, most candidates only answered a part of the situation, focusing only on the consequence and neglecting to include the warning. Additionally, some candidates who included the warning incorrectly used *una* with *otra vez*, and others spelt *vez* as *ves* or used *tiempo* in place of *vez*.

Situation (h)

You are going abroad for the first time. Write the note your mother leaves in your passport reminding you of one important thing you need to do. (Function: Reminding someone about something)

Suggested response: *Recuerda llamar a tu tía Carmen cuando llegues a Cuba.*

Candidates generally wrote the one thing that was to be done but neglected to include any verb addressing the issue of reminding. Similarly, some candidates did not use the subjunctive after *cuando*.

Situation (i)

You won the first prize for a costume designed by your Art teacher. Write the note you send him thanking him and giving details about the prize. (Function: Expressing thanks and providing information)

Suggested response: *Muchas gracias por su ayuda, gané un boleto para ir a Venezuela durante las vacaciones de verano*

Most candidates were able to express thanks even though some incorrectly used '*para*' instead of *por* after *gracias*. Most candidates were also able to describe the prize but used '*prize*', and '*regalo*' rather than *premio*. Some candidates also incorrectly wrote '*costume*' and '*costumbre*' to represent *disfraz*.

Situation (j)

Your best friend's mother has died. Write the note you send with flowers expressing condolences and offering help. (Function: Expressing sympathy and offering help)

Suggested response: *Mi más sentido pésame, te ayudaré con el funeral.*

OR

Lo siento, si necesitas hablar con un amigo, puedes llamarme.

Many candidates did not know how to express condolence and many failed to give the two required elements of the situation - expressing sympathy and offering help. Some candidates even unnecessarily described the mother instead of offering help. Again, many candidates had the aforementioned issues with the use of '*siento*'.

Recommendations

It is recommended that teachers do directed situation exercises with their CSEC final year students at least once per week to give the required practice and to hone their students' skill at writing. Teachers can also employ the use of scaffolding exercises to help students to achieve their potential in the skill. Teachers may get realia by using clippings and pictures from online Hispanic newspapers as well as videos and other sources for use in classes. Teachers also need to expose their students to the relevant functions and vocabulary that are covered in the syllabus, to better equip them to be competent in this area. These items could be tested in games, quizzes, oral presentation and role plays. The use of technology in the teaching and learning process could also enhance students' acquisition of necessary vocabulary and situation writing skills.

Section II (Question 2/Question 3) – Letter/Composition

Candidates were required to produce a continuous piece of prose in Spanish in the form of either a letter or a composition using 130–50 words. Both choices were kept within the scope of the syllabus and covered everyday topics.

These questions required the use of a varied range of vocabulary, good use of relevant grammar, including various past tenses, and some knowledge of idiomatic expressions.

Letter

As in many previous examinations, the letter continued to be the more popular choice.

Although most candidates were able to keep to stay within the word count, too many fell short of the required length. Candidates must be aware that a response that is too short decreases their chances of obtaining a satisfactory mark.

Candidates' Strengths

- Most candidates were able to correctly express the date, salutation and ending. Many had good introductory and closing sentences, for example, *Espero que te encuentres bien, espero que estés bien, estoy escribiendo para decirte*.
- By and large, candidates included all cues and attempted to develop each one.
- The future tense was very often used correctly for example, *Nosotros compraremos boletos, nosotros iremos a Margarita*.
- Many candidates attempted to use the preterite tense where necessary. Unfortunately their efforts were thwarted by incorrect renditions such as *nosotros fuemos* (instead of *nosotros fuimos*) or *yo fue* (for *yo fui*) and *la profesora decio* (instead of *la profesora dijo*).

Candidates' Weaknesses

- Several candidates did not produce the opening date correctly, choosing to spell out the day and year for example, '*doce de mayo de dos mil dieciseis*' (instead of *12 de mayo de 2016*).
- There was a constant absence of agreement between noun and adjective for example '*Nosotros estábamos triste y decepcionado*' (instead of *nosotros estábamos tristes y decepcionados*).
- Widespread use of '*porque de*' where *a causa de* was required.
- Inability to render the passive voice correctly for example, '*el vuelo cancelaba or el vuelo estaba canceló*' instead of '*el vuelo fue cancelado*'. (the flight was cancelled).
- The verb *divertirse* continued to be ignored and not used when required. Most candidates rendered "to have a good time" as '*tener un buen tiempo*' or '*tener divertido*'.
- The appearance of '*ropas*' (clothes) instead of '*ropa*' was too frequent.

Composition

With regard to grammar this question produced strengths and weaknesses similar to those seen in the letter. In addition, the preposition *en* was very often omitted after the verb *entrar* for example *la profesora entra la clase*. Everyday words such as *profesora, clase* were rendered as *professora* and *classe*.

Recommendations

Candidates must ensure that they have an excellent grasp of the past tenses of verbs and especially the irregular verbs for example, *tener, decir, ir, hacer*.

The use of the Internet is encouraged as a good place to find resources for improvement in one's grammatical skills.

Candidates are encouraged to be as creative as possible in their use of a wide range of vocabulary and idiomatic expressions.

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.

The contextual announcement and contextual dialogue were in keeping with the information outlined in the syllabus and therefore within the scope of candidates' ability.

Candidates' Performance on the Contextual Announcement

Candidates' Strengths

Most candidates observed the rubric of the question and attempted to address all of the cues. Generally, there was a very fair manifestation of grammatical competence and fairly good vocabulary. Examples of such usage included:

- *Tengo el placer de anunciar.*
- *El artista americano/el cantante famoso que se llama...*
- *... premios/descuentos especiales.*

Some of the better candidates made a valiant attempt at the use of the future and subjunctive tenses.

For example:

- *Los primeros cincuenta personas recibirán.*
- *Espero que todo el mundo venga ...*

Candidates' Weaknesses

Some candidates who attempted this question failed to show a solid command of grammar and knowledge of relevant vocabulary and structures. Examples of errors included:

- *El concierto es ir tener lugar*
- *La concerta emepece a son las seis*
- *Los bolletos cuesta/costan...*

Errors in Grammar

- Incorrect positioning of adjectives
- Incorrect use of *por* and *para*
- Use of *ser* in the present continuous – '*Beyonce es viniendo.*'
- Rendering the date – *en el 8 de julio*
- Use of *a* instead of *en* to indicate location of event

Errors in Vocabulary

- '*Libres*' for *gratis*
- '*Tequito*'/'*tocandos*' for tickets
- '*Tiempo*' for *hora*
- '*Refreshmente*'/'*refrescados*' for *refrescos*
- '*Dinero*' for *dolares*
- '*Omes*'/'*bebes*' for *comida/bebidas* respectively
- '*Por sale/liquidación*' for '*en venta*'

There were a few instances where parts of or all of responses were written in English. Some candidates' work highlighted some challenges with spelling. Evidence of this was seen in the spelling of numbers, months and some vocabulary items.

Contextual Announcement

Candidates' Strengths

Most candidates observed the rubric and made a valiant attempt to address all of the cues. Some examples of good usage of language include:

- *Me siento impotente ...*
- *Estoy harto ...*
- *Mi problema principal ...*

Candidates' Weaknesses

Some candidates did not understand the statement made by the mother and so the response for cue (iii) was often inappropriate. Candidates also showed difficulty with cues (iv) and (v), for which responses were either poorly handled or absent; while others simply repeated some of the statements made by the mother for their responses.

Candidates also had difficulty manipulating tenses required, used poor grammatical structures and misused vocabulary items.

Examples of errors were:

- 'Quero me ayudarte...' for 'Quiero que me ayudes...'
- Poor formation of tenses – 'Yo no fumar'/'No estoy fumado'
- Incorrect use of 'ser' and 'estar' and 'por' and 'para'
- Scant regard for accents

Recommendations

Candidates need to read instructions carefully. Further, they must ensure that they read the questions properly and include all of the relevant details.

Candidates need to be given more practice in the preparation and writing of the contextual announcement and dialogues as well as oral practice, reflecting themes and format. Also, the reading of dialogues and advertisements from texts, newspapers and magazines should be encouraged.

Candidates need to be encouraged to avoid writing in English and then translating, when writing in and out of the classroom.

Candidates need to be exposed to and learn idioms, synonyms and antonyms in the target language, to incorporate in their writing.

Section IV (Question 6) – Reading Comprehension

This question tested candidates' ability to carefully read a passage written in Spanish and then demonstrate their comprehension skills by answering in English, questions written in English based on the same passage

The question was of reasonable length and contained vocabulary and grammar suited for candidates who have been adequately prepared for the CSEC level of Spanish over at least a three-year period. There was no word or structure that should have presented difficulty to candidates and prevented them from interpreting the essence of the passage, so they should have been able to give a satisfactory response to each item. Candidates were also required to show mastery of higher order comprehension skills. However, there were candidates who found these aspects challenging.

From the scripts marked, it was noted that the majority of candidates adhered to the rubrics of the question; only one candidate did not and answered totally in Spanish. Most candidates attempted to

write in English sentences. Overall, performance was satisfactory. The majority of candidates understood the passage and many were able to express themselves accurately. On the other hand, some candidates lacked the ability to express themselves effectively, due to poor vocabulary, grammatical structures and spelling. A few candidates demonstrated very little comprehension of the passage based on the fact that some of their answers bore no resemblance to the content. Only a few candidates did not give any response at all.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question (a)

Where in Puerto Rico did the teacher take her students?

Suggested response: *They were taken to Plaza Carolinas or to a mall (any one).*

Incorrect response: They went to a commercial district in Carolinas. / The teacher took the students to Puerto Rico.

The majority of responses to this question was good. However, there were a few candidates who mistook mall for a square based on their interpretation of '*plaza*'. It would seem as if they missed the added phrase *un centro comercial grande*. A few candidates thought that the teacher took the students to the water park or to the water park and to Plaza Carolinas.

Question (b)

State the arrangements the teacher made with the students.

Suggested response: *She arranged to meet/leave at three o'clock at Parque El Agua entrance/exit.*

Incorrect response: The teacher told them to stay in groups of two or three. /The teacher told the students to meet her at the water park.

Most candidates got the time correct but had the wrong place.

Question (c)

What advice did the teacher give them?

Suggested response: *She told them to remain in groups/a group of two or three.*

Incorrect response: She told them to stay together. / To stay here and don't move.

The majority of the responses to this question was good.

Question (d)

What did Miguel do and why?

Suggested response: *He ran away/escaped from his group because he was rebellious/did not want to stay with his friends/classmates/peers.*

Incorrect response: He went to the pool in the hotel with his friends. / He escaped to the water park with his friends.

There were hardly any incorrect responses to this question. Most candidates understood that he left the group, satisfying what he did but failing to give a suitable reason or no reason at all. 'Because he did not like their company' was not accepted. There were a few candidates who did not give a response.

Question (e)

When the group was ready to leave what did the teacher realize?

Suggested response: *She realized that Miguel/somebody was missing.*

Incorrect response: The children were excited. / Miguel was at the hotel.

Most candidates handled this question well.

Question (f)

How did the teacher spend the next two hours?

Suggested response: *She was searching all the stores and restaurants for Miguel/everywhere in the mall.*

Incorrect Response: She spent the next two hours showing the children around the place. /She spent the next two hours shopping.

Those who responded to this question gave mostly partial responses. They scored on searching for or looking for Miguel/missing child/lost child. The place/s where searching was/were done was/were incomplete or wrong.

Question (g)

Describe the teacher's feelings when she returned to the hotel?

Suggested response: *She was frustrated, frightened/fearful and tired.*

Incorrect response: The teacher was worried about Miguel. /She was surprised and angry to see Miguel at the hotel.

The majority of candidates got two out of three points for this question. Only a few scored full marks. 'Frustrated' and 'tired' were the most popular responses. 'Temerosa' was interpreted as 'terrible' or 'terrorized' by a few candidates and 'worried' by the majority.

Question (h)

What sight greeted the teacher at the hotel?

Suggested response: *She found Miguel calmly playing in the pool.*

Incorrect response: A tranquil hotel. / Miguel had taken a taxi.

Most responses were good. Only a few candidates gave partial responses.

Question (i)

How did Miguel explain his presence at the hotel?

Suggested response: *Miguel explained that he went to the wrong place/exit, thought that everyone had left him and took a taxi to the hotel.*

Incorrect response: Miguel was tranquilized.

Most responses stated that "he took a taxi to the hotel". The majority of the remaining responses mentioned one other element. Only a few responses had all three elements. There were few non-responses to this question.

Question (j)

Explain the teacher's reaction towards Miguel.

Suggested response: *She was relieved/happy but angry because he was safe/had not obeyed her instructions.*

Relieved/happy and angry with an explanation of any one of these feelings

Incorrect response: She was frustrated with him. /She was surprised to see him.

There were few non-responses to this question. Most responses had one or two element/s. A few had full responses. The most popular response was 'happy/glad but angry/annoyed/upset'. The explanation for those feelings was missing from most responses or was inappropriate. 'Aliviada' was interpreted as 'alleviated' by only a few candidates.

Candidates' Strengths

Some candidates, despite not knowing key vocabulary, were able to paraphrase and communicate their responses accurately. Questions 'a', 'c', 'd', 'e', 'g', and 'h' were the ones that candidates generally treated well based on the responses they gave. Furthermore, questions 'a' and 'e' proved fairly easy for them as the majority was able to provide the correct responses. These were knowledge-based questions and required very little reasoning. Questions, 'c', 'd', 'g' and 'h' were consistently observed to have an area that was not accounted for in the responses given; thus, resulting in most candidates providing partially correct responses. For question 'g', the only problem was '*temerosa*'.

Candidates' Weaknesses

Some candidates did not read the entire passage and as such provided responses that were not in the passage. They also wrote their answers without paying attention to the maximum marks. For example; for a question worth 3 marks, some candidates only wrote one or two elements in their response. In addition, candidates used poor sentence structure and demonstrated poor spelling of key words.

Questions 'b', 'f', 'i' and 'j' posed the greatest challenge because they required for in-depth reasoning. Questions, 'b' and 'i' proved to be most difficult for the majority of candidates. For question 'b', the issue was distinguishing between '*arrangements*' and '*advice*'. Most candidates were not able to state the arrangement that was made and others had difficulty providing the place where the students were to meet. Also, there were some candidates who misinterpreted the expression: *una salida llamada "Parque El Agua"*. For questions 'i' and 'j', there were many candidates who understood just one aspect of questions. In question 'i' it seemed, that the majority of candidates interpreted the question to mean how Miguel reached the hotel; they did not recognize that Miguel went to the wrong entrance and thought that the group had left him. Therefore, these candidates only gave one part of the answer.

Further Comments and Recommendations

Teachers and future candidates should take note of the following observations and recommendations so as to improve on the quality of responses for this question.

- Candidates should be reminded that they are to read the title and each question carefully, more than once, to ensure that they understand what they are required to do.
- Candidates are encouraged to pay attention to the allotted marks as they indicate the possible number of elements required per question, as one word is not sufficient to respond to a question marked out of 3.

- Candidates should thoroughly prepare for the examination by reviewing grammar and vocabulary expected CSEC level so that they can give suitable responses. They should note that the preposition 'en' has more than one meaning and should, therefore, relate it to the context. 'Quería' also does not only mean *liked* but also *wanted* and *wanted* was the one more apt for the context of the passage. Greater practice is needed with reflexive verbs. 'Revoltoso' was interpreted as *mischievous* or *disobedient* by a few candidates and was unknown to many.
- Even though candidates are not penalized for English spelling, they should pay attention to this area especially with words such as *tired* (tried), *frustrated* (frustrated), *restaurants* (restaurante), and *rebellious* (rebellious).
- Teachers need to remind students that the questions are asked in chronological order so that they avoid repeatedly giving the same responses for two different questions.
- Candidates should restrain from writing responses in Spanish, or Spanish and English. They should endeavour to answer always using English sentences.
- Candidates should practise reading passages in textbooks and responding to comprehension questions.
- Candidates should make significant efforts to improve their Spanish vocabulary
- Teachers should continue using appropriate websites to improve students' reading comprehension skills, grammar and vocabulary.

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, Travel, Sports and Recreation, 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 demonstrated a range of abilities among 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.

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 were attempts to produce responses which could be rewarded for appropriateness but the language was severely flawed with grammatical inaccuracies and poor vocabulary. Many candidates seemed stumped by the questions and struggled to put their ideas together in Spanish, which often led to a number of anglicisms.

Many candidates did not read the situations carefully and as a result gave inappropriate responses. For example, where situations required candidates to ask a question many of them made statements instead of asking questions.

Most functions, were not well known or answered correctly. The following were examples of functions which were badly used:

- Requesting: *Me gusta*
- Suggesting: *Tú vas ...*
- Warning: *no debes sales*
- Promising: *promiso*
- Consoling: *lo siento*
- Warning: *tú no vas*
- Reminding: *no recordas*

Common Errors Made

- Inappropriate use of pronoun with the verb *gustar*: for example, *yo gusto; el gusta*
- Incorrect position of object pronouns
- Use of present instead of past tense
- Use of infinitive instead of conjugated verb
- Confusing masculine and feminine nouns: for example, *un camisa, un fiesta*
- Very little use of idiomatic expressions
- Misuse of **ser/estar**: *¿Dónde es tu?*
- Misuse of **salir/dejar**. For example, *salí mi libro en la clase*
- Use of familiar tú imperative to address a group. For example, *estudiantes siéntate/cállate*

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. Students must be encouraged to use more complex vocabulary structures and idioms and move away from cliché expressions and words.

Section II - Reading Passages

This section assessed candidates' ability to read a passage in Spanish (125 – 30 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 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 did understand the passages and therefore, produced very disjointed reading. Candidates did not use proper intonation and started and ended their reading passage in the same tone. Also, punctuation such as commas and full stops were not observed.

The majority of candidates stumbled on words containing one or more of the following letter combinations:

- *que: pequeños, riquezas*
 - *gue: guerra*
 - *gui: alguien*
 - *z: agudizan, riqueza*
 - *h: hacia; hogares*
 - *ge: gente, agente, escogen*
 - *je: dejarle, ambiente*
 - *ch: chistes*
 - *ae, aeropuerto*
 - *jue: juega*
 - *ie: especie*
 - *u: puntual, cultural*
 - *ll: desarrollo*
 - *cc: adicción*
 - *n: ninera; carino*
-
- Words such as *natural, cultural and intencional* which resembled their English equivalents were pronounced with the English accent and intonation.
 - Verbs conjugated in the third person were almost always mispronounced, with the stress on the last syllable. Noted errors were *mejoran, aumentan, agudizan*. Here the stress was placed on the last syllable instead of the second to last.
 - Candidates had problems pronouncing words that contained three and more syllables, for example, *enfrentamientos; videojuegos; conocimientos*

Other common errors

Passage 1

comportamiento, paciencia

Passage 2

ecoturismo, actualmente, patrimonio, excepcionales

Passage 3

irrupción, videojuegos, beneficiosos, auténticos, empática

Passage 4

intimidación, término, pesadilla, culminar, comportamiento

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. There is a great need for exposure to authentic listening activities from the target culture.

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 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 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. Many candidates did not focus on the structure of the question or the interrogative used in the question and, as a result, answered incorrectly.

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 using object pronouns
- Very little knowledge of the subjunctive
- The verb *gustar*
- Confusing the words *más*, *muy*, *mucho*
- Using the word *en* with days of the week
- Unfamiliarity with reflexive verbs: *levanto*, *peino*

Recommendations

Teachers should adopt the communicative approach to language in the classroom. As far as possible use the target language in the classroom so that students 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 to listen carefully to the demands of the question.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE[®]
EXAMINATION**

JANUARY 2017

**SPANISH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

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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 and vocabulary as prescribed in the CSEC syllabus. There was a marginal decline in performance on this paper in comparison with the previous year.

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 required that candidates recognize the appropriate function for each situation, and use 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. Overall, performance on this section was satisfactory.

Comments on Individual Situations

Situation (a)

You had a disagreement with your best friend Ricardo. Write the note you send to him expressing how you feel and why. (Function: Expressing feeling with a reason)

Suggested response: *Estoy muy triste porque estás enfadado conmigo.*

OR

Lo siento, te ofendí.

Most candidates were unable to score full points for this question. One of the most frequently occurring errors was the inability to use *Lo siento* correctly. Candidates need to recognize that *Siento ofenderte* is a perfect way to express 'I am sorry for offending you'. In addition, many candidates only addressed one part of the requirements. That is, they either gave the apology or the reason but not both.

Situation (b)

You are not feeling well and cannot go to school. Write the note your mother sends to your teacher explaining your absence. (Function: Stating and explaining)

Suggested response: *María no puede ir a la escuela hoy porque está enferma.*

Most candidates, once again, addressed only part of the rubric — the reason, and more often than not, used the incorrect verb with ‘*enferma*’ — ‘...**es enferma*’.

Situation (c)

It is your grandmother’s birthday. Write the email you send to your cousin suggesting how the occasion can be celebrated. (Function: Suggesting)

Suggested response: *Podemos tener una fiesta.*

OR

Sugiero que vayamos a la playa.

Candidates did not do as well as expected. Many of them attempted to use the expression ... *el cumpleaños de mi abuela*. However, they demonstrated an inability to construct the phrase correctly. It is worth noting that an appropriate response could be given without mentioning the grandmother’s birthday.

Situation (d)

Your Spanish teacher is retiring. Write the thank you note you send mentioning something she did for you. (Function: Expressing gratitude)

Suggested response: *Muchas gracias por darme lecciones adicionales.*

Many candidates confused the use of *para* and *por* in their response. Further, some candidates did not make it clear what the teacher did and consequently expressed gratitude only. Those who did so neglected to add ‘me’ to the infinitive.

Situation (e)

The supermarket is unexpectedly closed today. Write the note you see in the window explaining its closure. (Function: Explaining)

Suggested response: *Está cerrado porque no hay electricidad.*

Most candidates failed to secure a point for this situation. They did not indicate that the supermarket is/was closed. They tried unsuccessfully to apologize, and provided no reason for the closure.

Situation (f)

Your class is having a concert and you would like to participate. Write the email you send to your teacher requesting to participate in a specific performance. (Function: Requesting)

Suggested response: *Me gustaría cantar en el concierto.*

Most candidates were able to get at least two points for this question. However, there were problems with the use of *gustar* and most candidates did not know the word *concierto*. There were also some who did not indicate which *specific performance* was of interest to them.

Situation (g)

You are late for a lunch appointment. Write the message you send to your friend apologizing and saying when you will arrive. (Function: Apologizing)

Suggested response: *Lo siento, voy a llegar a las dos.*

As with the other situations, most candidates had difficulty expressing the apology appropriately. There were also those who did not express what time they would arrive. Additionally, some candidates lost marks as they attempted to explain why they were going to be late, a detail which was not a requirement of the given situation.

Situation (h)

Your parents have not returned home and you are worried. Write the text message you send to them expressing concern and asking for an explanation. (Function: Expressing concern, explaining)

Suggested response: *Estoy preocupado, ¿Dónde están?*

Candidates generally wrote a response seeking the explanation but failed to express concern. They used 'estás' instead of *están* when addressing both parents.

Situation (i)

Your sister refuses to carry out a specific task. Write the email you send to her warning her of the consequences of not doing the task. (Function: Warning and consequence)

Suggested response: *Si no friegas los platos mamá te castigará.*

Most candidates were not able to handle this situation well and, in most cases, only one aspect of the question was addressed, either the warning or the consequence.

Situation (j)

You are moving to another house and need help to get some tasks done. Write the email you send to your friend requesting assistance with a specific task. (Function: Requesting assistance)

Suggested response: *¿Puedes ayudarme a limpiar la casa?*

Many candidates were able to get at least two marks for this question. In many cases, candidates did not indicate the specific task. The most frequently occurring error was the use of *con*, for example, *con limpiando* instead of ‘a plus the infinitive’ after the verb *ayudar*.

Recommendations

It is recommended that teachers do directed situation exercises with their CSEC final year students at least once per week to give the required practice and to hone their skill at writing. Teachers can also employ the use of scaffolding exercises to help students to achieve their potential in the skill. Teachers can incorporate clippings and pictures from online Hispanic newsletters, videos and other materials in their lessons. They are also encouraged to expose students to the relevant functions and vocabulary that are covered in the syllabus, to better equip students with skills to handle this section competently.

Situations could be presented and tested through games, quizzes, oral presentations, and role play, among other things. The use of technology in the teaching and learning process could also enhance students’ acquisition of necessary vocabulary and situation-writing skills. Students must take the time to identify what two pieces of information are required by the situation and not attempt to give any more. In addition, candidates must remember that the instructions ask for *one* sentence only.

Section II (Question 2/Question 3) — Letter/Composition

Candidates were required to write a letter or composition based on four given cues. The demands of the question were adequate and achievable. Candidates who were well prepared and had good experience and knowledge of the syllabus would have found that treating the given topics adequately was well within their grasp. Such candidates would have been able to muster essential vocabulary and grammar needed to produce good responses.

It must be noted that the rubrics demanded that *all* four cues be addressed and developed within the 130–150 word limit.

Candidates’ Performance

Candidates’ performance ranged from poor to excellent. The majority of candidates was able to write a response. It is, however, regrettable that so many candidates apparently failed to prepare adequately for the examination, placing them in the poor or limited category.

In some cases, although all four cues were addressed, they were not developed, thus resulting in a response way below the required number of words. In other cases, cues were addressed and developed to such an extent that candidates went way past the stipulated word count. In either case, candidates suffered the consequences for failing to adhere to the rubrics, thereby resulting in a less satisfactory mark than what could have been achieved otherwise.

It must be pointed out that examiners are instructed *not* to read/consider any part of the response which goes way beyond the required number of words.

Also, with regard to the letter, too many candidates wrote to their friend rather than to the parents of their friend as requested in the rubrics.

Letter

You have just returned home after spending a lovely holiday at your friend's house in a Spanish-speaking country. Write a letter to your friend's parents in which you

- (i) greet and thank them for their generous hospitality
- (ii) explain why you enjoyed your stay
- (iii) state something you would have liked to do during your visit
- (iv) mention the plans you are already making for when they come to visit your country.

Strengths

- The more proficient candidates were able to show a good command of the language by employing the subjunctive mood where required. For example, *ojalá que llegues pronto; espero que todo vaya bien; es necesario que vengas pronto; cuando ustedes vengan a visitar.*
- There was good use of tenses, even with irregular verbs. For example, *yo quise ir al museo; nosotros no pudimos ir a los parques; nosotros tendremos una fiesta para ustedes; me habría gustado ir; nos divertimos mucho.*
- Some idioms were in evidence. For example, *estaba lloviendo a cántaros; no vale la pena; no cabe duda de que disfruté ...; fuimos de compras.*

Weaknesses

We must emphasize to candidates and teachers that if a candidate chooses to write a letter (which has been a very popular choice over the years) he/she should be able to produce the basics of letter writing, that is, the date, the salutation and the ending. Too many candidates failed on all three items.

- We continue to see the entire date spelt out, and with *el* before it. Keep in mind the example given here: *16 de enero de 2017*. The salutation is too often misspelt or no regard is given to the number of people to whom the letter is addressed. There was too much use of the incorrect '*Quierdo*' instead of *Querido*, no plural form, for example, '*Querido Señor y Señora Lopez*' instead of *Queridos Señor y Señora Lopez*. Other incorrect variations included '*Queridos Carla's padres/Querida Maria's padres*' instead of *Queridos padres de Carla/de Maria*. Candidates concluded with '*Brazos y besos*' or '*Con cariñoso*'.
- Too many candidates rendered 'to have a good time (to enjoy oneself)' using the hatched expression '*tener un buen tiempo*' or '*tener divertido/diversion*'. Candidates must acquaint themselves with the verb *divertirse* — to enjoy oneself, to have a good time or even *pasarlo bomba/bien*.
- There were huge inadequacies in using the correct forms of various verbs, particularly irregular verbs: '*mis padres dijeron*' instead of *mis padres dijeron*; '*yo tuvo una experiencia*'; '*no podemos ir*'.

- There was disregard for agreement between adjective and noun and also the position of the adjective, for example, *tu hija es simpático, la comida fue delicioso, tu bonita esposa.*
- Improper and incorrect use of 'gustar', for example, 'yo gusto ir' instead of *me gusta ir* and 'me gusté la playa' instead of *me gustó la playa* or 'ellos gusta los animales' instead of *a ellos les gustan los animales.*
- Conjugation of two successive verbs, for example, *Podemos vamos a la playa; Quiero voy al cine.*
- Widespread use of 'gracias para' instead of 'gracias por'.
- In many instances, candidates showed a lack of understanding of the use of *estar* and *ser*. These included *la comida estaba deliciosa; yo fui triste; su casa está grande; yo soy escribiendo...*

Composition

Your sister/brother is getting married. You go with him/her to select the wedding outfit but you are having difficulty making a selection. Write a composition about the experience. Include the following:

- (i) Details about the wedding: time, place, etc.
- (ii) Difficulties encountered
- (iii) Final decision made
- (iv) What you would do differently next time

Fewer candidates opted for the composition. Candidates' performance ranged from limited to very good. The perennial problem of inadequate understanding of the rules of good grammar as seen in the letter was also apparent in the composition.

Strengths

- There was good use of tenses in some cases, for example, *mi hermana iba a casarse; tuve que acompañar a mi hermano; la semana antes de la boda fuimos al centro comercial; el vestido no le quedaba bien.*
- Good candidates were familiar with the essential vocabulary, for example, *el traje/el vestido/la boda/las tiendas.*

Weaknesses

- Many candidates showed no mastery in the use of the verbs *estar* and *ser*, for example, *el vestido no estaba bonito; mi hermano fue contento*
- Inability to distinguish between *tiempo* and *vez*. 'El próximo tiempo' was seen instead of *la próxima vez.*
- Candidates are asked to avoid using 'las ropas' for the English word *clothes*. In Spanish the singular is used: *la ropa* = clothes

Recommendations

Students and teachers are advised to give more attention to achieving mastery in areas of frequent grammatical inaccuracies: the tenses of verbs, more so the irregular verbs, the use of which is very often required, for example, *tener, hacer, decir, ser, poder*; mastery in the use of the verb *gustar* is also highly recommended.

Candidates and teachers are reminded that their tablets, smart phones, etc. can also be used for achieving a better level of proficiency in the language.

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 and candidates were to use between 80 and 100 words to complete their responses.

The contextual announcement and contextual dialogue were in keeping with the information outlined in the syllabus, and it was observed that most candidates opted for the contextual dialogue.

Contextual Announcement

Your church group is having a sale, proceeds of which will go towards a community project. Write the announcement to be read in church.

Responses to ALL of the cues listed below MUST be included in the announcement.

- (i) Details of the sale (venue, date, time)
- (ii) The specific project towards which the funds will go
- (iii) Items on sale
- (iv) Plea for support and contributions
- (v) Contact details of the organizer

Candidates' Performance on the Contextual Announcement

Candidates' Strengths and Weaknesses

Most candidates observed the rubric of the question and attempted to address all of the cues. Their demonstration of grammatical competence and use of vocabulary was fair. Some examples of inaccuracies included the use of '*por*' instead of *para*; '*ser*' where *estar* should have been used. Other weaknesses noted were incorrect expression of time and generally poor spelling or unknown vocabulary.

Contextual Dialogue

Manuel is presently recovering from injuries sustained in an accident. He has the following conversation with his friend Jorge.

Responses to ALL of the cues listed below MUST be included in the completed dialogue.

- (i) Greetings and response to the enquiry about his health
- (ii) How he came to be injured
- (iii) Where he was treated for his injury
- (iv) How his injury affected his daily routine
- (v) How he will make up for time lost

Candidates' Performance on the Contextual Dialogue

Candidates' Strengths and Weaknesses

The rubric was observed by most candidates and they attempted to address all of the cues in their responses, although cues (ii) and (iv) presented some difficulty. Also, it was clear that many candidates did not understand *pierna* to mean *leg*, because reference was made to a broken hand, arm and headaches or head injuries. Once again, there was the misuse of *ser* and *estar* as well as '*socorro*' for *ayudar* and '*haber ir*' for *tener que*.

Recommendations

Candidates need greater exposure to idioms, synonyms and antonyms in the target language, so as to incorporate them in their writing. The differences between *ser* and *estar* and their usage need to be reinforced as well as the conjugations in the various tenses, and spelling changes in irregular verbs.

Special focus needs to be given to the differences between *por* and *para* and the use of prepositions so as to avoid repeated errors, which often taint the quality of candidates' expression.

Section IV (Question 6) — Reading Comprehension

This question tested 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.

Demands of the Question

The reading comprehension passage for the CSEC January 2017 examination was at a level appropriate for candidates who would have completed five years or more of learning Spanish. The level of vocabulary was such that candidates should have been able to fully comprehend the passage and answer the questions in English.

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. Candidates performed very well on this question.

Candidates' Strengths

- Generally, candidates were able to score at least one mark on most of the questions where more than one mark was awarded.
- The questions where one mark was allotted were very well answered.
- The majority of candidates are to be complimented for adhering to the instructions printed in their examination booklet.

Candidates' Weaknesses

- Candidates were challenged to give an explanation for (j).
- Candidates seemed to have forgotten basic vocabulary on clothing.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question (a)

What was Mrs Gomez's profession for over thirty years?

Suggested response: *She was a (Spanish) teacher.*

This question was answered correctly.

Question (b)

In what new capacity does Mrs Gomez now work?

Suggested response: *She is a principal.*

Incorrect response: *She is a director.*

Vocabulary posed the challenge here, with candidates being unaware of the meaning of *director*.

Question (c)

What always concerned Mrs Gomez?

Suggested response: *That the girls' skirts were too short.*

Incorrect response: *That they were wearing the wrong uniform.*

Surprisingly again, vocabulary was an issue, *falda*, being taken for uniform.

Question (d)

On what did Mrs Gomez insist?

Suggested response: *That their skirts be worn down to their knee.*

Incorrect response: *That the girls wear shirts to their elbows.*

Vocabulary again presented a challenge, not only articles of clothing but taking *rodillas* to mean elbows. In other instances, some candidates took *rodillas* for ankles.

Question (e)

Why did Mrs Gomez call a meeting with the parents?

Suggested response: *To explain the rules of the institution and to seek their support.*

Incorrect response: *To explain the rules of the school. (incomplete)*

Candidates generally omitted the latter part of this answer, perhaps because they did not recognize *apoyo*.

Question (f)

What did Mrs Gomez do regularly and why?

Suggested response: *She walked around the school observing student behaviour and checking skirt lengths.*

Incorrect response: *She observed uniforms and students.*

There were three items needed here, and candidates generally gave two out of the three. Perhaps *comportamiento* was not recognized which led to them stating that she just observed the students.

Question (g)

What action did Mrs Gomez take when she was not satisfied with what she observed?

Suggested response: *She took the girls to the office and made them change their skirts.*

Incorrect response: *They went to the office for a bigger skirt.*

Más larga was taken to mean 'bigger'.

Question (h)

What did Mrs Gomez keep in her office?

Suggested response: *She kept skirts of different lengths.*

Incorrect response: *She kept all types of skirts.*

The majority of candidates answered this question well.

Question (i)

What was Mrs Gomez jokingly called?

Suggested response: *The skirt police.*

Incorrect response: *The police.*

Many candidates responded correctly to this question.

Question (j)

Explain Roberto's comment.

Suggested response: *He was making fun of Mrs Gomez saying that he should hide because his skirt was short, and he is a boy and boys do not wear skirts.*

Incorrect response: *He said "Hide me. My skirt is too short".*

Most candidates realized that he was joking but could not explain why he was joking.

Further Comments and Recommendations

To candidates:

- Please try to keep in mind always that the allocation of marks points to the possible number of elements required in the answer.
- Please avoid including Spanish in your answers. This does not say that you have understood. In fact, it points to a deficiency in your retaining vocabulary.
- We cannot say it enough — read, read, read. The more you read, the more you will 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. As a result your answers would be more easily understood.

To teachers:

- We stress again, the importance of teaching vocabulary. The focus should not be solely on the acquisition of vocabulary, but the retention of said vocabulary. It is important to find ways to help students retain *basic* vocabulary.
- The Reading Comprehension is as important as the other questions. Students should be trained to answer questions as completely as possible, and to use correct spelling and sentence construction.

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, 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.

Generally, candidates fared well in this section of the examination. Most, if not all, attempted a response and most responses were appropriate.

Inaccuracies Noted

- Incorrect use of *ser* and *estar*, *por* and *para*
- Commands
- Omission of verb, for example, *No problema*
- Subject–verb agreements
- Use of *tú* where *usted* is more appropriate
- Possessive adjectives
- Articles and gender agreement
- Incorrect use of *gustar*
- Omission of personal *a*
- Incorrect verb conjugations
- Not knowing when to use *tu* and *ti*
- Confusion of *hacer* and *tener*

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. Students must be encouraged to use more complex vocabulary structures and idioms and to move away from cliché expressions and words.

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 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 did not have a clue as to what the passages were about, thus producing very disjointed reading. They showed no knowledge of the importance of intonation and started and ended their reading passage in the same tone. Also, punctuation like commas and full stops were not observed. Little or no knowledge was displayed of rules of accentuation and stress.

The following are some of the problems which candidates presented:

- Omission of the letter *r*, for example, *Carga, colaborar*
- Anglicisms
- Pronunciation of the silent *h*
- Mispronunciation of the letters *j* and *g*, *ll*, and *z*
- Stress on the wrong syllable
- Vowels, especially *e* and *i*

Problematic Words

Cuidar, azúcar, hogareños, ahijados, enriquecedora, contribuye, veintinueve

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. There is a great need for exposure to authentic listening activities from the target culture.

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 Home and Family, School and Career, Sports and Recreation, and Shopping. Candidates were asked four questions on each of the topics and 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. Many candidates did not focus on the structure of the question or the interrogative used in the question and, as a result, answered incorrectly.

The errors in grammar, which were evident in this section were much the same as those mentioned in Section I.

Other Challenges Faced

- Lack of understanding and misinterpretation of questions due to poor vocabulary
- Inability to construct a proper sentence
- Inability to recognize interrogatives

Recommendations

Teachers must ensure that the communicative approach to language is adopted in the classroom. As far as possible, they are encouraged to use the target language in the classroom so that students 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. It is important that they listen carefully to the demands of the question. Much more oral practice is needed.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

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

JANUARY 2018

**SPANISH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

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DETAILED COMMENTS

63 per cent of the candidates achieved Grades I-III compared with 62 per cent in 2017. The performance on Profile 1, Listening, improved with 85 per cent of the candidates achieving Grades A-C compared with 77 per cent in 2017. While performance on Profile 2, Reading and Profile 3, Speaking were comparable, there was a decline in performance on Profile 4, Writing.

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprised two sections, assessed the candidate ability to listen to and understand a number of aural items in the target language and to read and understand a number of written. Both sections required candidates to have sufficient mastery of essential grammar and vocabulary. Performance in 2018 was marginally less than 2017.

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. Each situation required that candidates recognize the function appropriate to it, and use 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.

Overall, performance on this section was satisfactory

Comments on Individual Situations

Situation (a)

Your friend is wearing a very attractive outfit today. Write the note you send complimenting him/her and saying what you like about the outfit.

Function: Complimenting and saying what you like about outfit

Expected response: *Estás muy bonita/guapo hoy. Me gusta el estilo/color.*

This was fairly well done. Most candidates were able to express the compliment or say what they liked about the outfit. However, some did not include both elements in their answer.

Most common errors:

- Spelling: for example, *tu* for *tú*
- Position and agreement of adjectives: for example, *tu rojo y azul zapatos*
- Gender agreement: for example, *Tu vestido es hermosa / tu ropa es muy moderno*
- Spelling: for example, *mi mamá no tiene dinero para el viaja / camisieta /*
- Inability to express likes: for example, *me gusta los zapatos / yo gusta tu camisa / me gusto tu falda / me gustaría tu vestido azul*
- Incorrect vocabulary: for example, *Tú mirar bonita*
- *Ser* vs *estar*: for example, *Tú eres muy guapa hoy*

Situation (b)

You cannot go on an educational trip today. Write the note you send to your teacher explaining why you cannot go and how you feel about it.

Function: Explaining and saying how you feel

Expected response: *No puedo ir porque estoy enfermo/a y estoy tan desilusionado/a.*

Most candidates were able to say why they could not go but had problems explaining how they felt. Instead of using simple words like 'triste' 'enojado' etc they tried to find more complex ways and made errors.

Most common errors:

- Spelling: for example, *cabaza/senorita/el viajo/Mi mamá esta enferma/professora/manana*
- Incorrect rendition of hurt: for example, *Me cabeza duelen*
- Gender agreement: for example, *Yo no puedo ir al excursión/no voy a la museo*
- Article missing: for example, *no puedo ir el muse*
- *Ser* vs *estar*: for example, *Soy enfermo*
- Incorrect structures: for example, *tengo ir al médico/tengo que asistir la boda/yo voy a hospital/no voy el viaje*

Situation (c)

Your neighbourhood is having a fundraising event. Write the flyer you put on the community notice board mentioning the event and inviting persons to attend.

Function: Inviting and mentioning event

Expected Response: *Vengan a la fiesta para recoger fondos para los huérfanos.*

This was perhaps the most difficult. Many candidates did not specify the event but used the word 'evento'. Most were able to express the inviting part. Those who tried to use the imperative made errors there.

Most common errors:

- Omission of personal 'a': for example, *usted invita sus amigos y parientes / para ayudar la gente enferma*
- Spelling: for example, *assistir/comunidad/ atención/ veinte nueve/ viente*
- Preposition 'a' missing after *asistir*
- Incorrect tense: for example, *me gusta invitar* instead of *me gustaría*
- Subject pronouns used instead of object pronouns: for example, *me gusta invitar tu*
- Incorrect structures: for example, *todo el mundo es bienvenido/se invito/en el viente de enero/el fútbol concurso/estamos teniendo una venta de pescado*
- Inability to invite: for example, *Les invitarte a la fiesta*

Situation (d)

While babysitting your little sister she injured herself. Write the text to your parents describing her injury and asking their advice.

Function: Describing and asking for advice

Expected Response: *Marta cayó y tiene una pierna fracturada, ¿qué debo hacer?*

This was another poorly done situation. Candidates experienced problems in describing the injury, simply stating that she hurt herself. Most were able to express the asking advice part.

Most common errors:

- Incorrect preterite forms: for example, *María se hiera en la cabeza / maria caió y rompe / Mi hermana daña la cabeza*
- Use of possessive adjectives with body parts: for example, *Maria ha roto su pie*
- Incorrect interrogative: for example, *cuál* for *qué*
- Inability to express injury: for example, *Mi hermana duelen en la cabeza / Maria tiene un fracturada al pie / Selenia ha rotado su brazo/Ella duele el pie*
- Spelling: for example, *mama* instead of *mamá/que* instead of *qué*, for example, *¿que hacer?*
- Expressed what hurt instead of indicating injury: for example, *Juanita tiene dolor de pierna*
- Incorrect structures: for example: *rompido* instead of *roto*

Situation (e)

You are trying to decide what to do after your CXC exam. Write the text you send to your brother abroad, mentioning your options and asking his opinion.

Function: Stating options and asking opinions

Expected Response: *¿Qué opinas, debo ir a una universidad o trabajar por un año?*

This was fairly well done. However, some candidates lost marks for not mentioning options but simply stating one activity.

Most common errors:

- Incorrect use of definite pronoun with professions: for example, *quisiera ser una periodista*
- Spelling: for example, *mama / papa*
- Preposition 'de' missing after *después*
- Vocabulary: for example, Misuse of *antes/delante* instead of *después*
- Spelling *a + el*: for example, *¿...ir a el colegio o la universidad? / que* instead of *qué*: for example, *¿Que piensas? / examens / tú opinión*
- Gender agreement: for example, *Quiero ir al universidad*
- Poor structures: for example, *Me gustaría voy a la playa*

Situation (f)

Your teacher asks the class to write one suggestion for a class outing. Write your suggestion with a reason.

Function: Suggesting with reason

Expected Response: *Podemos ir al cine porque se estrena la película que queremos tanto ver.*

This was fairly well done, although many did not know how to suggest and tried to find alternatives around it, creating alternative versions of the verb.

Most common errors:

- Conjugation of two consecutive verbs: for example, *Podemos vamos*
- Confusion between *porque* and *por qué*
- Inability to conjugate the verb 'sugerir'
- Inability to use subjunctive after 'sugerir que': for example, *sugiero que ir/vamos*

Situation (g)

Your parents are going on vacation. Write the note you put in your mother's purse wishing her a safe journey and reminding her of something she needs to do.

Function: Wishing a safe journey and reminding

Expected Response: *Buen viaje Mamá, no te olvides llamarme todos los días.*

It was surprising that most candidates did not know how to wish someone a safe journey. Very few provided the correct answer. Reminding was also a problem for many candidates. Some clever candidates used vocabulary like *necesitas/debes/tienes que* as alternatives.

Most common errors:

- *Bien* instead of *buen*: for example, *bien viaje*.
- Inability to use imperative form when reminding: for example, *No olvidar /olvidas*
- Inability to conjugate '*recordar*' as a radical changing verb: for example, *Recorda*.

Situation (h)

While shopping, you are separated from your friends. Write the text you send them making an arrangement to meet at a certain time or place.

Function: Arranging to meet with time or place

Expected Response: *Vamos a encontrarnos en la tienda Sol /a las cinco de la tarde.*

This was well done since most candidates were able to express themselves well enough to gain almost full marks.

Most common errors:

- Using *a* instead of *en*: for example, *Encuentrame a la tienda*.
- No use of reflexive pronoun with *encontrar*: for example, *Vamos a encontrar a las cinco*.
- Use of *son las* instead of *a las*: for example, *Vamos a encontrarnos son las cinco*.
- Inability to use imperative where needed: for example, *Vienes a la tienda Sol*.

Situation (i)

Your brother is angry at you for something that you did. Write the text he sends you expressing his anger, mentioning what you did.

Function: Expressing anger with specific reason

Expected Response: *Estoy enojado porque rompiste mi celular.*

Candidates had problems with the vocabulary for 'angry' and therefore tried different ways of expressing anger which in most cases were incorrect.

Most common errors:

- *Ser* instead of *estar*: for example, *Soy enojado contigo*
- Wrong agreement, forgetting that it was the brother speaking: for example, *Enojada*
- Use of present tense instead of preterite to express reason for anger: for example, *Rompes mi celular.*

Situation (j)

You are in an exam and need to leave the room for a moment. Write the note that you pass to the invigilator asking permission and explaining why you need to leave.

Function: Asking permission, giving a reason.

Expected Response: *Necesito llamar a mi madre, ¿puedo salir por favor?*

This situation was well done. Most candidates were able to achieve full marks by using very simple sentences. Those who tried longer explanations lost marks.

Most common errors:

- Use of informal address with Invigilator : for example, *¿me permites salir por favor?*
- Use of *tener* without *que*: for example, *Tengo ir al hospital*
- Misuse of *ser* and *estar*: for example, *Mi madre es en el hospital*
- Omission of personal *a*: for example, *Necesito llamar mi madre*

Recommendations

It is recommended that teachers use directed situation exercises with their CSEC final year students at least once per week to give them the required practice and to hone their skill at writing. Teachers can also employ scaffolding exercises to help students to achieve their potential in the skill. Teachers can incorporate in their classroom practice, the use of clippings and pictures from on-line Hispanic newspapers as well as videos and other sources. Also, teachers need to expose their students to the relevant functions and vocabulary that are covered in the syllabus, to better equip the students with skills to handle this section competently. Situations could be presented and tested through games, quizzes, oral presentations, and role play, among other activities. The use of technology in the teaching and learning process could also enhance

students' acquisition of necessary vocabulary and situation-writing skills. Students must take the time to identify what two pieces of information are required by the situation and not attempt to write about any more. In addition, candidates must remember that the instructions ask for ONE sentence only.

Section II (Question 2) – Letter

Candidates were required to write a letter based on four given cues. The question was clearly stated and straightforward. Candidates were expected to use the vocabulary and structures learnt within the syllabus to write a social letter. They were required to use a range of general vocabulary from the six themes of the syllabus and the various tenses and moods. The demands of the question were adequate and achievable. Candidates who were well prepared and had good knowledge and understanding of the syllabus would have found that treating the given topics adequately was well within their grasp. Such candidates would have been able to produce the essential vocabulary and grammar needed to produce good responses.

It must be noted that the rubrics demand that ALL four cues be addressed and developed within the 130-150 word limit.

Letter

You father accepted a job overseas and the entire family has migrated. Write a letter to your friend in Chile in which you include:

- (i) Where your family has migrated to and why
- (ii) The preparations your family made before leaving
- (iii) How you felt about leaving home
- (iv) What you think of your new environment and what you will do to adjust to it

Candidates' Performance

Most scripts appeared to fall in the moderate to satisfactory range. Many were in the limited band with a few at the upper or lower end.

In some cases, although all four cues were addressed they were not developed, thus resulting in a response way below the required number of words. In other cases, cues were addressed and developed to such an extent that candidates far exceeded the stipulated word count. In either case candidates suffered the consequences for their failure to adhere to the rubrics, thereby resulting in a less satisfactory mark than they could have achieved if they had followed instructions.

It must be pointed out that examiners are instructed NOT to read or consider any part of the response which goes way beyond the required number of words.

Also, with regard to the letter, too many candidates wrote to their friend rather than to the parents of their friend as requested in the rubrics.

Candidates' Strengths

- Candidates had knowledge of format for a letter.
- Most tried to include all the points given in the outline.
- The word limit was observed in most of the cases.
- There was evidence that candidates had knowledge of the preterite, imperfect, present and future tenses.

Candidates' Weaknesses

We must emphasize to candidates and teachers that a candidate at this level should possess a command of the basics of letter writing, that is, the date, the salutation and the ending. Too many candidates failed to produce any of these three items.

- As in previous years, many candidates spelt out the entire date , with “e” before it. Keep in mind the example given here: *16 de enero de 2017*. The salutation was too often misspelt, and seldom was any regard given to the number of people to whom the letter was to be addressed. There was too much use of the incorrect “*Quierdo*” instead of “*Querido*”. Candidates concluded with “*Brazos y besos*” or “*Con cariñoso*” instead of “*Besos y abrazos*” or “*Con cariño/Cariñosamente*”.
- Candidates experienced difficulty in producing the irregular preterites, and wrote, for example, *tuve* as *tuvé*, while some could not conjugate *obtener* in the preterite.
- Some weaker candidates did not recognize the required tense so they used the present and future where the past tense was needed.
- Sequence of tense was a problem, for example, *Papá dijo que vamos a Inglaterra*.
- Too many candidates failed to distinguish between *Por/para; tú/tu,; mí/mi; saber/conocer; probar/tratar salir/dejar; así/tan*.
- Negative constructions, for example, *no tiene alguien* (instead of *no tiene a nadie*)
- Poor use of conjunctions: *pero* was frequently used when *y* should have been used.
- Many candidates demonstrated limited knowledge of the use of the passive or avoidance thereof, for example, *No hace permitir perros*.
- There were also several errors of concord (person–number) with verbs, for example, *mi familia vamos*.
- *Trabajo* as a noun was substituted with *trabajar* or *trabaja*.
- Candidates showed inadequate knowledge of classes of pronoun, for example, *quiero decir tu, acompañar su, hablar mi*.
- Candidates experienced difficulty with the position of direct object pronouns, for example, *mi mamá habla me*.
- There was widespread use of “*gracias para*” instead of “*gracias por*”.
- In many instances candidates showed a lack of understanding of the use of *ser* and *estar*. For example they wrote incorrectly “*la casa está grande*”; “*yo soy escribiendo...*”

Recommendations

Candidates and teachers are advised to give more attention to achieving mastery in areas of frequent grammatical inaccuracies: the tenses of verbs, in particular the irregular verbs, for example, *tener, hacer, decir, ser, poder* the use of which is very often required; mastery of the use of the verb “*gustar*” is also expected at this level.

Candidates and teachers are reminded that technology such as their tablets and smart phones can also be used for achieving a better level of proficiency in the language.

As much practice as possible with extended writing is essential for mastery of this question. Journaling is a good activity to practise the tenses.

Section III (Question 3) –Contextual Dialogue

This section required candidates to complete a contextual dialogue. Cues in English were provided for this question.

The contextual dialogue was in keeping with the information outlined in the syllabus and therefore within the scope of candidates’ experience and ability.

Your country is hosting a music festival but your mother does not want you to go because of your upcoming exams. Complete the dialogue between you and your mother, giving her responses.

- (i) Her reasons for not allowing you to go
- (ii) Your efforts to change her mind
- (iii) Convincing her that it will not affect your studies
- (iv) Her approval with conditions

Candidates’ Strengths

Most candidates observed the rubric of the question and attempted to address all of the cues. Generally, they expressed their grammatical competence and used vocabulary quite well.

Examples of such usage included:

- ...pedirme permiso para ir a
- Sé que estudias pero cada noche juegas videojuegos y hablas sobre el teléfono.
- Tus exámenes son más importantes que pasarlo bomba, ¿verdad?
- No me importa si me pides mil veces, ya he dicho, no te dejaré ir.
- Es necesario que estudies.....

Candidates' Weaknesses

Some candidates who attempted this question failed to show a solid command of grammar and knowledge of relevant vocabulary and structures. Examples of errors included:

- *Estudio aveces pero estar sueno*
- *No vas mi hijo, haces estudiar*

Errors in Grammar:

- Incorrect use of 'por' and 'para': for example, *cada noche estudio para tres horas/necesitas estudiar por tener exito...*
- Poor noun and adjective/subject/verb agreement: for example, *tus estudios son importante / todos mis amigos vamos*
- Lack of agreement between possessive adjectives and nouns: for example, *tu exámenes*
- Misuse of 'saber' and 'conocer': for example, *no conozco nada de esto/ Mamá, sabes bien mis amigos*
- Misuse of 'hablar' and 'decir': for example, *voy a hacer lo que hablaste*
- Unfamiliarity with use of subjunctive: for example, *espero que haces bien*
- Misuse of 'bien' and 'bueno': for example, *necesitas hacer bueno en tus estudios*
- Misuse of 'asistir' and 'atender': for example, *no puedes attender la fiesta*
- Misuse of 'a' and 'en': for example, *tienes que estudiar a casa.*

Some candidates did not seem to realise that the fifth cue was a question the mother asked rather than a statement that she made. As a result, some of the responses were a bit inappropriate and distorted the general flow of the dialogue. Candidates also experienced some difficulty with Cues 6, 7 and 8, to which several either responded poorly or omitted; while others simply repeated some of the previous statements for their responses.

Recommendations

Candidates need to read instructions and ensure that they read the questions carefully and include all of the relevant details in their responses.

Candidates need to be given more practice in the preparation and writing of the contextual dialogues as well as oral practice, reflecting themes and format. Also, the reading of dialogues from texts, newspapers and magazines should be encouraged.

Candidates also need to be exposed to and learn idioms, synonyms and antonyms in the target language, so that they can incorporate these in their writing.

Section IV (Question 4) – Reading Comprehension

This question tested candidates' ability to read a passage in Spanish and then demonstrate their comprehension skills by responding in English to questions posed in English and based on the passage they have read.

The reading comprehension passage for the CSEC January 2018 examination was of a level that was appropriate for candidates who would have completed five years or more of learning Spanish. The level of vocabulary was such that properly prepared candidates should have been able to fully comprehend the passage and answer the questions in English.

Candidates' Performance

The responses of the candidates who did not perform at an acceptable level on this question showed that they would have benefited from more work at acquiring vocabulary skills in order to achieve full comprehension of the passage and from constant revision of their acquired vocabulary. On the whole, candidates performed reasonably well on this question.

Candidates' Strengths

- Generally candidates were able to score at least one mark on most of the questions where more than one mark was awarded.
- The questions where one mark was allotted were generally well answered.
- The majority of candidates are to be complimented for adhering to the instructions printed in their examination booklet. There were fewer instances of candidates answering in Spanish.

Candidates' Weaknesses

- Candidates found some aspects of vocabulary to be difficult.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question (a)

What was Miguel's profession?

Suggested response: He was a beggar.

Incorrect response: He was a vagrant.

The difficulty for some candidates here was the knowledge of the word "*mendigo*"

Question (b)

Where did he carry out his profession?

Suggested response: At the traffic lights.

Incorrect response: In the car park.
Some candidates were unaware of the meaning of “*semaforos*”.

Question (c)

What did Miguel’s “job” entail?

Suggested response: Going from car to car begging for money for food or medicine.

Incorrect response: He would clean cars.

Candidates largely understood what he did even if they did not know the Spanish word for beggar.

Question (d)

How did Miguel show appreciation in his “job”?

Suggested response: By wiping windscreens.

Incorrect response: By cleaning tires.

Here, candidates were unfamiliar with the word “*parabrisas*” meaning “windscreens”.

Question (e)

Explain how Miguel ended up in that “profession”.

Suggested response: He was born with a crippled hand and so was forced to beg to survive.

Partially correct response: His hand was paralyzed and so he couldn’t get a job.

Candidates generally omitted the fact that he was born that way.

Question (f)

How did the drivers feel about Miguel?

Suggested response: They liked him.

This was generally correctly answered.

Question (g)

Why was the author’s uncle unable to help Miguel on that day?

Suggested response: He had forgotten his wallet at home.

This was well answered.

Question (h)

What did the author’s uncle say to Miguel?

Suggested response: That he needed help that day.

Candidates also answered this question well.

Question (i)

What was Miguel's response?

Suggested response: Don't worry, here are ten dollars, today is my day to help.

This was also well answered.

Question (j)

Explain what Miguel's response showed about his character.

Suggested response: He was a generous person who, although he did not have much, was willing to share what he had.

Candidates tried their best to offer an explanation, but they tended to miss the connection between Miguel not having much but being willing to help. This year, though, this explanation question was well done.

Further Comments and Recommendations

To candidates:

- Please try to keep in mind always that the allocation of marks suggests the possible number of elements required in the answer.
- Please avoid including Spanish in your answers. This does not indicate that you have understood. In fact, it points to a deficiency in your retention of vocabulary.
- We cannot say it enough - read, read, read. The more you read, the more you will 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. As a result your answers will be more easily understood.

To teachers:

- We stress again, the importance of teaching vocabulary . Moreover, it is not sufficient that students simply acquire vocabulary, they also need to retain acquired vocabulary. We need to find ways to help our students retain basic vocabulary.
- The reading comprehension question is as important as the others. Candidates should be trained to use correct spelling and sentence construction.

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. For this exam the topics were, ***Home and Family, Daily Routine, Shopping*** and ***Travel***.

Section I – Responses to Situations/Instructions

This section required the candidates to produce appropriate oral 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. Candidates who performed excellently in this section produced appropriate responses that were expressed correctly, demonstrating 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.

Candidates who performed weakly in this section showed very little command of the grammar and vocabulary required to perform competently on this part of the oral examination. In several cases, there was some attempt to produce an appropriate response but the language was flawed with grammatical inaccuracies, structural inconsistencies and a limited range of vocabulary. Some candidates demonstrated a lack of comprehension of the questions and struggled to put their ideas together in Spanish, which often led to disjointed responses, the stringing together of arbitrary vocabulary and the use of a number of anglicisms.

In few cases, candidates opted not to provide a response and requested to skip some of the situations. Some candidates translated the situation rather than give a response. Also, they were unfamiliar with the correct registers to adopt when addressing someone and therefore used *Tú* when *Usted* was needed. In addition, it should be noted that some candidates responded to the situations by using reported speech instead of direct speech as required.

Grammatical errors noted were:

- Incorrect use of *ser* and *estar*, *por* and *para*
- Commands
- Omission of verbs: for example, *No problema*
- Subject-verb agreements
- Use of *Tú* where *Usted* was more appropriate
- Possessive adjectives
- Articles and gender agreement
- Incorrect use of *gustar*
- Omission of personal 'a'

- Incorrect verb conjugations
- Not knowing when to use 'tu' and 'ti'
- Confusion of 'hacer' and 'tener'

Recommendations

The syllabus is very clear as to the functions which candidates are expected to be able to use to perform well in this section. However, many candidates appear not to be fully aware of the functions they need to know in order to respond to the situations presented. Teachers are highly 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. Students must be encouraged to use more complex vocabulary structures and idioms while moving away from clichéd expressions and words.

Section II - Reading Passages

This section assessed candidates' ability to read a passage in Spanish (125-130 words in length) demonstrating correct pronunciation of discrete sounds, good intonation and fluency. 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 experienced difficulty in 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. They showed no knowledge of the importance of intonation and started and ended their reading passage in the same tone. Passages were often not phrased correctly so meaning was lost. Also punctuation marks like commas and full stops were not observed. Little or no knowledge was displayed of rules of accentuation and stress.

The following are some of the problems which candidates presented:

- Demonstration of weakness in pronunciation caused the following errors:
Mispronunciation of the following sounds/letters:
z as English z
ge/gi as gee
h not read as silent
ll pronounced as one 'l'
English rendition of vowels
- Anglicized or incorrect pronunciation of certain words: *comunicándose, importantísima, responsabilidad, comportamiento, culturales, décadas, elegida, jóvenes, opción, calidad, sencillas, búsqueda.*

Recommendations

Challenges in fluency and intonation in reading as outlined above typically 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. Incorrect 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. There is a great need for exposure to authentic listening activities from the target culture.

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 ***Home and Family, Daily Routine, Shopping*** and ***Travel***.

Candidates were asked four questions on each of the topics and were assessed on comprehension and spontaneity, fluency and expression. Family and Shopping were better handled than Travel.

As in previous years, this section of the oral examination posed difficulties for several candidates. The well prepared candidates 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, other candidates struggled with this section, handicapped by a limited vocabulary and poor knowledge of grammatical structures. There was limited comprehension of the questions asked by some who asked for them to be repeated constantly.

The errors in grammar evident in this section included:

- Incorrect conjugation of verbs: for example, *Yo lavar la ropa*
- Incorrect use of the reflexive form: for example, *Yo baño*
- Adjectival agreement
- Agreement of articles: for example, *Un visa, una pasaporte*
- Incorrect use of “*me*” before *prefiero*
- Confusion between imperfect and preterite tenses
- *Incorrect use of ser vs estar*
- Incorrect use of *gustar*: for example, *yo gusto*

Some vocabulary inaccuracies noted were:

- *sitio* for *ciudad*
- the word '*billete*' was unknown
- *con mi* instead of *conmigo*
- *Incorrect use of ser* where *ir* was required

Recommendations

Teachers must ensure that, as far as possible, they use the target language in the classroom so that students will become comfortable hearing Spanish being spoken around them. The use of online radio stations and podcasts will also aid in providing this authentic language experience to the students. 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 addition, students must be encouraged to pay attention to the details which are required in the questions and particularly to listen carefully to the demands of the question before responding. **Much more oral practice is needed.**

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 2018

**SPANISH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY**

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GENERAL COMMENTS

In 2018, 70 per cent of candidates achieved Grades I–III compared with 67 per cent in 2017. There was an improvement in performance in Profiles 1, 3 and 4 (Listening, Speaking and Writing respectively), while Profile 2 (Reading) showed a decline.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 — Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprised two sections, assessed 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. There was an improvement in candidates' performance in 2018 compared with 2017.

Paper 02 — Free Response

Section I (Question 1) — Directed Situations

This question required that candidates read carefully the directions regarding each of ten situations described in English and then provide appropriate written responses in Spanish to each situation. It assessed candidates' knowledge of Spanish vocabulary, inclusive of idiomatic expressions, Spanish grammar rules and structure. Marks were awarded if responses included all details in the situation and adequately communicated meaning. Responses were categorized as appropriate or partially appropriate and were awarded marks accordingly, with penalties for errors pertaining to the quality of language. Inappropriate responses were awarded no marks even if the language or expression was perfect.

Candidates' Performance

Overall, candidates' performance ranged between satisfactory and good. Some candidates were able to respond correctly to each situation, while there were a few who clearly lacked the vocabulary to competently express themselves. There were some exceptional responses where candidates demonstrated a level of creativity, command of accurate grammar and wide vocabulary. Most candidates understood/recognized the function which needed to be addressed and attempted to provide an appropriate response.

Candidates' Strengths

Candidates generally observed the rubric and responded with precision and language accuracy. The quality of responses revealed that some candidates were well prepared for the exam. These candidates followed through in the examination, honing the lessons learnt and applying them accordingly to each

situation. They obviously understood the requirements of the question and showed great ingenuity in answering questions that called for more than a straightforward answer. The range of vocabulary used was impressive.

Candidates' Weaknesses

Candidates seemed weak in the use of correct/appropriate vocabulary required to respond to the situations given. Examples include using the word '*atender*' for 'attending' or '*asistir*' for 'helping' in Spanish. There were many candidates who would have earned better scores if they had not made avoidable errors especially with regard to spelling. Candidates suffered penalties for the omission and/or the inclusion of accents and tildes where these affected the meaning for the context (for example, *que/qué, mama/mamá, papa/papá, mi/mí, como/cómo, tu/tú*).

Word order was another area of weakness for some candidates as was the writing of the time in Spanish. Candidates also had difficulty distinguishing between *por* and *para, ser/estar, tu/ti, me/mi*. The use of the subjunctive was often overlooked. Some candidates were also not cognizant of the familiar and polite forms of address, using *usted* and *tú* inappropriately or interchangeably.

Candidates were also challenged in converting what would be an appropriate answer in English to Spanish. In the process, general grammar and vocabulary errors were noted. Examples include the following:

- '*A el*' instead of *al*
- The use of the preposition '*a*' instead of *en*
- Lack of agreement with respect to gender and number

In addition to the errors already mentioned, there were candidates who misinterpreted what they were expected to do with the information in the situations and who therefore neglected to include all the elements required for a full response. There were also some candidates who unnecessarily complicated their responses, writing extended pieces where a shorter answer would have sufficed.

Comments on Individual Situations

Situation (a)

You have done well in your examinations. Write the note you receive from your aunt congratulating you and promising to do something special for you. (Function: Congratulating and promising)

Suggested Response: *Felicitaciones, voy a comprarte un regalo bien bonito.*

Most candidates were able to identify the requirements for this response and were able to think of two appropriate details to ensure a full response. Others were able to score at least one mark for this item.

Some candidates were not familiar with the terms *enhorabuena*, *felicitaciones* or *felicidades*, but spelling was one of the major problems candidates encountered in attempting this question, as many of them often spelt *felicitaciones* and *felicidades* wrong. *Felicidades* was frequently spelt '*felizcidades*'. It was good to see that many candidates got around the problem of spelling these words by using simpler, equally acceptable ways of congratulating, for example, *Muy bien*, *Bien hecho* or simply *Bien*.

Another major error was observed when candidates attempted to say, for example, "Congratulations on your exams", forgetting that Spanish is a more literal language and you would need to say congratulations on passing your exams. Thus, many candidates wrote '*Felicitaciones en tus exámenes*'/'*Felicitaciones por tus exámenes*' when it should be *Felicitaciones en aprobar tus exámenes*/*Felicitaciones por aprobar tus exámenes*.

The following common errors were encountered:

- Use of the subject pronoun after *por* or *para*, for example, *voy a tener una fiesta por tu*
- Many used the preposition '*ti*' when *te* was required and vice versa, for example, '*Voy a comprar un regalo para te.*'/'*Voy a comparti/tu un regalo.*' Candidates demonstrated unfamiliarity with the use of the words *tu*, *tú*, *te* and *ti*.
- *Tomar* was often used instead of *llevar*, for example, "*Voy a tomarte al cine.*"
- Most candidates who used the word *cuando* with future time were not aware that the subjunctive is needed.
- Candidates also misused the expression '*pasar un examen*', thinking it meant to pass an exam.

Situation (b)

You wish to borrow an item from one of your classmates. Write the note you send to him/her making the request. (Function: Requesting)

Suggested Response: *¿Puedes prestarme un bolígrafo por favor?*

This situation was fairly well done. Candidates were able to make a request for a specific item. However, many candidates were unfamiliar with the expression 'to borrow', *pedir prestado*, and those who tried to use it mixed up the expressions 'to borrow' and 'to lend'. The more imaginative candidates used the verb *to use*, adding a period of time and thus gaining full marks (for example, *puedo usar tu bolígrafo por este examen*).

Candidates are encouraged to find alternative ways of expressing themselves when they lack knowledge of specific vocabulary. Since the function was requesting, candidates lost marks for using the imperative. Candidates also misused the registers in addressing their classmate in the formal way, *usted*. Some even confused both registers in the same sentence, for example, "*Prestame su libro por favor.*"

Situation (c)

You send a short email to Anita informing her of an incident and the time it occurred. Write the email that you send. (Function: Providing information)

Suggested Response: *Dos chicos pelearon en la escuela esta mañana a las ocho.*

This situation proved to be one of the most challenging simply because most candidates did not seem to understand what the word 'incident' meant. Responses such as '*llegué a la escuela*' or '*Había una fiesta en mi casa*' were candidates' interpretation of the incident.

Another major problem was that candidates did not seem to understand that the time the incident occurred as stated in the question meant *clock* time, so the time of day was missing from many responses. General periods of time like '*la semana pasada*', '*ayer*' and '*anoche*' were used but were not accepted. Also, there were candidates who came up with their own names of the person rather than using the name given, though mentioning the name was not essential for the question to be appropriate.

The most common errors noted for this situation included the following:

- Unfamiliarity with the conjugation of the verb *morir* was evident. For example, responses such as *muertio/morio/muertido/morido* were seen.
- There were many candidates who had literal translations of someone being in an accident, for example, "*fue/estaba en un accidente*" instead of *tuvo un accidente/sufrió un accidente*.
- Also, there was misuse of *a las* and *son las* with time and *en* and *a* meaning *at a place*.

Situation (d)

Manuel is unable to go on a field trip with his class. Write the note his mother sends to his teacher apologizing and giving a reason. (Function: Apologizing with reason)

Suggested Response: *Siento decir que Manuel no puede ir porque está enfermo.*

This item was well handled by the majority of candidates. Most candidates gave simple responses similar to the suggested response. However, comprehension and interpretation of the situation was an issue for some candidates as was lack of due attention to the wording of the question. These were evident in some responses as candidates wrote in the first person as Manuel rather than as Manuel's mother.

There were also those candidates who did not pay attention to the details, especially where the use of the pronoun or a name of a person was included in the response, writing Juan instead of Manuel or '*ella*' instead of *él*. Candidates also lost marks for not including the apology part of the response, as they simply gave a reason. Others apologized without giving a reason.

Common errors encountered for this situation included the following:

- Omission of *a* after *ir*, for example, “*no va poder*”
- Incorrect agreement, for example, “*él/Manuel está enferma*”
- Unfamiliarity with the use of *ser* and *estar* and incorrect agreement, for example, “*Manuel es enferma.*”
- Uncertainty with respect to the use of *Lo siento* and *Siento que*. Most candidates who used *Siento que* were not aware that the subjunctive was needed

Situation (e)

Your cousin who lives overseas is returning home after spending a vacation with you. Write a farewell note to her expressing how you feel about her leaving. (Function: Expressing feeling)

Suggested Response: *Estoy triste que regreses hoy pero buen viaje.*

This was one of the easier items for many candidates. They were able to handle both aspects with a simple goodbye and a simple feeling.

However, some candidates lost marks for not including a farewell and others for not including a feeling. Candidates who did not read the situation carefully missed that the cousin was female and therefore used nouns and adjectives that were masculine, for example, “*Hasta la vista primo bonito.*” Candidates are to be commended for using expressions such as *Voy a echarle de menos.*

Common errors encountered for this situation included the following:

- Lack of subjunctive after *estar triste que*, for example, “*Estoy triste que estás saliendo*”
- Use of *por* and *para* with *gracias*, for example, “*Muchas gracias para tu visita*”
- Errors of agreement, for example, ‘*tu vacaciones (tus vacaciones)*’, ‘*con with mi (conmigo)*’

Situation (f)

Your brother has gone out and leaves a note informing you of where he went and why. Write the note he leaves. (Function: Explaining)

Suggested Response: *Fui a la biblioteca para estudiar.*

This item was very well handled, with many scoring full marks. However, some candidates did not read the situations carefully and so lost marks for not giving a reason. Comprehension and interpretation of the situation was an issue for some candidates, as evident in responses which did not address the person going somewhere and stating why. One such example was “*Gracias, para decirle, que ibas fuera de casa*

y dejarme estas notas." This response does not contain anything pertaining to the situation. It does not state where the person has gone and why.

There were also responses that contained only a part of the requirement: "*Voy al parque con mis amigos.*" Some candidates wrote that they had travelled to another country, for example. While candidates were not penalized for such responses, it was evident that they did not understand the context of the question as *gone out* implies 'not gone very far', with the intention to return.

Common errors encountered for this situation included the following:

- The preposition *para* was often left out when explaining where the brother went, for example, "*Fui a la biblioteca estudiar*"
- Incorrect use of the first person singular of the past tense of the verb *ir*, for example, using '*fue*' instead of *fui*
- Use of *a* instead of *en* when referring to where the brother was, for example, '*Estoy al parquet*'

Situation (g)

Your sister is purchasing a gift for your mother. She sends you a picture of two items. Write the message you send to her stating your preference with a reason. (Function: Expressing preference, giving a reason)

Suggested Response: *Prefiero la blusa roja porque es el color favorito de Mamá.*

This item was generally well handled. Some candidates provided very accurate responses using very simple language, for example, "*Prefiero la blusa porque es muy bonita.*"

Common errors encountered for this situation included the following:

- Problems with agreement of noun and adjective.
- Unfamiliarity with the use of *gustar* when referring to a third person. Very few candidates seemed to be familiar with the expression *A mamá le gusta-n ...*

Situation (h)

You are going out with friends. Write the note your father leaves you instructing you of two things you should not do. (Function: Warning)

Suggested Response: *No tomes bebidas alcohólicas ni llegues tarde a casa.*

Stronger candidates were able to use two negative commands well. Candidates who were unsure of how to correctly use imperatives avoided them altogether with the use of the verb *deber*, for example, “*No debes tomar y no debes regresar tarde a casa.*”

A few candidates did not read the situation carefully and lost marks for giving two positive instructions: “*Llega a casa temprano y quédate con tus amigos.*”

Common errors encountered for this situation included the following:

- Inability to use imperatives properly
- Incorrect use of and missing registers
- Use of ‘y’ instead of *ni* in sentences. For example, instead of saying *No debes tomar ni fumar*, many candidates wrote “*No debes fumar y tomar.*”
- Misuse of *a* and *en* when speaking about a place, for example, “*No te quedes mucho tiempo a los bares.*”

Situation (i)

You are the secretary of a club and scheduled a meeting. Write the email you send to the club members reminding them of two details of the meeting. (Function: Reminding with details)

Suggested Response: *Recuerden que la reunión va a ser en el auditorio a las tres de la tarde.*

Most candidates recognized the requirements of the situation and included the two relevant elements in their responses. A few candidates lost marks for giving only one detail of the meeting.

Common errors encountered for this situation included the following:

- Misuse of *son las* and *a las* when referring to the time the meeting will take place
- Unfamiliarity with the word *el* meaning *on* or *on the* when referring to a day or date, for example, “*Vamos a encontrarnos en lunes*”
- Use of ‘a’ instead of *en* in talking about where the meeting would be, for example, “*Vamos a encontrarnos a mi casa*”
- Unfamiliarity with the use of verb *ser* meaning *to take place*, thus giving responses such as “*La reunión está en la escuela*”

Situation (j)

Rosario has invited you to an activity. Write the note you send to her accepting the invitation and offering to help with something. (Function: Accepting and offering help)

Suggestion Response: *Me gustaría ir y voy a traer los refrescos.*

This item was fairly well done. However, some candidates had problems accepting an invitation and simply used the word *Sí*.

Common errors encountered for this situation included the following:

- Misuse of the verbs *asistir* and *ayudar* for offering help
- Omission of preposition after *ayudar*
- Use of gerund instead of infinitive, for example, “¿Necesitas ayuda en ‘cocinando’ la comida?”
- Unfamiliarity with use of the subjunctive with *querer que*, for example, “¿Quieres que te ayude con la comida?”

Further Comments and Recommendations

The situations required vocabulary and grammatical structures well within candidates’ abilities. They were also concisely stated so that the functions/requirements were unambiguous and easily identified. Many candidates would have scored more highly if they had read each situation more carefully in order to identify the function and focused on responding only to the stated requirements. Candidates are advised that the more concise their responses the less likely they are to make mistakes. They should observe that they are required to provide their responses in one sentence only, so providing extended responses is not encouraged. The focus should be on addressing all the elements required in a fully appropriate response. Candidates should therefore be trained to keep sentences uncomplicated while using idioms correctly.

Additionally, candidates must pay attention to correct spelling as marks can be lost through careless omissions of accents. Candidates should be encouraged to learn and use common expressions which can satisfy the requirements of a range of situations likely to be presented. Simple verb structures such as *ir a + infinitive*, *poder + infinitive*, *tener que + infinitive* are very useful for almost all types of situations.

It is important that candidates read questions carefully; respond specifically regarding the information required and recognize the required function. In guiding students’ writing, teachers should emphasize the need for students to underline the key words and phrases in the situation so that they do not omit important information when constructing their responses.

Teachers are encouraged to continue to employ different methods and strategies to enable students to strengthen their competency in the language. In this technological age, there is need to explore creative

ways to engage students, to assist them in acquiring the content so that they are able to utilize same in meaningful, grammatically correct sentences. Teachers could probably have relay exercises in which a student reads aloud a situation, another student articulates what function is required, the next student provides the appropriate expressions for the situation, with the last student in the relay constructing the sentence or answers appropriate to the situation. The relay team that finishes first and has a perfect score would be deemed the winner.

Section II (Question 2 — Letter)

Candidates were required to write a letter of 130–150 words based on four given cues. They were assessed on use of language, accuracy, coherence and clarity of expression. The cues were not narrowly structured and allowed candidates to express themselves in language which would have been within their ability. Even candidates whose vocabulary and grammar might have been limited would not have been disadvantaged. The question demanded the use of a wide range of tenses, which included the present, preterite, imperfect and future.

Letter

You are on a student exchange programme overseas. Write a letter to your Mexican friend in which you include

- (i) how you were selected to participate in the programme
- (ii) information about the country you are presently visiting and your host family
- (iii) activities in which you have participated during your stay
- (iv) how you will promote the exchange programme upon your visit home.

Candidates' Performance

Overall, candidates' performance ranged between moderate and satisfactory. Although most candidates remained within the required word count, there were too many who fell short and still too many who went way beyond the 150-word limit. Candidates must make a more serious effort to obey instructions as they are penalized for failure to do. Also, having an excessively lengthy letter does not increase the chances of achieving a higher grade.

There was widespread use of English words and phrases. Candidates are reminded that they are required to write a letter in Spanish. The following constructions were seen.

- *Yo fui a Spain./Yo estoy en Spain ahora./Voy a England.*
- *Fue a Eiffel tower./Fui a Westminster Bridge./Fui a Buckingham Palace.*
- *Soy estudiante de 'el student exchange programme'./Estoy en el programa "We say yes".*
- *Trabaja bien para estar en la "Work hard, go abroad".*
- *Nosotros visitamos New York City y London.*

In all these cases candidates should have been able or should have made an attempt to render the English words/expressions in Spanish, except in the case of some proper nouns (England = *Inglaterra*; tower = *la torre*; bridge = *la puente*; palace = *el palacio*; New York City = *la ciudad de Nueva York*; Spain = *España*).

It must be noted that although examiners are encouraged and, in fact, are required to ensure that as far as possible all scripts are read thoroughly in order to arrive at the correct grade, this is sometimes hard to achieve because of illegible handwriting, which is extremely difficult to decipher. Candidates need to expend more effort in producing legible scripts. It is also regrettable that what might be considered the main theme of the letter, namely, a student exchange programme, could not be rendered adequately in Spanish by the majority of candidates.

Candidates' Strengths

Some candidates demonstrated a strong command of the language and used a very wide range of expressions. In describing activities in which they participated, they not only incorporated the usual expressions for leisure/sporting activities but also used expressions such as *el senderismo*, *montar a caballo* and *visitar las cataratas*. Some also used expressions such as *platicar*, *me chifla*, *son muy señores*, *vamos al grano*, *me divertí montón*, *acogedor*, *aspirante*, *me tocó*, and *chido*, to name a few.

There was good use of idioms, even by weaker candidates, and as such the standard of work presented was high. Additionally, the structure of some sentences was worthy of commendation.

- *Por mis buenas calificaciones fui elegido en un programa escolar ...*
- *He participado en un sin fin de actividades.*
- *Comimos hasta mas no poder.*
- *Me llevo bien con ellos porque son carinosos.*
- *A mi parecer, lo mejor del viaje son los platos venezolanos.*
- *Tengo hospedaje con ...*
- *Son simpáticos y echan muchos chistes.*

The use of the subjunctive, when necessary, was in evidence.

- *Ellos me tratan muy bien como si fuera su hijo.*
- *Cuando regrese a mi país, cuando vuelva a mi país.*
- *Me gustaría que estuvieras aquí conmigo.*
- *Espero que este programa en el cual estoy participando me pueda servir mucho en el future.*
- *Espero que te vaya bien.*
- *Que Dios te bendiga.*

Most candidates were familiar with the format for letter writing. The date, salutation and also the opening and closing paragraphs were well written by most candidates.

Candidates' Weaknesses

The perennial error of the omission of required accents was rampant. There were some candidates who could not produce the basic vocabulary expected at this level, one example being the Spanish equivalent for the month May. Quite a number of candidates seemed unable to structure a sentence and indicate its end by putting a full stop. In many instances words flowed from one idea to another with no punctuation and no capitalization of proper nouns or the first word in the new sentence or idea.

Not many candidates were able to adequately formulate a phrase which expressed *a student exchange programme* or *the family with which I am staying is*. There was also general weakness in the area of grammar, with a few examples highlighted below.

- Lack of agreement between adjective and noun, for example, "*la familia es divertido y cariñoso*".
- Faulty conjugation of verbs, especially irregular verbs, for example, '*Yo fue*', '*fuemos yo juge*', '*yo deciré*', '*ellos dijieron*'
- Incorrect use of *ser* and *estar*, for example, "*Yo soy en Perú.*" "*Estoy un estudiante.*" "*La casa está verde y blanca.*"
- Errors related to the gender of some simple nouns, for example, '*la padre*', '*la país*', '*una programa*', '*un madre*', '*el familia*'.
- Failure to include all required accents.
- Misspelling of first person form of the verbs *jugar* in the preterite (*jugué*) and *llegar* in the present subjunctive (*cuando llegue*).
- Unfamiliarity with the use of the subjunctive with *cuando* when future time is implied.
- Errors relating to subject/verb and noun/adjective agreement, for example, "*La gente son divertidos.*"

A very large number of candidates committed errors ranging from the very basic such as incorrectly writing the date in Spanish to incorrectly using the preterite and subjunctive. Many candidates did not know the Spanish equivalent for the month of May and those who did capitalized the word. In the majority of scripts there were problems pertaining to the date; either there was the article *el* before the date or the omission of *de* before the month and year.

Several candidates had issues distinguishing between the words *ciudad* and *cuidad* and used the latter as the equivalent to the English word city. There were similar problems between *porque* and *a causa de*; *a eso de* and *acerca de*; *pero* and *perro*. In addition, there was confusion with respect to using vocabulary suitable for the context in which an idea was being conveyed, as seen in the following examples:

- *Yo voy a reloj baloncesto* = I am going to watch basketball.

- *Derecho ahora* = Right now.
- *Yo participo en actividades gusta nadar, comprar, pintar ...* = I participate in activities like ...
- *Hay muchos hacer gusta visitar el museo.*
- Using '*las gentes*' (the people) instead of *la gente* and '*las ropas*' (clothes) instead of *la ropa*

Recommendations

- The teaching of grammar might appear to be burdensome to many but it cannot be overlooked. The need for good grammar must be emphasized. Constant drilling is required.
- The use of good idioms in letter writing must be encouraged. Idioms add some measure of delight to what is written.
- More time and effort must be spent on understanding the need for the use of the subjunctive.
- The conjugation of verbs, particularly irregular verbs, needs greater attention.
- There is need for regular practice in letter writing and in acquiring a pool of idiomatic expressions which might enhance the quality of candidates' production.
- There must be greater effort to be competent in the use of verbs, particularly irregular verbs. Certain verbs are almost sure to be needed in any Spanish exam. These may include *tener, ir, decir, hacer, ver*.
- Practice in writing responses as assignments and under test conditions is encouraged.
- Attention needs to be paid to learning vocabulary.
- More attention needs to be paid to applying correct grammatical rules.
- It is necessary that students be guided in the correct use of a dictionary, to alleviate the incorrect use of vocabulary.
- The importance of accents must be stressed.
- Language learnt in junior classes ought not to be ignored.
- Games and drills should be used to practise the language.
- Students can be directed to appropriate websites for further practice.
- Prospective candidates are encouraged to use their smartphones, tablets, etc. to access websites where learning the language may be easier.

Section III (Question 3) — Contextual Dialogue

Demands of the Section

This section required candidates to complete a contextual dialogue. Cues in English were provided for both options. The contextual dialogue was in keeping with the information outlined in the syllabus and therefore within the scope of candidates' ability.

Contextual Dialogue

You and your friend Raul are talking about a vacation from which his family just returned. Responses to all of the cues listed below must be included in the dialogue.

- (i) A discussion of where his family went
- (ii) A description of the hotel where they stayed
- (iii) Things they saw and did
- (iv) Information about night life
- (v) Plans for next year's vacation

Candidates' Strengths

Most candidates observed the rubric of the question and attempted to address at least three of the cues. There was a fairly good manifestation of grammatical competence and good vocabulary. Examples of good usage of language included the following:

- *Todas las películas aparecieron interesantes.*
- *Nadé, di una vuelta en bicicleta, saqué unas fotos, tomé el sol, visité las montañas.*
- *Mi familia y yo fuimos a Cancun y nos divertimos mucho.*
- *Era una experiencia inolvidable.*

Candidates' Weaknesses

Some candidates who attempted the question failed to show a solid command of grammar and knowledge of relevant vocabulary and structures. Many of them did not understand the meaning of *la proximidad a la playa* nor *la vida nocturna* and therefore misused them in their responses. Weaker candidates simply reused words and sentences from the given cues as their responses. Other examples of errors included the following:

- *"No sabo español"* for *No sé español*
- *'Buen'* for *bien*
- *"Nadé con mis premios"* for *Nadé con mis primos*
- Poor noun and adjective agreement, for example, *'el hotel es maravillosa'*, *'la vida nocturna es aburrido'*
- Incorrect noun and verb agreement, for example, *"Las vacaciones estuvo bien."*
- Incorrect use of *ser* and *estar* (especially with the location and description of the hotel).
- Poor use of *por* and *para*.
- Poor conjugation and use of verbs (*ir, gustar, jugar, ser, estar*) in the preterite and imperfect tenses, for example, *"Me gusté la vida nocturna"; "Jugué al fútbol con ..."*. There were also other errors including *"Yo pudi/comé/sacé"*.

- Limited use of the future tense (for the last cue) and where it was used the conjugation and spelling was wrong.
- Use of literal translations, for example, '*hay eran*' for *there were*; '*soy visito*' for *I visited*; "*yo plano a vengo espalda Mexico*" for *I plan to come back to Mexico*; '*lo era*' for *it was*.
- Limited use of idiomatic expressions and appropriate use of prepositions, for example, '*cerca a la playa*' instead of *cerca de la playa*.
- Limited use of accents where necessary.
- Use of '*y*' before words beginning with *I* or *hi* instead of *e*.

Vocabulary and spelling were also an area of concern. Some obvious errors included the following:

- '*perro*' for *pero*
- '*famila*'/'*femilia*' for *familia*
- '*jente*' for *gente*
- '*vistar*' for *visitar*
- '*ay*' for *hay*

Recommendations

- Students need to be exposed to different ways of expressing the verb *gustar*. They were not able to adequately communicate *My mother/father likes the night life*. They frequently omitted *a* and *le*.
- More time should be spent on this component of the examination. Students need to be taught how to do a contextual dialogue using the utterances that come before and after to help them to make their responses.
- Students need to be given more practice in the preparation and writing of the contextual dialogues as well as oral practice, reflecting themes and format. The reading of dialogues from texts, newspapers and magazines should be encouraged. Also, students should be given completed dialogues (along with other possible responses), to discuss the tenses, vocabulary and structures used in the exercise.
- Candidates are encouraged to read through the dialogue before inserting their responses, to allow for the natural flow of conversation. Furthermore, they should note that the order of the cues does not necessarily mean that the dialogue is written in the same order.
- Candidates are encouraged to avoid writing in English and then translating, when writing in and out of the classroom.
- Candidates need to build and strengthen their vocabulary as well as be exposed to and learn idioms, synonyms and antonyms in the target language, to incorporate in their writing.
- Students should be helped/taught how to manage set word limits and not just be told what the word limit is. In addition, teachers need to encourage students to review and reread their work at all times. Teachers can plan and structure review time into each lesson to help students get into the habit of looking over their work before submission.

Section IV (Question 4) — Reading Comprehension

This question tests candidates' ability to read a passage in Spanish and then to demonstrate comprehension skills by responding in English to questions posed in English, based on the passage they have read.

Demands of the Question

The reading comprehension passage was at a level appropriate for candidates who would have completed almost five years of learning Spanish. The level of vocabulary was such that candidates should have been able to understand the passage and answer the questions in English.

Candidates' Performance

Most candidates showed that they had the necessary vocabulary skills in order to achieve full comprehension of the passage. As the general context of the passage proved easily comprehensible, many candidates were able to achieve full marks. However, this was not the case for weaker candidates who lacked knowledge of certain key vocabulary items and so experienced challenges.

Too many candidates continue to ignore the instructions to answer in English and so they responded in Spanish or a combination of Spanish and English. Candidates are advised that there are penalties for failure to observe the rubric.

Candidates' Strengths

Most candidates understood the information required to answer Parts (a), (b), (d), (e), (g) and (i), and responded appropriately.

Candidates' Weaknesses

Many candidates did not give the expected responses for Parts (c), (f), (h) and (j). Candidates had difficulty with Parts (h) and (i) as the responses tended to overlap. Most candidates faced challenges in responding to Part (j), as they were unable to fully express themselves in order to obtain full marks. Their responses required more in-depth analysis.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question (a): What kind of student was Lucita?

Suggested Response: *She was hardworking.*

Incorrect Response: She was an applicable student.

The responses to this question were quite good except where candidates misinterpreted *falso amigo* 'aplicada', thus translating as applicable.

Question (b): What was Lucita's goal?

Suggested Response: *To get a job to help family.*

Incorrect Response: To do good.

There were a few incorrect responses. Most candidates were able to translate *empleo* and those who had difficulty translated based on context using helpers like *trabajaba* and *obtener*. Therefore, most candidates scored 1–2 marks on this question.

Question (c): What happened to Lucita's father?

Suggested Response: *He died.*

Incorrect Response: He went away.

This question was quite problematic for some candidates. A few of them responded by saying that the father was not mentioned in the passage and scored no marks. Even though the father was not mentioned, students who knew the meaning of *viuda* would have easily figured out what happened to him. Misunderstanding of *viuda* indicates limited knowledge of vocabulary in the area of family.

Question (d): How did Lucita's mother provide for the family?

Suggested Response: *She worked in a supermarket.*

Incorrect Response: She was in a store.

Most candidates understood this question and were able to give accurate responses. The cognates *trabajaba* and *supermercado* made it easy for candidates to score full marks. Even if some candidates did not recognize *cajera*, they could have still obtained full marks on this question. The responses indicate that more emphasis should be placed on the topic "Professions".

Question (e): What was Lucita's class planning this year?

Suggested Response: *A trip abroad.*

Incorrect Response: An educational tour to a place.

This question was generally well understood by candidates, as some of them could relate to planning an educational visit to a Spanish-speaking country. Additionally, the two consecutive cognates in the phrase *una visita educativa* made translation very easy. However, some candidates encountered problems translating *extranjero* as *foreign*, thus losing a mark. Perhaps the absence of *país* caused them to become confused.

Question (f): How did Professor Alameda try to help Lucita?

Suggested Response: *Looked for donations from her country.*

Incorrect Response: She wanted help from her friends.

Candidates seemed to be quite comfortable with *viajes educativos*, which most translated correctly. Perhaps their desire to travel contributed to their interest in content related to the topic "Travel". However, some candidates did not comprehend the Spanish business word *compañía* and confused its

correct meaning with 'companions.' On the other hand, the cognate *donaciones* was easily understood, which led to most candidates scoring at least one mark.

Question (g): What kind of response did Professor Alameda get?

Suggested Response: *Donations were not given for those kinds of trips.*

Incorrect Response: No one donated.

This question was generally well handled. Most candidates were able to correctly provide the first part of the answer. However, they did not include the second part of the response and so did earn the full two marks. Candidates need to pay more attention to the rubric and provide the information required.

Question (h): What did Profesor Alameda suddenly remember?

Suggested Response: *That there was an old rich woman who was looking for someone to read to her.*

Incorrect Response: Someone was looking for help.

While most candidates obtained the first mark for understanding the cognate *rica*, some misinterpreted *falso amigo* 'anciana' to mean 'ancient', instead of *old woman*. Fortunately, they were required to have either old or rich so the mark was almost guaranteed. A few candidates did not understand what *leyéndole* meant and so provided incorrect responses. More attention should be placed on conjugating irregular past participles.

Question (i): What arrangement was made between Lucita and the other person?

Suggested Response: *The woman would pay for the trip and Lucita would spend two hours with her on Fridays and Saturdays.*

Incorrect Response: She would work during the week.

The requirements for this question included *lady pays, spend time* and *on weekends*. The vocabulary used in the passage linked to this response was simple to interpret, *la mujer pagaría el viaje y Lucita iría los fines de semana leyéndole a ella*. Candidates need to pay more attention to the mark scheme and should aim to fulfil the requirements of the question.

Question (j): What was Lucita's reaction to the arrangement. Explain.

Suggested Response: Happy because she got an unexpected opportunity.

Incorrect Response: She works and travels.

Some candidates who earned full marks on other parts in this section lost marks in Part (j). Most of them obtained at least one mark for *happy, grateful* or another feeling. A few candidates rewrote their responses to Part (i). Another guaranteed mark was awarded for stating that it was an opportunity, which was an opportunity in itself as the answer was revealed in the cognate *oportunidad*. The final mark was the most difficult to obtain for those who literally translated, *Nunca olvidaría esta oportunidad*, instead of mentioning what the opportunity was. There were many instances where candidates stated a reaction but gave no explanation for the reaction.

Recommendations to Candidates

- As answer booklets are now being scanned, it is important that candidates take care with their handwriting and the kind of pen that they use.
- Candidates are encouraged to read more, both in English and in Spanish, so they can learn the meanings of words, learn the synonyms for words in Spanish and English, how to spell and how to use language.
- It is important that candidates read the given instructions carefully and avoid including Spanish in their answers.
- Candidates are advised to read the entire passage before they begin to answer the questions. It is also very important to pay keen attention to what is required for each question and to give precise and concise answers. Providing irrelevant information indicates a lack of comprehension, detracts from answers and results in the loss of marks.
- Make use of the information regarding marks allocated to individual questions. Obviously, a response of more than one mark hints at the amount of detail to be provided.
- Candidates are to be commended for adhering to the rubric. However, answering in a complete sentence does not mean that they should supply answers that are not in the passage. Neither should they provide answers that are required for other questions.
- Take time to explore all that the technology has to offer with regard to foreign language learning.

Recommendations to Teachers

When practising the 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:

- Vocabulary is important to comprehension. Students ought to keep revising vocabulary using revision techniques that work for their learning styles.
- Grammar is also critical in understanding the passage. Much practice is required, especially with respect to irregular verbs and the preterite tense.
- Students should be encouraged to read the passage at least three times in order to understand the story.
- It is recommended that teachers continue to dedicate quality time to Reading Comprehension exercises with their CSEC final year students at least once per week.
- Teachers can also employ the use of skimming and scanning as well as other scaffolding exercises to help students achieve mastery in the comprehension.
- Teachers are encouraged to continue the good practice of exposing students to the relevant vocabulary that is covered in the syllabus. Vocabulary can be tested/built through games, quizzes, oral presentations, role play and puzzles, among other things.

- The use of technology in the teaching and learning process could also enhance students' acquisition of necessary vocabulary and reading comprehension skills. Doing storyboards in Spanish will also help students build the necessary vocabulary.
- In incorporating reading comprehension activities into classes, teachers must continue to ensure that students are engaged in exercises that mirror the format of the CSEC examination and that the students clearly understand that the responses to the Reading Comprehension are to be in Spanish.
- Teachers are again encouraged to try to explore all that the internet has to offer to facilitate instruction. Please refer to past reports for websites previously recommended. In addition, teachers may find the following websites helpful.

<https://www.teachervision.com> (synonyms)

<https://quizlet.com> (synonyms/antonyms)

www.talkingpeople.net (skimming and scanning)

www.reallygoodstuff.com (teaching reading comprehension)

www.superteacherworksheets.com (reading passages)

www.spanishplayground.net (reading comprehension)

www.readingrockets.org (cognates)

Paper 03 — Oral Examination

The oral examination tested the ability of candidates to produce appropriate responses in Spanish to a number of situations testing specific functions, read aloud a short passage in Spanish and carry on a conversation in the target language by responding to questions based on four out of six topics set out in the syllabus (Home and Family, School and Career, Sports and Recreation, Daily Activities, Shopping and Travel).

Section I — Responses to Situations/Instructions

This section required candidates to produce appropriate oral responses in Spanish to situations/instructions described in English, in keeping with the function specific to the situation. Candidates' performance on this section demonstrated a range of abilities. Those who performed excellently in this section produced appropriate responses that were expressed correctly, demonstrating 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.

Candidates who performed poorly in this section showed very little command of grammar and vocabulary, to handle this oral part of the examination competently. In several cases there was some attempt to produce an appropriate response but the language was flawed with grammatical inaccuracies, structural inconsistencies and a limited range of vocabulary. Some candidates demonstrated a lack of

comprehension of the questions and struggled to put their ideas together in Spanish, which often led to disjointed responses, stringing together of arbitrary vocabulary and the use of a number of anglicisms. In a few cases candidates opted not to provide a response and requested to skip some of the situations. Some candidates translated the situation rather than give a response. Also, some candidates were unfamiliar with the correct registers when addressing someone.

The following grammatical errors were noted:

- Incorrect use of *ser* and *estar* (particularly with feelings and states of being)
- Challenges with subject–verb agreement
- Challenges with stem-changing verbs — *sugerir*, *preferir*
- Incorrect use of idiomatic expressions which require the use of the infinitive and/or the subjunctive. Challenges using the subjunctive with suggesting or advising
- Incorrect adjectival agreement in gender and number as well as incorrect use of irregular adjectives. Incorrect positioning of adjectives in extended sentences
- Challenges with the use of commands in the familiar form
- Incorrect definite and indefinite articles
- Incorrect use of pronouns, particularly distinguishing between subject pronouns and possessive pronouns
- Incorrect use of *gustar*
- Anglicisms often used when vocabulary terms were unknown
- Misuse of the verbs *asistir*, *ayudar*, *atender*
- Limited or no use of the subjunctive

Recommendations

- Candidates need to be apprised of syllabus requirements in terms of the functions they should be able to perform. Many candidates appeared not to be fully aware of the functions they needed to know in order to respond to the situations presented. Teachers are highly 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. Students must be encouraged to use more complex vocabulary structures and idioms while moving away from cliché expressions and words.

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. 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. They showed no knowledge of the importance of intonation and started and ended their reading passage in the same tone. Passages were not phrased correctly so meaning was lost. Additionally, punctuation such as commas and full stops were not observed. Little or no knowledge was displayed of rules of accentuation and stress.

Demonstration of weakness in pronunciation caused the following errors:

- Mispronunciation of the following sounds/letters
 - Z as English z
 - *Ge/gi* as gee
 - G versus J
 - H not read as silent
 - *Ll* pronounced as one 'l'
 - English rendition of vowels
 - Anglicized or incorrect pronunciation of certain words: *televisión, cuiden, jóvenes, usan, traigan, escuchábamos, goce, sirenas, piratas, Cartagena, hogareñas, recuerda, futuro*

Recommendations

Challenges in fluency and intonation in reading as outlined above typically 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. There is great need for exposure to authentic listening activities from the target culture.

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. In 2018 the topics on which the candidates were tested were Home and Family, School and Career, Sports and Recreation, Daily Activities, Shopping 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 challenging for several 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, other candidates struggled with this section, handicapped by limited vocabulary

and poor knowledge of grammatical structures. There was limited comprehension of the questions asked by some who asked for repetition constantly.

The errors in grammar evident in this section included the following:

- Confusion between imperfect and preterite past tenses
- Inconsistency regarding the use of *gustar*
- Use of *ser* versus *estar* (particularly with occupation)
- Use of *por* versus *para*, for example, *por mi familia ... para mi familia*
- Inaccurate conjugation of verbs, for example, *mi familia miramos, yo tengo que friego los platos*
- Adjectival agreement
- Agreement of articles, for example, *la día*
- Incorrect use of *me* before *prefiero*

Some of the vocabulary inaccuracies noted included the following:

- Unfamiliarity with *ahorros/gastos*
- Use of *ustedes* for *ellos*
- *Al cine* (*a la cine* was presented often)
- Use of '*la día*' instead of *el día*
- Use of '*las ropas*' instead of *la ropa*
- Use of '*la enferma*' for *la enfermera*

Recommendations

- As far as possible, teachers should ensure that the target language is used in the classroom so that students 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.
- Using content from online radio stations and podcasts will also aid in providing this authentic language experience for students.
- Students should be encouraged to pay attention to the details which are required in questions and, in particular, to listen carefully to the demands of a question before responding.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE[®]
EXAMINATION**

JANUARY 2019

**SPANISH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY**

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GENERAL COMMENTS

In January 2019, 364 candidates wrote the Spanish examination. This number is consistent with that of 2018 when 357 candidates wrote the examination. From this sitting, 60 per cent of the candidates achieved acceptable grades (I–III) in comparison with 64 per cent in 2018 and 62 per cent in 2017. There was significant improvement in Profile 2 (Reading), marginal improvement in Profile 1 (Listening) and a decline in Profile 4 (Writing).

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 — Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprised two sections, assessed 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. In 2019, 71 per cent of candidates achieved acceptable grades (I–III) compared with 75 per cent in 2018, representing a marginal decrease in performance.

Paper 02 — Free Response

Section I (Question 1) — Directed Situations

This question required that candidates read ten situations in English and then provide appropriate written responses in Spanish, for each situation.

The key elements used to assess candidates' competencies were their knowledge of Spanish vocabulary (inclusive of idiomatic expressions) and Spanish grammar rules and structure. Marks were awarded if the response included all details in the situation and adequately communicated meaning. Responses were categorized as appropriate or partially appropriate and were awarded marks accordingly, with penalties for errors in quality of language. Inappropriate responses were awarded no marks even if the language of expression was perfect.

Candidates' Performance

Overall, the performance of candidates ranged from satisfactory to good. Some candidates were able to respond correctly to each situation, while there were a few who lacked the vocabulary to express themselves competently. There were some exceptional responses where candidates demonstrated creativity and a command of accurate grammar, and used a wide range of vocabulary. Most candidates recognized the function which needed to be addressed and they attempted to provide appropriate responses.

Candidates' Strengths

Candidates generally observed the rubric and responded with precision and language accuracy. The quality of responses revealed that some candidates were well prepared for the examination. These candidates demonstrated an understanding of the requirements of the question, applied the lessons they had learnt to each situation and showed great ingenuity in answering questions that called for more than a straightforward answer. The range of vocabulary used was impressive.

Candidates' Weaknesses

Candidates seemed weak in the use of appropriate vocabulary to respond to the situations given. Examples include using the word *atender* for attending or *asistir* for helping in Spanish. Many candidates could have earned better scores if they had not made careless errors especially with regard to spelling. Candidates suffered penalties for the omission and/or the inclusion of accents and tildes where these affected the contextual meaning, for example, *que/qué*, *mama/mamá*, *papa/papá*, *mi/mí*, *como/cómo* and *tu/tú*).

Other areas of weakness for some candidates were word order, the writing of the time in Spanish and distinguishing between the use of *por/para*, *ser/estar*, *tu/ti*, *me/mi*.

The use of the subjunctive was often overlooked. Some candidates were also not cognizant of the familiar and polite forms of address, using *usted* and *tú* inappropriately or interchangeably.

An area of challenge for many candidates was converting what would be an appropriate answer in English, to Spanish. In the process, general grammar and vocabulary errors were noted. Some examples include:

- Using *a el* instead of *al*
- The use of the preposition *a* instead of *en*
- Failure to make gender and number agree

Further to the errors above, some candidates misinterpreted what they were expected to do with the information in the situation described and therefore neglected to include all the elements required for a full response. Some candidates also complicated their responses unnecessarily by writing extended pieces where a shorter answer would have sufficed.

Comments on Individual Situations

Situation (a)

Your pen pal wants to know how you and your family were affected by a recent hurricane in your area. Write the text message you send mentioning two ways in which you were affected. (Function: Providing information)

Suggested response: *Nuestra/Mi casa sufrió mucho daño y no tuvimos electricidad por tres días todavía no tenemos electricidad.*

Candidates had some difficulty providing a fully accurate response to this situation mainly due to a lack of vocabulary related to different parts of the house and surrounding areas. Most candidates tried to describe some sort of damage done to their house but could not find the appropriate vocabulary. The candidates who interpreted the situation to mean how they were affected personally, scored full marks for giving responses such as '*No podía ir a clases por una semana y no pude ver television porque no había electricidad.*' Many candidates mentioned only one way in which they were affected and got partial marks.

The following common errors were encountered:

- Misuse of *ser* and *estar*
- Unfamiliarity with the passive voice
- Noun and adjective agreement
- Confusing past participle with the preterite tense, for example, *roto* and *rompio*

Situation (b)

Write the email you send to your cousin in El Salvador congratulating him on winning a National Art competition and enquiring about the prize. (Function: Congratulating)

Suggested response: *Felicitaciones/Enhorabuena/Buen trabajo/Muy bien, ¿qué ganaste?*

Most candidates were able to offer their congratulations in some form. However, they encountered difficulty trying to express congratulations on winning something.

In many cases, candidates stated what was won instead of asking a question about the prize. The most common error encountered here was with use of the preterite tense.

Situation (c)

You want to have a surprise anniversary party for your parents. Write an email to your aunts and uncles inviting them and giving one detail about the party. (Function: Inviting with detail)

Suggested response: *Me gustaría invitar/leles/le/les invito a la fiesta el domingo/a las tres de la tarde.*

This was fairly well done. Candidates were able to provide some form of invitation with a detail. However, most candidates who tried to say 'my parents' anniversary party' struggled with this.

The most common errors included the following:

- The use of '*en la noche*' instead of *de la noche* when trying to give time as a detail
- Using '*a mi casa*' instead of *en mi casa*

Situation (d)

You wish to be selected as the class prefect. Write the text message you send to your classmates stating two promises you will fulfill if elected. (Function: Promising)

Suggested response: *Les prometo aire acondicionado en nuestra aula y cada estudiante tendrá acceso a una computadora*

Most candidates were able to give two promises even though many misspelt the word *prometo*. However, many knew to use *voy a* as a promise.

Situation (e)

You are the president of your school's Spanish club. Write the announcement you post on the notice board, mentioning two reasons why students should attend this meeting. (Function: Giving reasons)

Suggested response: *Para la próxima reunion vamos a tener un visitante importante y después habrá comida.*

This was well done. Candidates were able to provide two reasons why they should attend the meeting.

The most common errors encountered included the following:

- Using 'atender' instead of *asistir*
- The use of 'a' instead of *en*

Situation (f)

You and a classmate are meeting tomorrow to work on a project. Write the text message you send reminding him/her of the meeting along with a request for a specific item. (Function: Reminding and requesting)

Suggested response: *No olvides la reunión mañana y trae hojas de papel*

Some candidates neglected to give both details required. Generally, this situation was challenging to candidates because of their lack of knowledge of the following:

- Informal command, whether positive or negative. Some wrote '*recuerdas*' or '*no olvidas*'.
- Problems with the correct spelling of the word project in Spanish, *proyecto*.
- The use of the subjunctive with *cuando* to express future time.

Situation (g)

Your friend from Argentina is visiting soon. Write the email he/she sends indicating when he/she will arrive and one place he/she would like to visit. (Function: Providing information)

Suggested response: *Voy a visitar en julio y quisiera visitar la playa Maracas.*

Most candidates managed this question quite well. However, a few candidates did not do the second part of the sentence well. Instead of expressing that they would like to visit a place, they stated that they are going to visit a place.

Common errors encountered included the following:

- The incorrect way of using *en* to express the date rather than *el*, for example, '*vengo en lunes*' instead of *vengo el lunes* or '*llego en cinco de mayo*' rather than *llego el cinco de mayo*
- The use of '*en a*' instead of *de la* for specific time

Situation (h)

A student has fallen ill in class. Write the note the teacher sends to the principal mentioning what is wrong with the student and requesting assistance. (Function: Explaining and requesting help)

Suggested response: *¿Puede usted/Puedes llamar una ambulancia porque Juanita se desmayó?*

Most candidates failed to state specifically what was wrong with the student and simply wrote that the person was ill — '*Juanita está enferma*' or '*Juan se siente mal*'. Candidates also lost marks for not requesting the assistance of the principal.

Frequent errors encountered included the following:

- Using '*es*' instead of *está*.
- No use of *a* in front of the indirect object noun/pronoun when using the verb *doler*, for example, '*María le duele la cabeza*' instead of *A María le duele la cabeza*.
- Misuse of *asistir*, where *ayudar* should have been used.

Situation (i)

You will be missing school for a few days because you are going abroad with your parents. Write the note your mother sends to the school giving the reason for your absence and saying when you will return. (Function: Explaining)

Suggested response: *Profesor, Ana va a Barbados (para visitar a un pariente enfermo) y va a regresar en tres días/el tres de mayo.*

Most candidates did this question well. However, in a few instances, candidates wrote as if the note was from the child and not the parent. In some instances, candidates lost marks for not saying when the child would return.

The following were the most common errors encountered:

- Writing the date incorrectly
- Use of the personal *a*

Situation (j)

You forgot your best friend's birthday. Write the note of apology you send saying how you will make up for it. (Function: Apologizing)

Suggested response: *Siento olvidar tu cumpleaños Ana, te prometo hacer una torta de chocolate.*

Most candidates did this question well, giving both an apology and a promise.

The most common errors encountered included the following:

- Candidates not understanding when to use *lo siento* and *siento*. There were many instances of '*lo siento*' and '*lo muy siento*'.
- Using '*por olvidando*' instead of *por olvidar*.

Further Comments and Recommendations

The situations required vocabulary and grammatical structures well within the candidates' abilities. They were also concisely stated so that the functions/requirements were unambiguous and easily identified. Many candidates would have scored more highly if they had read each situation more carefully in order to identify the function and if they had focused on responding only to the stated requirements. Candidates are advised that the more concise their responses, the less likely they are to make mistakes. Candidates should observe that they are required to provide their responses in one sentence only, so providing extended responses is not encouraged. The focus should be on addressing all the elements required in a fully appropriate response. Teachers should therefore train students to keep their sentences uncomplicated while using idioms correctly.

Additionally, candidates must pay attention to correct spelling as marks can be lost through careless omissions of accents. Candidates are encouraged to learn and use common expressions which can satisfy the requirements of a range of situations likely to be presented. Simple verb structures such as *ir a* + infinitive, *poder* + infinitive, *tener que* + infinitive are very useful for almost all types of situations.

It is important that candidates read the situation carefully, provide answers specific to the information required and recognize the function which is required. In guiding students' writing, teachers should emphasize the need for students to underline the key words and phrases in the situation so that they do not omit important information when constructing their responses.

Teachers are encouraged to continue to employ different methods and strategies to enable students to strengthen competency in the language. In this technological age, there is a need to explore creative ways to engage students, to assist them in acquiring the content so that they will be able to utilize it in meaningful, grammatically correct sentences. Teachers could probably have relay exercises in which one student reads a situation aloud, another student articulates what function is required, the next student provides appropriate expressions for the situation, and the last student in the relay constructs the sentence or answers appropriately to the situation. The relay team who finishes first and has a perfect score is deemed the winner.

Section II (Question 2 — Letter)

Candidates were required to write a letter of 130–150 words based on four given cues. They were assessed on use of language, accuracy, coherence and clarity of expression. The demands of the question were suitable, adequate and within the candidates' life experiences. The cues were not narrowly structured and allowed candidates to express themselves in language which would have been within their ability. Even candidates whose vocabulary and grammar might have been limited, would not have been disadvantaged. The question demanded the use of a wide range of tenses which included the present, the preterite, the imperfect and the future.

Letter

Your school is involved in a project to help neighbouring countries that were affected by a natural disaster. Write the letter you send to your Cuban friend telling him/her about this project and be sure to include:

- (i) Why your school has undertaken this project
- (ii) What your school has done to help so far
- (iii) Other contributions you hope to get
- (iv) How he/she can support this cause

Bearing in mind the importance that CXC syllabuses and examinations place on relevance to everyday life, this compulsory question required candidates to write on a topic with which they can easily identify. Candidates who prepared adequately by paying attention to the syllabus outlined by CXC, were able to use the vocabulary, grammar and idioms necessary to produce good responses. Candidates were expected to cover all four cues given using a wide range of tenses, vocabulary and idioms within the stipulated word count of between 130 and 150 words.

The letter was attempted by most candidates. The marks ranged from excellent to poor, with most candidates falling within the moderate to satisfactory category. The demands of the question fell well within the scope of candidates. The topic was current and was one to which the candidates could easily relate.

Strengths

Most candidates attempted the question. They displayed the following strengths:

- The beginning and ending of the letter were well known.
 - *Espero que todo vaya bien*
 - *Recibí con alegría tu carta*
- The cues were generally followed.
- Few candidates wrote the date in words.
- The more competent candidates showed knowledge of tenses, including that of irregular verbs. The correct use of grammar and vocabulary created a comprehensive flow and coherence of language.
 - *Desafortunadamente otros países experimentaron el terror*
 - *Mi colegio ha hecho mucho*
 - *Sin embargo, queremos hacer más*
- The subjunctive was used appropriately by the more capable candidates.
 - *Espero que puedas ayudar*
- Idioms were used by a few candidates to enhance the style of writing.

Weaknesses

A few candidates were not adequately prepared and could not produce a good letter. There were many instances of poor grammar and poor knowledge of vocabulary and idioms, affecting flow and coherence.

Errors included the following:

- Omission of preposition – *Ayudar ^ la gente*
Queremos obtener más dinero ^ comprar
- Inclusion of preposition – *Esperamos 'a obtener'*
- Wrong vocabulary – *'asistieron' a las personas*
'Tú' amigo
Te escribo para 'hablarte' que mi escuela
Compramos 'comidas'
'Casos' de agua
- Date written in words or with the inclusion of *el* — *'once' de abril 'de dos mil' or 'el 12 de abril'*
- Omission of accents — *como estas/mas/paises/tu puedes*
- *Ser* used with gerund — *es ayudando*
- Lack of infinitive — *puedes ayudame*
- Wrong spelling — *dies/proyecto/contributions*
- Use of polite for friend — *Usted puede ayudar/Su amigo, Juan*
- Clumsy expressions — *Querida mi amiga*
Mi llamo es
Soy es
- Inclusion of definite article — *Necesitan 'los' libros, 'la' comida*
- Pluralizing collective nouns — *Las ropas, las gentes*
- Use of the verb *gustar* — *^ Mi escuela 'te' gusta ayudar*
- Poor rendition of the preterite — *'fueron/tenieron'*
- Lack of verb agreement — *Mi escuela 'quiero'*

Recommendations

- Candidates who are not prepared for the examination are encouraged not to write it.
- Productive practice of grammar is necessary, not just in exercises but in context, for reinforcement.
- Translation from one language to the next is still a necessary tool, which enables candidates to understand the nuances of the language and to move smoothly from one language to the next.
- The use of good idioms in candidates' letter writing is encouraged. Idioms add some measure of delight to what is written.
- More time and effort must be spent on understanding the need for the use of the subjunctive, which is a key aspect of Spanish grammar.
- Conjugation of verbs and more particularly, irregular verbs, needs more attention.
- Regular practice at letter writing and acquiring a pool of idiomatic expressions will enhance the quality of the responses candidates produce.
- The strengthening of all four skills — listening, reading, speaking and writing — will help the enhancement of each individual one. Meaningful use of games, projects, classroom activities and technology will promote teaching and learning.
- The teaching of grammar might appear to be burdensome to many but it must not be overlooked; the need for good grammar must be emphasized. Constant drilling is required.
- Greater effort must be made to be competent in the use of verbs, particularly irregular verbs, and especially those irregular verbs common to any Spanish exam. These may include *tener, ir, decir, hacer* and *ver*.

- Teachers should use practice assignments where responses are written under test conditions; this would aid them in thoroughly preparing students for this part of the examination.
- Attention needs to be paid to learning vocabulary.
- More attention needs to be paid to applying correct grammatical rules.
- It is necessary that students be taught the correct use of a dictionary to alleviate the incorrect use of vocabulary.
- The importance of accents must be stressed.
- Language learnt in junior classes should not be ignored.
- Use games and drills to practise the language.
- Students can be directed to appropriate websites for further practice. Prospective candidates are encouraged to use their smart phones, tablets, and other appropriate technology devices to access websites where learning the language can become easier.

Section III (Question 3) — Contextual Dialogue

This section required candidates to complete a contextual dialogue. Cues in English were provided for both options. The contextual dialogue is in keeping with the information outlined in the syllabus and therefore within the scope of candidates' ability.

Contextual Dialogue

You and your classmate are discussing an upcoming field trip to the Mexican embassy to meet and interact with the Mexican football team. You discuss your preparations before leaving school.

Responses to ALL of the cues listed below MUST be included in the dialogue.

- (i) Excitement to go on a field trip with your classmates
- (ii) Information about some items you have packed
- (iii) Anxiety about your ability to speak Spanish with the football team
- (iv) Discussion on ways to exchange information with the team
- (v) Exchange of goodbyes

Generally, performance on this question was satisfactory. Although it was within the scope of candidates' ability, there were a few candidates who did not attempt to answer the question at all. A number of candidates also wrote as if they were going to Mexico and not the embassy, so they mentioned packing suitcases and clothes. Furthermore, candidates who attempted the question did not provide appropriate responses based on the dialogue given.

Some frequent errors encountered included the following:

- *Soy emocionante/entusiasmo*
- Spelling and vocabulary for *cámara* — 'camera', 'camero', 'camarero'
- Use of 'hacer' instead of *tener* — 'Yo hago mi camea para sacar fotos'/'Yo hago mi dinero para ir al centro comercial después'
- Numbers — 'Tengo cinco ciento dolares'/'Yo tengo cien dineros'
- Use of 'por' for *para* — 'Tengo que comprar un regalo por mi mamá'

- Indiscriminate use of pronouns — *‘Podemos darles sus corre electrónico’/‘Hablaré con tú en la mañana’*
- Poor use of *gustar* — *‘Yo no gusto hablar español’*
- Poor use of adjectives — *‘Mi acento es muy mal’/‘Voy a sacar muchos fotos’*
- In many instances, candidates copied parts of the cues to complete their dialogue, which at times were appropriate.

Recommendations

- More time should be spent on this component of the examination. Students need to be taught how to formulate appropriate responses that fit into the contextual dialogue.
- Candidates need more practice in the preparation and writing of the contextual dialogues as well as oral practice, reflecting themes and format. The reading of dialogues from texts, newspapers and magazines is encouraged. Candidates should also use completed dialogues (along with other possible responses) and discuss the tenses, vocabulary and structures used in the exercise.
- Candidates are encouraged to read through the dialogue before inserting their responses, to allow for the natural flow of conversation. Furthermore, they should note that the dialogue does not necessarily have to be written in the same order as the cues.
- Candidates need to avoid writing in English and then translating.
- Candidates need to build and strengthen their vocabulary base, learn idioms, synonyms and antonyms in the target language, and incorporate these into their writing.
- Teachers need to train students how to manage set word limits. In addition, they should encourage students to review and reread their work at all times. Teachers can plan and structure review time into each lesson to help students get into the habit of looking over their work before submission.

Section IV (Question 4) — Reading Comprehension

This question tested 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.

The reading comprehension passage for the CSEC January 2019 examination was of a level that was quite appropriate for candidates who would have already attempted this question in the previous year. The level of vocabulary and grammar was such that, out of 20 marks, candidates could have consistently scored between 18 and 20.

Candidates’ performance was good; a few candidates gave answers that had nothing to do with the passage but the majority demonstrated a very good understanding of the passage, and therefore gained between 15 and 20 marks. In questions where more than one mark was awarded, unless the candidate did not understand the entire passage, candidates generally gained at least one mark; at most, two.

Strengths

- Candidates handled the last question fairly well. This question usually presents problems with interpretation and understanding.
- Instructions were adhered to quite well.

- Most candidates understood the vocabulary and the grammar used in the passage.

Weaknesses

- Many of the references to culture and to natural formations were not recognized by some candidates.
- Part (a), a one-mark question, was not answered correctly by most candidates.

Comments on Individual Questions

Part (a)

How long did the narrator stay in Costa Rica?

Suggested response: *The narrator spent a fortnight in Costa Rica.*

Incorrect response: The narrator spent two months in Costa Rica.

'*Una quincena*' seemed not to be known as a fortnight or two weeks or fourteen/fifteen days.

Candidates then resorted to what they recognized, '*dos meses*'.

Part (b)

Why did the narrator travel during the dry season?

Suggested response: *The narrator travelled during the dry season to be able to visit the national parks.*

Incorrect response: He travelled during the dry season to see the volcano.

Most candidates knew this answer and easily earned the two marks.

Part (c)

Why did the narrator stay only one night in San Jose?

Suggested response: *Because accommodation in the capital is expensive.*

Incorrect response: Because he had no car.

It is believed that '*alojamiento*' confused candidates, and so they did not understand that it referred to the narrator's stay.

Part (d)

According to the narrator, what can be seen from the top of the volcano?

Suggested response: *From the top of the volcano you can see fishing boats in the lake.*

Incorrect response: Lava can be seen from the top of the volcano.

Some candidates did not understand that sentence and linked lava to volcano.

Part (e)

Name two animals that were seen in Monteverde Park.

Suggested response: *They saw rare insects/dangerous snakes/white-faced monkeys.*

Incorrect response: Butterflies and spiders can be seen.

On the whole, this was very well answered.

Part (f)

Name the flower that was encountered in Monteverde and its significance.

Suggested response: *It was the orchid, national flower of Costa Rica.*

Incorrect response: The *orquidea/Costarricense* is the national flower of Costa Rica.

Candidates seemed not to recognize the use of the adjective of nationality nor the English translation of *orquidea*.

Part (g)

Who accompanied the narrator and Lilly to Puerto Viejo?

Suggested response: *The narrator's Uncle Raul and Aunt Carmen accompanied them to Puerto Viejo.*

Incorrect response: The narrator's uncles accompanied them.

Surprisingly 'tios' seemed to have evaded them and they seemed to forget that for family members, the plural of the masculine form is used to refer to both genders.

Part (h)

What two things did the narrator and Lilly do in Puerto Viejo?

Suggested response: *They spent time fishing, swimming and sunbathing.*

Incorrect response: They spent time in Arenal, taking in the Caribbean festival.

Most candidates answered this question well.

Part (i)

Name the meal the narrator ate in Puerto Viejo and state what is special about it.

Suggested response: *They ate 'gallo pinto' which is the national dish of Costa Rica.*

Incorrect response: They ate beans, plantains and eggs because it tastes good.

Knowledge of culture seemed to be lacking here and instead of naming the dish, candidates said what it consisted of.

Part (j)

How do we know that the narrator was impressed with his visit to Costa Rica?

Suggested response: *He said that he would never forget his visit and is already planning to visit again.*

Incorrect response: He said that '*nunca olvidar este viaje*' and he is coming back.

This question was well answered.

Recommendations

Candidates should take note of the following:

- Learn and revise vocabulary constantly.
- Ensure that revision goes back to the very beginning, basic Spanish.
- Engage in frequent practice using past papers. Past papers are easily available on CXC's website and in other places.

Paper 03 — Oral Examination

The CSEC Spanish oral examination tested candidates' ability to produce appropriate responses in Spanish to a number of situations testing specific functions, read aloud a short passage in Spanish and carry on a conversation in the target language by responding to questions based on four out of six topics set out in the syllabus: Daily Life, Shopping, Sports and Recreation and Travel.

Section I – Responses to Situations/Instructions

This section required candidates to produce appropriate oral 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. Candidates who performed excellently in this section produced appropriate responses that were expressed correctly and that demonstrated 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.

Candidates who performed weakly in this section showed very little command of grammar and vocabulary to handle this oral part of the examination competently. In several cases, there was some attempt to produce an appropriate response but the language was flawed with grammatical inaccuracies, structural inconsistencies and a limited range of vocabulary. Some candidates demonstrated a lack of comprehension of the questions and struggled to put their ideas together in Spanish, which often led to disjointed responses, the stringing together of arbitrary vocabulary, and the use of a number of anglicisms.

In a few cases, candidates opted not to provide a response and requested to skip some of the situations. Some candidates translated the situation rather than give a response. They were also unfamiliar with the correct registers when addressing someone and therefore used *tú* when *usted* was needed.

The following grammatical errors were noted:

- Incorrect and sporadic use of the infinitive when not required.
- Omission of the *a* in verb constructions such as *ir a* + infinitive
- Incorrect use of *ser* and *estar* (particularly with feelings and states of being)
- Inaccurate conjugation of the future tense and failure to recognize the need for the subjunctive.
- Challenges with the use of idiomatic expressions that require the use of the infinitive and/or subjunctive.
- Incorrect adjectival agreement in gender and number as well as incorrect use of irregular adjectives; incorrect positioning of adjectives in extended sentences.
- Incorrect definite and indefinite articles
- Incorrect use of reflexive construction, for example, '*me prefiero*'
- Confusion with *querer* and *poder*

Recommendations

The syllabus is very clear as to the functions which candidates are expected to be able to use in order to perform well in this section. However, many candidates' responses suggested that they were not fully

aware of these functions. Teachers are encouraged to develop exercises to adequately afford students the opportunity to practice these functions orally. Practice in responding to situations orally must begin in the early stages of the teaching/learning process and teachers must avoid the tendency to wait until the examination year to expose students to this skill. Candidates are encouraged to use more complex vocabulary structures and idioms while moving away from cliché expressions and words.

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. 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. They showed no knowledge of the importance of intonation and started and ended their reading passage in the same tone. Passages were not phrased correctly so meaning was lost. In addition, punctuation marks like commas and full stops were not observed. Little or no knowledge of the rules of accentuation and stress was displayed.

Some of the problems candidates presented are outlined below.

- Mispronunciation of the following sounds/letters:
 - Z as English z
 - Ge/gi as gee
 - H not read as silent
 - Double 'l' (ll) pronounced as one 'l'
 - English rendition of vowels
- Anglicized or incorrect pronunciation of certain words: *década, Medellín, proveer, acceso, período, apareció, mayores, socializar, exigentes, variados, popular, internacionales, sumergidos, mensajes, alojamiento, equivalentes, titularidad, satisfacer.*

Recommendations

Challenges in fluency and intonation in reading as outlined above typically 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. There is a great need for exposure to authentic listening activities from the target culture.

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 Life, Shopping, Sports and Recreation and Travel.

Candidates were asked four questions on each of the topics and were assessed on comprehension, spontaneity, fluency and expression. Questions on the internet and the mall received enthusiastic responses from some candidates. However, at some centres there were inaccurate responses for these which demonstrated a lack of comprehension.

This section of the oral examination continues to be challenging for several 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, other candidates struggled with this section, handicapped by a limited vocabulary and poor knowledge of grammatical structures. Some candidates showed limited comprehension of the questions asked and constantly requested repetition.

The errors in grammar evident in this section included the following:

- Adjectival agreement
- Agreement of articles
 - *Un tienda*
 - *Un fiesta*
- Incorrect use *jugar*, for example, '*jugo fútbol*'
- Confusion between *Ser* vs *estar*, for example, '*¿Dónde es tu papá?*'
- Inconsistency with *gustar*
- Reflexive use of *preferir*

Some vocabulary inaccuracies noted included the following:

- *deporte* for *deportista*
- *Sitio* to mean city
- *Bota* to mean boat
- *Las ropas*
- *Divertido* to mean diversion
- Wrong vocabulary terms used — *el agua era 'simpático', recibo 'presentos' para la Navidad, es 'expensivo'*.

Recommendations

Teachers must ensure that they use the target language as far as possible in the classroom so that students become comfortable hearing Spanish around them. The use of radio stations and podcasts will also aid in providing this authentic language experience to students. 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 particularly listen carefully to the demands of the question before responding.

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 2019

SPANISH

GENERAL PROFICIENCY

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GENERAL COMMENTS

In 2019, approximately 70 per cent of the candidates achieved grades (I-III) which is equivalent to performance in 2018. There were improved performances on Profile 1 (Listening) and Profile 3 (Speaking). Performance in Profile 2 (Reading) was comparable to 2018, while there was a decline on Profile 4 (Writing).

Paper 01 — Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprised two sections, assessed 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. Performance in 2019 was similar to 2018.

Paper 02 — Free Response

Section I (Question 1) — Directed Situations

This question required that candidates read carefully the directions regarding each of ten situations described in English and then provide appropriate written responses in Spanish to each situation.

Candidates' knowledge of Spanish vocabulary (inclusive of idiomatic expressions), and Spanish grammar rules and structure were key elements by which candidates' competencies in tackling this question were assessed. Marks were awarded if a response included all details in the situation and adequately communicated meaning. Responses were categorized as appropriate or partially appropriate and were awarded marks accordingly, with penalties for errors in quality of language. Inappropriate responses were awarded no marks even if the language of expression was perfect.

Candidates' Performance

Overall, the performance of candidates could be described as satisfactory to good. Some candidates were able to respond correctly to each situation while there were a few who clearly lacked the vocabulary to express themselves competently. There were some exceptional responses where candidates demonstrated a commendable level of creativity, sound command of accurate grammar and wide vocabulary. Most candidates understood/recognized the function which needed to be addressed and attempted to provide appropriate responses.

Candidates' Strengths

Candidates generally observed the rubric and responded with precision and language accuracy. The quality of responses revealed that some candidates were well prepared for the exam. These candidates demonstrated an understanding of the requirements of the question, applied the lessons they had learnt to each situation and showed great ingenuity in answering questions that called for more than a straightforward answer. The range of vocabulary used was impressive.

Candidates' Weaknesses

Candidates seemed weak in the use of appropriate vocabulary to respond to the situations given. Examples include using the word *arivar* for arrival in Spanish. There were many candidates who would have earned better scores if they had not made careless errors especially with regard to spelling. An area of challenge for many candidates was in converting what would be an appropriate answer in English, into Spanish. In the process, general grammar and vocabulary errors were noted.

Additionally, there were candidates who misinterpreted what they were expected to do with the information in the situation described, and therefore neglected to include all the elements required for a full response. There were also some candidates who complicated their responses unnecessarily by writing extended pieces where a shorter answer would have sufficed.

General areas of weakness included the following:

- The omission and/or the inclusion of accents and tilde where these affected the meaning for the context, such as *que/qué, mama/mamá, papa/papá, mi/mí, como/cómo, tu/tú, mas/más*
- Omission of punctuation, especially interrogative
- Word order
- The writing of the time in Spanish
- Distinguishing between the use of *por* and *para, ser/estar, tu/ti*
- Overlooking the use of the subjunctive
- Some candidates not being cognizant of the familiar and polite forms of address, using *usted* and *tú* inappropriately or interchangeably.

Comments on Individual Situations

Situation (a)

Your friend messages you asking you to guess what he/she has bought you for your birthday. Write your response asking two questions about the gift.

This situation was used to test the function of 'Asking' and a full response consisted of two questions in either one sentence or as two separate but very short questions.

Full Response: *¿Es grande y es caro?*

Accepted also were two short questions: *¿Es el regalo bonito? ¿Es un vestido?*

Candidates generally handled this question very well. The majority of candidates were able to ask two questions pertaining to the gift. Common responses focused attention on color, size and cost. In a few instances reference was made to the specific item. Some candidates asked questions like 'What is the gift?' or 'What did you buy?' for which they received no marks, since the questions had to be specifically about the gift.

The following common errors were encountered:

- *Presento/Presenta/Presente* for present/gift
- Misuse of *ser* and *estar*, for example, '*Esta un vestido*'
- Use of '*expensivo*' for *caro/costoso*
- Object pronoun *lo* used as subject pronoun, for example, '*¿Es lo grande?*'

Situation (b)

Your mother cannot take you to the mall this evening. Write the text she sends suggesting two ways you can get there.

The function that was being tested for this situation was 'Suggesting'. Hence, the different ways of making suggestions were accepted. The familiar form was required and the response should have been written from the mother to the child.

Full response: *Tú puedes tomar un taxi o caminar con tu hermano mayor al centro comercial.*

Most candidates were able to provide a response to this situation. Candidates scoring full marks were those who provided a simple sentence such as *Puedes tomar el autobus o ir en taxi*. However, some candidates wrote the response from the perspective of the child speaking to the parent saying how he/she can get to the mall.

The following common errors were encountered:

- Unfamiliarity with the vocabulary for mall or shopping centre
- Spelling of *comercial* with two m's, as the English 'commercial'
- Misuse of the verbs *tomar* and *llevar*, for example, '*Tu padre puede tomarte*'
- Misuse of imperatives, for example, '*Va con tu hermano*'

- Misuse of the verbs *pedir* and *preguntar*, for example, '*Pide a tu padre si puede llevarte*'
- Use of the formal register instead of the familiar
- Use of the verb *viajar* to mean catch a public means of transport; this led to responses like '*Viaja o llama a tu padre*'.

Situation (c)

Your teacher asks students in the class to write two things that they would like to do during the August holidays. What do you write?

'Providing information' was the function being tested through this situation. In addition, candidates had to mention two different things that they would like to do during the August holidays. As long as the chosen verb indicated an attempt to carry out two activities, the response was awarded full marks.

Full response: *Me gustaría/quisiera/quiero ir a la playa y visitar a mis abuelos.*

This situation was very well done by most candidates. Even the weaker ones were able to mention two things that they would like to do.

The following common errors were encountered:

- Use of '*me gusta*' instead of *me gustaría*
- Use of '*Yo gustaría*' instead of *me gustaría*
- Omission of the personal *a*, for example, '*Visitar mis abuelos*'
- Misspelling of *agosto*
- Unfamiliarity of the change of *y* to *e* for example, '*y ir a la playa*'

Situation (d)

Your father had to leave home suddenly. Write the note he leaves your mother saying where he went and why.

This situation tested the function of 'Explaining'. The two elements that were being sought was saying where the father went and why. The note should have been written from the standpoint of the father, since the note is from the father of the candidate to the mother of the candidate.

Full response: *Fui al supermercado porque nosotros necesitamos más comida.*

Most candidates who went for a simple response such as the one given above scored full marks. Others who tried to make longer, more complicated sentences found themselves being penalized for many spelling and grammar errors.

The following common errors were encountered:

- Giving the reason for leaving but not specifying the intended destination
- Misspelling of *supermercado*
- Lack of agreement of adjectives, for example, *Estoy enferma* (when it was the father who was speaking)
- Misuse of *ser* and *estar*, for example, '*Mi madre es enferma*'
- Unfamiliarity with the use of *en* to mean at a place, for example, '*Estoy al hospital*'
- Unfamiliarity with the expression *tener hambre*, for example, '*Estoy hambre*'
- Misuse of *muy* and *mucho*, for example, '*tengo muy hambre*'

Situation (e)

You did something that really upset your sister. Write the note of apology you leave her mentioning what you did.

The function that was tested in this situation was 'Apologizing'. The expressions of apology were expected to be accompanied by the correct grammar forms of the verbs. Candidates should have fulfilled two requirements:

- giving an apology
- saying what he/she did that demanded the apology

Full response: *Lo siento (mucho), comí tu pastel.*

Accepted also was: *Siento /lamento usar tu maquillaje sin tu permiso.*

Most candidates were able to give a full response to this situation although in many cases the apology alone was given without mention of what he/she did. In other cases, the apology came without specific mention of what he/she had done.

The following common errors were encountered:

- Unfamiliarity with apologizing using the verb *sentir*, for example, '*Lo siento por/lo siento que*'; very few candidates used this correctly
- Misuse of the words *muy* and *mucho*, for example, '*Lo muy siento.*'
- Use of the formal register instead of familiar, for example, *Comí su helado*

Situation (f)

Your neighbour's dog has gone missing. Write the notice he puts on the community notice board giving two pieces of information about the lost dog.

This situation was used to test the function of 'Describing'. Two different description details were required to satisfy a full response to this situation.

Full response: *He perdido mi perro negro y pequeño.*

This by far was the easiest situation for candidates. Most of them scored full marks by giving a simple description of the dog in terms of size and colour.

The following common errors were encountered:

- Agreement with noun and adjective, for example, '*Mi perro es blanca*'
- Misspelling of *perro* (using one 'r')

Situation (g)

Your brother's flight is delayed. Write the message he sends giving one reason for the delay and when he is expected to arrive.

The function that was being tested was 'Explaining'. The candidate was asked to give one reason for the delay of the flight and then say the new time when he/she would arrive. It was expected that candidates would have explained why the flight was delayed and not just mention about missing a flight.

Full response: *Llegaré mañana a las ocho de la noche porque el avión tiene problemas.*

This was one of the more problematic situation for candidates. There were quite a few instances of no response. Many responses scored partial marks for giving personal reasons instead of reasons for delay of the flight.

The following common errors were encountered:

- Unfamiliarity with vocabulary for flight resulting in words like 'flighto' and 'vuelto'
- Unfamiliarity with vocabulary for airplane resulting in words like 'aeroplano'
- Unfamiliarity with telling time resulting in expressions like 'voy a llegar son las ocho'
- Misuse of *por* and *de* with time, for example, '*..a las ocho por la mañana*'
- Misuse of the verbs *llegar* and *llevar*, for example, '*Voy a llevar a las ocho*'
- Use of *arrivar* for *llegar*

Situation (h)

You are caught misbehaving in class. Write the note that the principal sends to your parents telling them what you did and how you will be punished.

This situation tested the function of 'Giving information'. First, the candidate had to mention the misbehaviour and then the consequence. However, some candidates may find it easier to start with the consequence followed by the act of misbehaviour. Candidates needed to be able to identify an action that would fit the category of misbehaviour. Overall, there should have been two pieces of information given.

Full response: *Su hijo rompió una silla y él tiene que limpiar los baños.*

Many candidates were penalized for writing two long sentences thus scoring partial marks since the elements needed for a full response were not in the first sentence. One must remember that with two long sentences only the first is read and anything coming after is disregarded. If all elements are not covered in that one long sentence, the candidate automatically scores partial marks. Some candidates did not mention a specific misbehavior resulting in responses such as '*su hijo se comport mal*' or '*su hijo fue malo*'.

The following common errors were encountered:

- Use of the informal register, for example, '*tu hijo...*'
- Unfamiliarity with and misspelling of the words *suspensión* and *detención*
- Unfamiliarity with the expression '*tener que + inf*', for example, '*Tiene que limpio la sala*'/'*tiene limpiarla sala*'/'*ha limpiar la sala*'
- Incorrect use of the words *mal* and *malo*, for example, '*Su hijo es mal*'/'*se comport malo*'

Situation (i)

You receive a text message from your telephone provider advising you of one thing you should do and one thing you should not do during a storm. Write the text message.

The function being tested by the use of this situation was 'Giving advice'. Candidates were required to give the advice using two components: one thing that he/she should do during a storm and one thing that he/she should not do; in other words, one positive and one negative action. Candidates should have written from the position of the telephone provider, so the formal form was required. The use of the infinitive to express advice in a formal way was also acceptable. The forms of *deber* (*debe* and *deben*) were also accepted followed by the infinitive. *Recomendamos/sugerimos que + subjunctive* were also accepted once both elements were present.

Full response: *Durante una tormenta, favor de no conducir y favor de cortar los árboles cerca de la casa. Debe/deben comprar de antemano las cosas necesarias pero no debe/deben salir durante durante la tormenta.*

This was another problematic item for many candidates with quite a number of no responses. Many candidates interpreted this situation as advice about using your telephone. Many candidates were penalized for giving two negative or two positive bits of advice. Candidates are advised to read the situations carefully before attempting to answer.

The following common errors were encountered:

- Unfamiliarity with vocabulary for storm resulting in words like *storma, storme, tempesto/a, hurican, etc.*
- Use of familiar register instead of formal, for example, '*Debes apagar tu teléfono*'
- Unfamiliarity with imperatives

Situation (j)

You receive a note on your desk from a secret admirer mentioning two things that he/she admires about you. Write the note.

'Giving reasons' was the function being tested in this situation. The candidate was expected to give two reasons why someone admired him/her.

Full response: *Me gusta que tú seas simpática y también me gusta mucho que tú seas bonita. Tú eres muy guapo y alto.*

This situation was well done by most candidates. Those who kept their responses simple scored full marks with responses such as '*Me gustan tus ojos y tu personalidad*'.

The following common errors were encountered:

- Misuse of *gustar*, for example, '*me gusta tus ojos*'/'*gusto tus ojos*'
- Unfamiliarity with saying 'I like you'
- Wrong use of the word *amor*, for example, '*Amor tu*'/'*amo tu personalidad*'
- Misuse of *ser* and *estar*, for example, '*Estás muy linda*'
- Spelling of *pelo* with two l's

Suggestions for Teachers

- Teachers should conduct frequent sessions using sample directed situations from various CXC past papers, with a focus on the language functions. This can help students to gain a greater awareness of the role of the language functions in helping them to achieve accuracy and appropriateness of responses.
- Grammar sessions can be done using thematic contexts where students can learn varied vocabulary and verbs in the context of topics such as shopping, travel, school, home and family etc.
- The provision of more opportunities for students to spell vocabulary expressions perhaps through dialogues, spelling quizzes, basic translations and audio visual means.
- Use of review and reinforcement grammar activities to further reinforce the use of *ser* and *estar*; the conjunction 'y' particularly with words that follow commencing with the letter 'l'; advising or making recommendations using both the formal and informal registers; expressing commands; agreement of adjectives with nouns in Spanish; the preterit and imperfect tenses; the conditional and future tenses.
- A significant number of students were unable to respond in one sentence so practice in this area is necessary.
- Many of them also omitted the interrogation marks at the beginning and end of questions. Writing questions should be reinforced.
- Many of the responses revealed the need for teachers to emphasize the importance of accents as too many students failed to acknowledge them.
- There were situations where students were required to provide more than one set of information and it proved to be challenging for them as their responses were too verbose and/or long-winded in some instances. More practice in this area needed.
- There is an urgent need to reiterate the importance of using correct grammar; teachers are encouraged to continue having vocabulary exercises to strengthen this skill.

Section II (Question 2 — Letter)

Candidates were required to write a letter, 130–150 words, based on four given cues. They were assessed on use of language, accuracy, coherence and clarity of expression. The demands were suitable, adequate and within the candidates' life experiences. The cues were not narrowly structured and allowed candidates to express themselves in language which would have been within their ability. Even candidates whose vocabulary and grammar might have been limited, would not have been disadvantaged. The question demanded the use of a wide range of tenses which included the Present, the Preterite, the Imperfect, and the Future.

Letter

The sister of your Mexican friend is getting married and has invited you to the wedding. Write the letter you send to your friend in which you

- (i) say how you feel about being invited
- (ii) talk about preparations you have made for your trip to Mexico
- (iii) ask advice on what gift you could bring
- (iv) mention some of the things you hope to do at the wedding and for the rest of your stay in Mexico

Candidates' Performance

Performance ranged from satisfactory to very good. There were fewer No Responses (NR) than in previous years. It seemed to be a question at which almost all candidates made some sort of attempt.

Candidates Strengths

Many candidates were able to start and end the letter appropriately. They were also able to adequately describe how they felt.

There were some letters that were well organized and offered a wide variety of vocabulary. There was evidence of knowledge of Mexico where references were made to food, culture, places of interest and activities. Appropriate use of the subjunctive in statements of greetings was effectively handled. The majority of candidates stayed within the word limit and there was more legible handwriting than previously.

Examples of phrases/structures/ vocabulary items/idioms which demonstrated mastery of the language and versatility of many candidates include the following:

- *No puedo explicar la gran felicidad que tengo*
- *Me dio mucho gusto marcándote*
- *Gracias por tomarme en cuenta*
- *Me has tomado de sorpresa*
- *Por nada en el mundo me lo perdere*
- *Me alegre mucho de recibir*
- *Un vestido deslumbrante*
- *Ya alisté*
- *Espero con ansias*
- *Yo me quedé impactado*
- *Algo que te agrade*
- *Un festejo familiar*
- *Obsequios*
- *No te voy a mentir que me sentí muy importante*
- *Escríbeme la antes posible*
- *Experimentar una cultura diferente*
- *El motivo de mi carta es*

- *Lo que más me molesta es*
- *¿Me puedes sugerir un regalo?*
- *En un abrir y cerrar de ojos, llegó el momento.*
- *Hay tanto que decir pero ahora vamos al grano.*
- *No puedo comprar un regalo caro porque estoy sin blanca.*
- *Tu novio es un bombón.*
- *Estoy contento que me hayas invitado a la boda*
- *Espero que tú estés bien / Espero que tu familia esté bien.*
- *Escríbeme pronto / saludos de mi parte a tu familia*
- *Quisiera bailar y cantar en la boda*
- *Cuando llegue voy a visitar*
- *Compré mi vestido*
- *Puse mi pasaporte y mi visa en mi bolso*
- *Yo hice mi maleta*
- *He hecho todas las tareas*

Candidates' weaknesses

In many instances, candidates misinterpreted the question. The letter did not address the Mexican friend whose sister was getting married, but a host of other persons. The most common was the letter to the bride and not to the brother.

The following common errors were encountered:

- The problem of writing months with capital letters was again prevalent. This was only part of the problem with the date. In addition, candidates included *e/* and omitted *de* as well as spelt out the date in words.
- The words *querido* and *querida* proved difficult to spell for a number of candidates. Some of the variations included '*quierda*', '*queirido*' and '*quierida*'
- The question *¿Cómo estás?* was frequently asked without the accents and was almost predictably followed by '*y como es tu familia?*'
- Omission of accents when essential: '*tu*' instead of *tú*; Also *cómo*, *está*, *esté*, *invitación*, *México*, *también*, *no sé qué comprar*
- Misuse of *ser* and *estar* especially in expressing how they felt *soy feliz*, *soy emocionante*.
- Inability to differentiate between the past participle, the gerund, and a noun, for example, '*estoy fascinante*', '*estoy emocionante*', '*estoy sorpresa*', '*estoy alegría*'
- Misuse of *por* and *para*:
 - *Muchas gracias para la invitación.*
 - *Voy a quedarme para dos semanas.*
 - *Un regalo por tu hermana*

- Misuse of *gusta/gustan; gustaría/gustarían*:
 - *Yo gusta comprar*
 - *Tu hermana gusta los zapatos*
- Unfamiliarity with 'y' before words that began with 'l':
 - '*me gustaría ir a la playa y ir de compras.*'
 - '*tu hermana es simpática y inteligente.*'
- Wrong use of vocabulary:
 - '*regla*' for *regalo*, '*blar*' for *bailar*, '*conocer a*' for *recibir*, '*saber*' for *conocer*,
 - *gusta and como* (a literal translation)
 - '*las ropas*' for *la ropa*, '*el wedding*' for *la boda*
- Some basic errors in statements such as:
 - *voy a salir son las ...*
 - *mi hermana's boda*
 - *voy a el restaurante* as well as *de el*
 - *tengo comprado*
 - *Mi compro y mi practico*
 - '*Con tu*' instead of *contigo*.
- Some repeated spelling errors such as *differente*, *recommiendes*, and *centro commercial*
- Adjective/noun agreements and placement of adjectives:
 - *tengo mi bonito zapatos*
 - *un vestido nueva*
 - *mis azules zapatos*
- The occurrence of *de* along with colours and some other adjectives, for example, '*pantalones de rojo*'/'*vestido de bonito*'
- Wrong use of tenses:
 - *Fui a la tienda y compraba muchas cosas.*
 - *Yo recibía tu invitación.*
- *Quiero* and/or *espero* followed by the present indicative or by *que* instead of the infinitive when used with the same subject:
 - '*Quiero canto en la boda*'
 - '*Espero que yo baile a la boda*'
- Confusion about the correct word to use to express a period of time – *hora, vez, tiempo* were all used to say *la primera vez*.
- Punctuation was another major concern. There was no punctuation throughout numerous letters and this made it very difficult to understand what the students were trying to say at times. Many letters were set out in one block instead of paragraphs which contributed to some clustered presentations; these proved difficult to read.

Recommendations

- All teachers should be encouraged to aim to have their students at least give the date, greet the recipient and exchange opening pleasant remarks of a letter, in a perfect format.
- Accentuation should be intentionally taught at the start of the course and emphasized throughout. The use or lack thereof creates a change in meaning and intention and when not done right produces confusion for the reader. If candidates lose marks as a result of neglect or habitual omission, or are confused about the use of the Spanish accent, it is time for teachers to attend to teaching to correct the occurrence.
- The use of transition words and phrases to help the candidates create flow in their writing should also be intentionally taught.
- Teachers should make the effort to keep up-to-date with the language as most languages change and develop. They could perhaps subscribe to educational journals/magazines as well as attend workshops where possible; this will help to improve their skills.
- Candidates should be reminded that their writing should be as clear and as legible as possible so they can get the best results for their work. They should practice spacing between words and possibly writing on every other line which would provide space for the annotations as well as allow for a clearer view of the passage.
- Practice in writing the responses as assignments and under test conditions must be executed.
- Regular practice at letter writing and acquiring a pool of idiomatic expressions which might enhance the quality of the candidate's production.
- Attention needs to be paid to learning vocabulary.
- Greater effort to be competent in the use of verbs particularly irregular verbs. Certain verbs are almost sure to be needed in any Spanish exam. These may include '*tener*', '*ir*', '*decir*', '*hacer*', '*ver*'.
- More attention needs to be paid to applying correct grammatical rules.
- It is necessary that candidates be guided with the correct use of a dictionary to alleviate the incorrect use of vocabulary.
- Use games and drills to practise the language.
- Teachers should direct students to appropriate websites for further practice.

Section III (Question 3) — Contextual Dialogue

This section required candidates to complete a contextual dialogue based on cues in English. The contextual dialogue was in keeping with the information outlined in the syllabus and therefore within the scope of candidates' ability.

Contextual Dialogue

You witnessed a robbery at your neighbour's house. Write the dialogue between you and a police officer, giving your responses. Be sure to include:

- (i) where you were when the robbery occurred
- (ii) details of how the robber entered the house
- (iii) a description of the robber
- (iv) what you did upon seeing the thief
- (v) a promise to give more information as needed.

Along with the cues provided, candidates were expected to use the utterances made by the second person in the dialogue as a guide as to what they were expected to say/write. For all cues to have been used well and appropriately, candidates should have provided the information by mentioning the following:

1st Tú: the person being in the patio when the robbery occurred

2nd Tú: the thief entering through a window

3rd Tú: description of the robber plus not being able to see the robber's face/the robber wearing a mask

4th Tú: being afraid and calling the police

5th Tú: the clothes worn, especially a jacket that is easily recognizable

6th Tú : not being able to remember or not knowing

7th Tú: promising to call the police if he/she remembers anything and asking if he/she could leave

Candidates' Performance

Generally, performance on this question was satisfactory. Although it was within the scope of the candidates' ability, there were a few candidates who did not attempt to answer the question at all. Furthermore, candidates who attempted the question often misused the first cue, by stating that the robbery occurred in the patio/at their house. Some candidates who lacked understanding of the cues did not give a sensible response for Part (ii) but stated other points of entry besides the window.

With respect to the third response, the majority of candidates was able to satisfactorily describe the thief; however, a few candidates failed to mention that he was wearing a mask. In the following responses, some issues encountered were that some candidates mentioned only that they were afraid, or they called the police, but failed to mention both. Some even stated action that was contrary to what the cues suggested, for example, called parents/neighbor, hid. In the fifth response, a few candidates stated what the thief carried/stole instead of what he was wearing. Apparently the vocabulary *llevar puesto* was unfamiliar to them so they interpreted it to be 'carrying' instead of *wearing*. The sixth and seventh responses were handled quite well by the majority of candidates, but with grammatical errors that will be outlined below. It must be noted that many scripts that were outstanding lost marks due to the absence of accents including those that changed the meaning of words as well as going beyond the word limit.

The following common errors were encountered:

- *Por* vs *Para*
- Spelling errors; most common was the use of 'v' instead of 'b'

- Preterite vs Imperfect: Using 'fui' instead of *estaba* for the first response and the use of the preterite in describing the thief.
- Using 'viste' instead of *vi*.
- Absence of personal 'a'
- Using 'al ladrón' instead of *el ladrón*
- Using 'fui' in place of *fue*, 'mirar' vs *ver* and 'oír' instead of *escuchar*
- Using 'roto' instead of *rompió*
- Using possessive pronouns instead of the article when referring to body parts
- Word order, for example, 'negra camisa'
- The use of *de* before a color, for example, 'una camisa de negra'
- Adjective–noun agreement when describing
- Using 'promesa' instead of *prometo*
- Using the reflexive pronoun with *recordar* but not with *acordar*

Recommendations

- More time should be spent on this component of the examination. Students need to be taught how to do a contextual dialogue, using the utterances that come before and after to help them to structure their responses.
- Students need to be given more practice in the preparation and writing of the contextual dialogues as well as oral practice, reflecting themes and format. The reading of dialogues from texts, newspapers and magazines should be encouraged. Also, students should be given completed dialogues (along with other possible responses); to discuss the tenses, vocabulary and structures used in the exercise.
- Candidates must be encouraged to read through the dialogue before inserting their responses, to allow for the natural flow of conversation. Furthermore, they should be made aware that the order of the cues does not necessarily mean that the dialogue is written in the same order.
- Candidates need to be encouraged to avoid writing in English and then translating, whether writing in or out of the classroom.
- Candidates need to build and strengthen their vocabulary base as well as be exposed to and learn idioms, synonyms and antonyms in the target language, to incorporate in their writing.
- Students should be taught how to manage set word limits and not just be told what the word limit is. In addition, teachers need to encourage students to review and reread their work at all times. Teachers can plan and structure review time into each lesson to help students get into the habit of looking over their work before submission.

Section IV (Question 4) — 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, based on the passage they have read.

This reading comprehension passage for the CSEC June 2019 examination was of a level that was quite appropriate for a candidate at CSEC level. The level of vocabulary and grammar was such that candidates should have consistently scored between 17–20 marks out of a total of 20.

Candidates' Performance

Performance in this question ranged from satisfactory to very good. Most candidates showed that they had the necessary vocabulary skills in order to achieve full comprehension of the passage. As the general context of the passage proved easily comprehensible, many candidates were able to achieve full marks. However, for the weaker candidates, lack of knowledge of certain key vocabulary items in the passage proved to be challenging.

Too many candidates continue to ignore the instructions to answer in English, and respond in Spanish or a combination of Spanish and English. Candidates are advised that there are penalties for failure to observe the rubric.

Candidates' Strengths

Most candidates understood the information required to answer these questions and responded appropriately.

Candidates' Weaknesses

Many candidates seemed to have a problem with the English language resulting in misinterpretation of some of the questions. A lack of Spanish vocabulary also contributed to incorrect responses.

Comments on Individual Questions

Part (a)

How does the author initially describe his father?

Suggested response: *Admirable*

Incorrect response: Ambitious

Responses to this question were quite good except where candidates left the cognate *admiración* and did not change 'c' to 't' in the English response. Although they left out the accent in the response, 'admiracion' was still considered a grammatical error. Additionally, some candidates put ambitious and admiring, and were not awarded the mark. Notably, the cognate *admiración* was quite recognizable, thus suggesting limited knowledge of vocabulary in the area of descriptive words.

Part (b)

Why does the author describe his father in this way?

Suggested response: *He faced difficulties but overcame them.*

Incorrect response: He got a job to support his family.

There were few incorrect responses. Most candidates understood that he had obstacles and then became successful. However, some were confused by the *Falso Amigo, éxito*, which they misinterpreted as exit instead of success. Some overlooked the verb *enfrentar* from the sentence and lost a mark for 'had/faced'.

Part (c)

What two pieces of information are given about the author's grandfather?

Suggested response: *He was the only provider who died, had three children and a sick wife.* (Any two pieces of information would have been sufficient.)

Incorrect response: He left his family and was the oldest child.

The responses to Part (c) were similar to that of Part (d). In most cases, candidates could have put he/his father died and his wife/mother was ill for Part (c) and (d) respectively, and score full marks in both. However, it was important to state who died and who was ill in the aforementioned questions. In Part (c), some candidates encountered problems translating *único* to only. They therefore misinterpreted *el único proveedor* as a unique person, thus losing a mark.

Part (d)

Why did the author's father have to abandon school/his studies?

Suggested response: *His father died, he had to work, to support his family because he was the eldest child and his mother died.* (Any two pieces of information would have been sufficient.)

Incorrect response: He had a wife and three children.

Most candidates understood this question and responded appropriately. However they also gave information that should have been left for the following question. Candidates are advised to read all questions before attempting to answer so that responses are not duplicated.

Part (e)

Why did the author describe his father as ambitious?

Suggested response: *He studied at nights to get an education.* (Any two pieces of information would have been sufficient.)

Incorrect response: He worked hard and had a family.

Some candidates misinterpreted *una persona ambiciosa* as he was hardworking, without reading the rest of the sentence which contained the answer. Additionally, few made up incorrect responses, automatically assuming that the author didn't have time for studying and getting an education, instead of the appropriate response stated in the passage.

Question (f)

Who helped the author's father?

Suggested response: *A neighbour/teacher.*

Incorrect response: Profesor vecino or a family member

Most understood the basic concept of the answer. The Spanish word *profesor* was an acceptable response, which contained a simple spelling error. While *profesor* was an acceptable response, '*profesor vecino*' was not accepted as it showed that they were not sure what the words meant.

Question (g)

How did the life of the author's father change?

Suggested response: *He got a diploma and had a better job to be able to support his mother and siblings and start his own family.* (Any three pieces of information would have been sufficient.)

Incorrect response: He worked hard to get an education.

The exact cognate *diploma* made it easy for most candidates to obtain a mark in the first part of the answer. The vocabulary was generally straightforward, which made it easy to obtain a full score. This question was generally well responded to, except in cases where candidates did not use the rubric as a guide. Students should be trained how to pay attention to the marking scheme for individual questions in the Reading Comprehension section.

Question (h)

According to the author's father, what is the main ingredient for success?

Suggested response: *Determination/perseverance/never giving up.*

Incorrect response: Having a good family.

Most candidates scored full marks in this question. However, few did not read the passage properly, and they went on to make up incorrect responses. Once again, the cognate *determinación* should have helped candidates to answer correctly.

Question (i)

What is the author's wish?

Suggested response: *That his/her children could be like his/her father.*

Incorrect response: He/she wants to be like his/her father.

The question posed some problems although the vocabulary used in the passage to state this response was simple to interpret, “*cuando yo tenga hijos ¡ojalá sigan el ejemplo de mi papá!*”. While readers understood what the author was trying to say, they had to read the passage a few times to interpret the pronouns correctly.

Question (j)

What lesson can be learnt from this story?

Suggested response: *Life has a lot of obstacles but with determination we can always find a way to be successful.*

The requirements for this question included obstacles/difficulties, determination and success. Many candidates who earned full marks in other parts of this section were able to summarize that information and obtain some marks in this part. A wide variety of responses were accepted here and quite a few candidates who got NR or zero in other responses, were able to get a mark here for having part of the answer.

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 the passage. Neither should they provide answers that are required for other questions. An example of this was providing ‘his mother was ill and his father passed away’ for Part (c) instead of for Part (d).

When 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, students and future candidates will take note of the following recommendations.

- Vocabulary is important to comprehension. Candidates ought to keep revising vocabulary using revision techniques that work with different learning styles.
- Grammar is also critical to understanding the passage. A lot of practice is required, especially for stem-changing verbs, go verbs, reflexive verbs, and imperfect and preterite tenses.
- Candidates are encouraged to read the passage at least three times in order to understand the story.
- When answering questions, consider the amount of marks awarded to that question. If more than one mark is allotted, students should be taught to look for more information for their responses than just a single point.

Paper 03 — Oral Examination

The CSEC Spanish oral examination tested candidates' ability to produce appropriate responses in Spanish to a number of situations testing specific functions, read aloud a short passage in Spanish and carry on a conversation in the target language by responding to questions based on four out of six topics set out in the syllabus: Home and Family, School and Career, Sports and Recreation, Shopping.

Section I – Responses to Situations/Instructions

This section required the candidates to produce appropriate oral 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. Candidates who performed excellently in this section produced appropriate responses that were expressed correctly, and that demonstrated 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.

Candidates who scored in the middle range in this section presented responses that though they demonstrated comprehension, still contained errors in syntax, structural inconsistencies and incorrect vocabulary use.

Candidates who performed weakly in this section showed very little command of grammar and vocabulary to handle this oral part of the examination competently. In several cases, there was some attempt to produce an appropriate response but the language was flawed with grammatical inaccuracies, structural inconsistencies and a limited range of vocabulary. Some candidates demonstrated a lack of comprehension of the questions and struggled to put their ideas together in Spanish, which often led to disjointed responses, stringing together of arbitrary vocabulary and the use of a number of anglicisms.

In few cases, candidates opted not to provide a response and requested to skip some of the situations. Some candidates translated the situation rather than give a response. Also they were unfamiliar with the correct registers when addressing someone and therefore used *tú* when *usted* was needed. On some occasions, when responses were not forthcoming, students hesitated for extended periods of time before actually giving their final response.

The following common grammatical errors were encountered:

- Incorrect use of verb structures in which candidates conjugated both verbs '*debes limpiar*', '*puedes vas*' etc.
- Incorrect use of commands in the negative form
- Incorrect placement and use of object pronouns

- Omission of *a* in verb constructions such as *ir a* + infinitive
- Incorrect use of *ser* and *estar*
- Confusion with the use of *por* and *para*
- Inaccurate conjugation of the future tense and failure to recognize the need for the subjunctive
- Challenges with the use of *muy*, *mucho* and *más* as well as *bueno* and *bien*
- Incorrect adjectival agreement in gender and number
- Incorrect use of irregular adjectives
- Incorrect positioning of adjectives in extended sentences
- Incorrect definite and indefinite articles
- Incorrect use of reflexive constructions '*me prefiero*'
- Confusion with *querer* and *poder*
- Challenges with the correct use of *prometer*

Recommendations

The syllabus is very clear as to the functions which candidates are expected to be able to use to perform well in this section. However, many 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 and teachers must avoid the tendency to wait until the examination year to expose students to this skill. Students must be encouraged to use more complex vocabulary structures and idioms while moving away from cliché expressions and words.

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. 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. They showed no knowledge of the importance of intonation and started and ended their reading passage in the same tone. In some cases, passages were not phrased correctly so meaning was lost. Also, punctuation like commas and full stops were not observed. Little or no knowledge was displayed of rules of accentuation and stress.

The following are some of the problems that candidates presented.

- Demonstration of weakness in pronunciation; this caused mispronunciation of the following sounds/letters:
 - z pronounced as the English 'z'
 - *Ge/gi* as gee
 - *H* not read as silent
 - *Ll* pronounced as one 'l'
 - *Y* mispronounced or left silent
 - English rendition of vowels
- Anglicized or incorrect pronunciation of certain words: *virtual, cuestión, estrategias, infancia, desarrollar, inteligencia, agresividad, hogareñas, jefe, elegir, destrezas, disfrutará, identidades, miembros, adquirir, habilidades, obvias, frecuentemente, aconsejable, perjudicial, necesidades, destrezas, cuidar, conocimiento, fuerza, organizados, ausencia, rendimiento, autoestima, especializarte, ahorro, forjan.*

Recommendations

Challenges in fluency and intonation in reading as outlined above typically 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. There is a great need for exposure to authentic listening activities in the target language.

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: Home and Family, School and Career, Sports and Recreation, and Shopping. Candidates were asked four questions on each of the topics and were assessed on comprehension and spontaneity, fluency and expression. Questions on parents' professions received inaccurate responses for many; this demonstrated a lack of comprehension. Some students were unable to answer the extended descriptive questions, and provided responses which were often two or three words strung together. The question *Piensas que los hombres deben ser el jefe de la familia?* received poor responses in some cases, since students did not appear to understand the expression "*jefe de la familia*".

This section of the oral examination continues to be challenging for several 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, other candidates struggled with this section, handicapped by a limited vocabulary and poor knowledge of grammatical structures. There was limited comprehension of the questions asked by some who constantly asked for repetition.

Errors in grammar which were evident in this section included:

- Adjectival agreement, for example, *mi profesores son simpática*
- Use of the Preterite and Imperfect past tenses
- Inaccurate use and formation of the future tense
- Agreement of articles, for example, *el computadora*
- Omission of articles when needed
- Subject–Verb agreement
- Incorrect choice of tense for some responses
- *Ser vs estar*, for example, '*mis padres están profesores.*'
- Inconsistency with *gustar*; '*Se gusta*' commonly used
- Reflexive use of *preferir*

Some vocabulary challenges were noted:

- regarding *las profesiones*
- with the expression *desde cuando*
- confusion with *deporte/deportista/deportivo*
- difficulty understanding the expression *tareas domésticas*
- difficulty distinguishing between *muy* and *mucho*

Recommendations

Teachers must expose their students to consistent use of the target language in the classroom through radio stations and podcasts, and online oral and aural activities. Exposure to native speakers would also assist in providing an authentic language experience for students. Extensive use of Spanish in the classroom will not only strengthen students' listening and speaking skills, but will also increase their confidence when conversing in Spanish. Students must be encouraged to pay attention to the details which are required in the questions and particularly listen carefully to the demands of the question before responding.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE[®]
EXAMINATION**

JANUARY 2020

**SPANISH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY**

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GENERAL COMMENTS

In January 2020, 275 candidates wrote the Spanish examination; this represents a decrease in the number of candidates when compared with the 364 candidates in 2019. From this sitting, 67 per cent of candidates achieved acceptable Grades I–III in comparison with 60 per cent in 2019 and 64 per cent in 2018. Improvements were seen in Profile 1 (Listening), Profile 3 (Speaking) and Profile 4 (Writing) while there was a decline in Profile 2 (Reading).

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 — Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprised two sections, assessed 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. In 2020, 71 per cent of candidates achieved acceptable Grades I–III compared with 70 per cent in 2019, representing a consistent performance.

Paper 02 — Free Response

Section I (Question 1) — Directed Situations

This question required that candidates read carefully the directions regarding each of ten situations described in English and then provide appropriate written responses in Spanish to each situation. Candidates' knowledge of Spanish vocabulary, inclusive of idiomatic expressions and Spanish grammar rules and structure were key elements used to assess candidates' competencies in tackling this question. If a response included all details in the situation and adequately communicated meaning, marks were awarded. Responses were categorized as appropriate or partially appropriate and were awarded marks accordingly, with penalties for errors in quality of language. Inappropriate responses were awarded no marks even if the language of expression was perfect.

Candidates' Performance

Overall, candidates' performance ranged from satisfactory to good. Some candidates were able to respond correctly to each situation, while there were a few who lacked the vocabulary to competently express themselves. There were very few exceptional responses where candidates demonstrated both a level of creativity as well as a command of accurate grammar and wide vocabulary. Most candidates understood/recognized the function which needed to be addressed and they attempted to provide appropriate responses.

Candidates' Strengths

Candidates generally observed the rubric and responded with precision and language accuracy. The quality of responses revealed that some candidates were well prepared for the examination. These candidates understood the requirements of the question, applied the lessons they had learnt to each situation and showed great ingenuity in answering questions that called for more than a straightforward answer. The range of vocabulary they used was impressive.

Candidates' Weaknesses

Candidates seemed weak in the use of appropriate vocabulary to respond to the situations given. Examples include using the word *atender* for attending or *asistir* for helping in Spanish. Many candidates could have earned better scores if they had not made careless errors especially with regard to spelling. Candidates suffered penalties for the omission and/or the inclusion of accents and tildes where these affected the contextual meaning, for example, *que/qué*, *mama/mamá*, *papa/papá*, *mi/mí*, *como/cómo*, *tu/tú*).

Other areas of concern for some candidates were distinguishing between the use of *por/para*, *ser/estar*, *tu/ti* and *me/mi*, writing the time in Spanish and word order.

The use of the subjunctive was often overlooked. Some candidates were also not cognizant of the familiar and polite forms of address, using *usted* and *tú* inappropriately or interchangeably.

An area of challenge for many candidates was converting what would be an appropriate answer in English, to Spanish. In the process, general grammar and vocabulary errors were noted. Some examples include:

- Using *a el* instead of *al*
- Use of the preposition *a* instead of *en*
- Failure to ensure gender and number agreement

Further to the errors above, some candidates misinterpreted what they were expected to do with the information in the situation described and therefore neglected to include all the elements required for a full response. Some candidates also complicated their responses unnecessarily by writing extended pieces where a shorter answer would have sufficed.

Comments on Individual Situations

Situation (a)

The president of your sports club requests topics for the agenda of an upcoming meeting. Write the message you send giving your suggestion with a reason. (Function: Suggesting)

Suggested response: *Podemos/Debemos/por qué no/ hablar de reunir fondos para nuestro viaje a Margarita porque necesitamos dinero.*

Most candidates were able to provide an appropriate response to this situation, giving both suggestion and reason. Some candidates gained only partial marks because they either omitted suggesting a topic or giving a reason.

Common errors included the following:

- Lack of the subjunctive after *sugiero que*
- Misuse of words, for example, *gusta* for *como*
- Lack of noun and adjective agreement, for example, '*nuestra viaje*'
- Misuse of *por* and *para*

Situation (b)

Your friend has just placed first in a competition. Write the text message you send congratulating him/her and mentioning the accomplishment. (Function: Congratulating)

Suggested response: *Felicitaciones/Enhorabuena/Felicidades/Te felicito/Congratulaciones por ganar (el concurso)*

Most candidates were able to express some form of congratulation. However, they encountered difficulty trying to express congratulations on winning something.

In many cases, candidates did not mention the accomplishment and thus gained only partial marks.

The following common errors were encountered:

- Confusion between *ser* and *estar*, for example, '*Soy contento por ti*'
- Confusion between *tu*, *tú* and *ti*
- Using the polite form of address instead of the familiar with a friend, for example, '*Usted ganó*'
- Lack of subject and verb agreement, for example, '*Tú ganó*'

Situation (c)

You are having a birthday party. Write a text message inviting your friend, giving one detail about the party. (Function: Inviting with detail)

Suggested response: *Quiero invitarte a mi fiesta de cumpleaños el sábado que viene/ a las seis/ en mi casa*

This was one of the best done situations, with candidates being able to provide some form of invitation with a detail.

The most common errors included the following:

- Using '*en la noche*' instead of *de la noche* when trying to give time as a detail
- The use of '*a mi casa*' instead of *en mi casa*
- Using *son las* instead of *a las*
- Varied incorrect versions of birthday party, for example, '*cumpleanos fiesta*'/'*fiesta de feliz cumpleanos*'
- Incorrect use of *ser* and *estar* meaning to take place, for example '*la fiesta está en mi casa*'
- Expression of date: writing the date and using *en el* to mean 'on the' for example, '*la fiesta es en el 8 de mayo*'

Situation (d)

You are planning an activity. Write the message you send to your cousin requesting assistance with a specific task. (Function: Requesting assistance)

Suggested response: *¿Puedes comprar las bebidas por favor?*

This situation was very well done. Most candidates were able to use an appropriate verb to request help mentioning what help they would like. Some candidates lost marks for saying that they wanted help with a specific task, but not mentioning the task.

The most common errors included the following:

- Using *usted* instead of *tú* as in Situation (b)
- Incorrect use of the imperative, for example, '*ayudasme*'
- Misuse of *me*, *mi*, and *mí*
- Failure to use the infinitive after the first conjugated verb, for example, '*puedes voy*'
- Misuse of *ayudar* and *asistir*, for example, '*puedes asistirme*'
- Omission/misuse of preposition after *ayudar*, for example, *ayudame* '*con*' *preparar*

Situation (e)

You changed the venue of a meeting with your Spanish group. Write the message you send to the group informing them of the new venue. (Function: Providing information)

Suggested response: *Vamos a reunirnos en el laboratorio*

This was well done; candidates were able to provide acceptable responses, indicating where the meeting would be held.

The most common errors included the following:

- Using *atender* instead of *asistir*
- The use of *a* instead of *en*
- Using *estar* instead of *ser* (to mean take place)
- Misspelling of *reunión*

Situation (f)

You are planning an outdoor picnic. Write a text message to your friend asking him/her to contribute a specific item. (Function: Requesting)

Suggested response: *Para la merienda, por favor trae/lleva unas botellas de agua*

Responses to this situation were well done. Most candidates were able to request a specific item. The biggest problem encountered was the use of the imperative.

The most common errors included the following:

- use of *usted* rather than *tú*
- use of two conjugated verbs together, for example, '*puedes trae*'
- confusion between the verbs *llegar* and *llevar*, for example, '*¿Puedes 'llegar' una torta por favor?*'

Situation (g)

Your friend from Panama will be visiting your country. Write the message he/she sends indicating one place he/she would like to visit and why. (Function: Identifying with reason)

Suggested response: *Quisiera/me gustaría visitar la playa porque no hay playas en mi país.*

Most candidates responded very well to this situation gaining full marks once responses were kept short.

The most common errors included the following:

- Confusion with when to use *me gusta* and *me gustaría*.
- The use of two conjugated verbs together, for example, '*quiero visito*'

Situation (h)

Your cousin abroad wants to know about your school rules. Write the text message you send telling him/her about two important school rules. (Function: Providing information)

Suggested response: *Se prohíbe correr en las aulas y caminar sobre el césped*

Almost all candidates responded appropriately to this situation although they had difficulty finding the appropriate form/vocabulary to express what things are not allowed.

The most common errors included the following:

- Misuse of negative imperatives, for example, '*no fuma y no come*'
- Omission of *que* in the expression *tener que*, for example, '*tienen llevar*'
- Lack of agreement between noun and adjective, for example, *zapatos 'negro'*
- No use of personal *a*, for example, '*Debemos respetar los profesores*'

Situation (i)

You cannot attend school today. Write the message you send to your friend giving a reason for your absence and asking a favour. (Function: Explaining and requesting)

Suggested response *Ana, estoy enfermo-a y necesito pedir prestados tus apuntes por favor.*

This was fairly well done. Most candidates stated that they were ill and asked the friend to get homework/notes etc. Some candidates lost marks for either not giving a reason for absence or not asking a favour.

The most common errors included the following:

- Requesting using the imperative with *por favor*, for example, '*Prestarme tus apuntes por favor*'
- Misuse of *ser* and *estar*, for example, '*Soy enfermo*'/'*Soy en el hospital*'
- Using *atender* instead of *asistir*, for example, '*no voy a atender a la escuela*'

Situation (j)

You did not complete a chore that your mother asked you to do. Write the note you leave for your mother giving a reason for not doing the chore and saying how you will make up for it. (Function: Explaining and promising)

Suggestion response: *Se me olvidó pero voy a hacerlo más tarde*

Most candidates did this question well, giving a reason and a promise.

The most common error was encountered when candidates attempted to give the apology. Candidates still do not understand when to use *lo siento* and *siento* and therefore, there were many instances of '*lo siento por*' and '*lo muy siento*'.

Further Comments and Recommendations

The situations required vocabulary and grammatical structures well within candidates' abilities. They were also concisely stated so that the functions/requirements were unambiguous and easily identified. Many candidates would have scored more highly if they had read each situation more carefully in order to identify the function and if they had focused on responding only to the stated requirements. Candidates are advised that the more concise their response, the less likely they are to make mistakes. Candidates should observe that they are required to provide their responses in one sentence only, so providing extended responses is not encouraged. The focus should be on addressing all the elements required in a fully appropriate response. Teachers should therefore train students to keep sentences uncomplicated while using idioms correctly.

In addition, candidates must pay attention to correct spelling as marks can be lost through careless omissions of accents. Candidates are encouraged to learn and use common expressions which can satisfy the requirements of a range of situations likely to be presented. Simple verb structures such as *ir a* + infinitive, *poder* + infinitive, *tener que* + infinitive are very useful for almost all types of situations.

It is important that candidates read the situation carefully, recognize the function which it entails and provide answers specific to the information required. In guiding students' writing, teachers should emphasize the need for them to underline key words and phrases in the situation so that important information is not omitted when constructing their responses.

Teachers are encouraged to continue to employ different methods and strategies to enable students to strengthen competency in the language. In this technological age, there is a need to explore creative ways to engage students, to assist them in acquiring the content so that they will be able to utilize it in meaningful grammatically correct sentences. Teachers could probably have relay exercises in which one student reads a situation aloud, another student articulates what function is required, the next student provides appropriate expressions for the situation, and the last student in the relay constructs the sentence or answers appropriately to the situation. The relay team who finishes first and has a perfect score is deemed the winner.

Section II (Question 2 — Letter)

Letter

A storm has just passed through your island. Write the letter you send to your friend in Costa Rica telling him/her about the storm. Be sure to include:

- (i) Details about the storm
- (ii) Preparations you made for the storm
- (iii) How the storm affected your family and neighbourhood
- (iv) How you plan to prepare for future storms

Candidates were required to write a letter based on given cues about a topic which is not unfamiliar to them. The topic fell within the scope of the CSEC syllabus, particularly with regard to grammar, syntax and vocabulary. The main ingredients for attaining a good, very good or excellent mark are the use of good grammar, relevant vocabulary and evidence that the candidate is able to use appropriate idiomatic expressions. The letter must fall within the range of 130-150 words in length and should include the date, for example, *20 de febrero de 2020*; the salutation, for example, *Querido Pedro/Querida Ana*; and an appropriate ending, for example, *Cariñosamente*.

As mentioned earlier, the topic would generally deal with matters familiar to candidates. In this case, they were asked to write about a storm – a frequent occurrence in the Caribbean. However, many candidates were unfamiliar with relevant vocabulary and did not know the Spanish for *storm, to destroy, rain, thunder/lightning, or lights/flashlight*.

Most candidates fell within the poor to moderate category but some were in the good, very good and excellent categories.

Strengths

Some candidates had good renditions for the date, the salutation and the ending and many had a good opening paragraph which included expressions such as *tanto tiempo sin hablar, gracias por tu ultima carta, espero que estés bien, tengo que decirte del huracán* and *escibo para contarte*.

Many candidates, even the weaker ones, attempted to treat all the cues and stayed within the required word limit.

Some candidates were very good with the use of the subjunctive, for example, *teníamos la certeza de que la tormenta no viniera tan brutal...* and *el huracan llegó como si fuera a destruir la isla*. There were also some instances of generally good grammar, for example,

mis padres; mis hermanos y yo nos acostamos en un cuarto seguro; afecto atodo el vecindario ya que algunas parte; se bloquearon co restos de basura and pusimos la medicina y los pasaportes en una maleta.

A few candidates showed strength in the use of adequate vocabulary, for example, *el huracán, la tempestad, la tormenta, el relámpago, la lluvia, el trueno, una inundación, mudarse de casa, una linterna* and *el techo*.

Weaknesses

Too many candidates failed to write the date, salutation and ending correctly. There seems to be some misinformation about how the date should be written. Many candidates continue to spell it out in words. A correct example would be *13 de enero de 2020*. Observe from the example that only the month is spelt out.

The most common errors included the following:

- Inappropriate vocabulary: a storm was '*un storma*' or '*un disaster natural*' or '*mal tiempo*'
Other examples of inappropriate words were '*destroyo*' and '*un flashlight*'
- Too often *ropa* was pluralized as '*ropas*' when it should have been *mucha ropa* or *más ropa*
- Candidates seem to be unaware of the difference between because and because of
 - *porque* = because
 - *a causa de* = because of
- Poor knowledge and use of the various tenses, especially irregular verbs, for example, *caer, destruir, hacer, ir, tener, venir, poner*

Recommendations

- The answer to achieving a good mark lies partly in paying some attention to these reports which continue to highlight areas where candidates have shown weakness.
- In preparation for the examination, teachers should ensure that students receive regular practice in letter writing, using the imagination to produce and prepare topics which deal with familiar situations. Teachers should also use practice assignments where responses are written under test conditions.
- Productive practice of grammar is necessary, not just in exercises but in context, for reinforcement.
- Candidates should practise translating from one language to the next. This is a necessary tool which would enable them to understand the nuances of the language and to move smoothly from one language to the next.
- More time and effort must be spent on understanding the need for the use of the subjunctive, which is a key aspect of Spanish grammar.

- Conjugation of verbs and more particularly, irregular verbs, needs more attention.
- Teachers should ensure that students acquire a pool of idiomatic expressions to enhance the quality of the responses they produce.
- The strengthening of all four skills – listening, reading, speaking and writing – will help the enhancement of each individual one. Meaningful use of games, projects, classroom activities and technology will promote teaching and learning.
- The teaching of grammar might appear to be burdensome to many but it cannot be overlooked; the need for good grammar must be emphasized. Constant drilling is required.
- Greater effort must be made to be competent in the use of verbs particularly irregular verbs, and especially those irregular verbs common to any Spanish exam. These may include *tener, ir, decir, hacer* and *ver*.
- Attention needs to be paid to learning vocabulary.
- It is necessary that candidates be taught the correct use of a dictionary to alleviate the incorrect use of vocabulary.
- The importance of accents must be stressed.
- Language learnt in junior classes should not be ignored.
- Use games and drills to practise the language.
- Students can be directed to appropriate websites for further practice. Prospective candidates are encouraged to use their smart phones, tablets, and other appropriate technology devices to access websites where learning the language can become easier.

Section III (Question 3) — Contextual Dialogue

This section required candidates to choose to complete a contextual dialogue. Cues in English were provided for both options. The contextual dialogue was in keeping with the information outlined in the syllabus and therefore within the scope of candidates' abilities.

Contextual Dialogue

You and your friends will be going on a school trip to a Latin American country. You and your father are discussing your preparations before leaving the country. Write the dialogue between you and your father, giving your responses. Be sure to include:

- (i) Your excitement to travel with your classmates.
- (ii) Information about what personal items you have packed.
- (iii) Organization and safety of travel documents and spending money.
- (iv) Reassurance to worried parents about your responsible behaviour while abroad.
- (v) Promise to keep in touch while abroad.

Generally, performance on this question was satisfactory. Although it was within the scope of candidates' ability, there were a few candidates who did not attempt to answer the question at all. Furthermore,

candidates who attempted the question often misused the first cue, by failing to express feelings of excitement. Many stated that they were nervous; others simply expressed assurance that they were comfortable travelling abroad but failed to use expressions that showed excitement. The second cue was consistently well done, with candidates either simply stating that they have everything, or itemizing what they packed.

With respect to the third response, the majority of candidates were able to satisfactorily state that they had their documents but failed to express assurance that they were safe. Some candidates simply itemized again, from the second cue, the items packed.

The fourth cue was challenging for many. Candidates stated how much money they had but did not state who gifted them the money. Others stated what gifts they were going to buy for friends/family members. The verb *regalar* was misused.

For the fifth response, many candidates were able to state what activities they were going to do, however in the sixth, many simply gave assurance of good behaviour without stating what mother said. The seventh response was handled quite well by the majority of candidates, but with grammatical errors as outlined below.

Some frequent errors encountered included the following:

- Confusion with the use of verbs and vocabulary
 - Using *ser* versus *estar*
 - '*Estar seguro*' versus *ser seguro*
 - '*Pasar*' versus *Gasar*
 - *Mucho* and *muy* used incorrectly
 - '*El centro de comercial*' instead of *centro comercial*.
 - '*Promeso*' instead of *Prometo*
- The use of '*dinero*' instead of *dólares* while expressing how much money he/she had. The English word 'dollars' was also used and the omission of accents was very prevalent.
- Not knowing how to count in hundreds; candidates wrote '*cinco cientos*' and '*cien y cinco*'

Recommendations

- More time should be spent on this component of the examination. Students need to be taught how to formulate appropriate responses that fit into the contextual dialogue.
- Candidates need more practice in the preparation and writing of the contextual dialogues as well as oral practice, reflecting themes and format. The reading of dialogues from texts, newspapers and magazines is encouraged. Candidates should also use completed dialogues (along with other possible responses) and discuss the tenses, vocabulary and structures used in the exercise.
- Candidates are encouraged to read through the dialogue before inserting their responses, to allow for the natural flow of conversation. Furthermore, they should note that the dialogue does not necessarily have to be written in the same order as the cues.

- Candidates need to avoid writing in English and then translating.
- Candidates need to build and strengthen their vocabulary base, learn idioms, synonyms and antonyms in the target language, and incorporate these into their writing.
- Teachers need to train students how to manage set word limits. In addition, they should encourage students to review and reread their work at all times. Teachers can plan and structure review time into each lesson to help students get into the habit of looking over their work before submission.

Section IV (Question 4) — 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.

This reading comprehension passage for the CSEC January 2020 examination was of a level that was quite appropriate for a candidate who would have already attempted this question in the previous year. The level of vocabulary and grammar was such that candidates could have consistently scored between 18 and 20.

Generally, candidates performed well; a few candidates gave answers that had nothing to do with the passage but the majority demonstrated a very good understanding of the passage, and therefore gained between 15 and 20 marks. In questions where more than one mark was awarded, unless the candidate did not understand the entire passage, candidates generally gained at least one mark; at most, two.

Strengths

- Candidates handled the last question fairly well. This question usually presents problems with interpretation and understanding.
- Instructions were adhered to quite well.
- Most candidates understood the vocabulary and the grammar quite well.

Comments on Individual Questions

Part (a)

What was the narrator's parents' response when he asked for a dog?

Suggested response: *Not now, maybe next year.*

Incorrect response: You are too young for a dog.

Most candidates got full marks, although the weaker ones did not seem to know the meaning of *el año que viene*.

Part (b)

What was the narrator doing when Fili came into his life?

Suggested response: *He was swimming in the river/spending time with his cousin.*

Incorrect response: He was at home with his cousin.

Most candidates knew this answer and easily earned the two marks.

Part (c)

How did the narrator and his cousin gain Fili's trust?

Suggested response: *They gave him food and water.*

Incorrect response: They took him home.

All candidates were able to score full marks.

Part (d)

How did the narrator's parents react to Fili?

Suggested response: *At first they were not happy, then they agreed/relented.*

Incorrect response: They put him out of the house.

Some candidates did not understand the word *cedieron* although most gave a correct response, assuming that it meant *to give in/accept*.

Part (e)

What did the narrator realize about Fili's behavior?

Suggested response: *He was naughty and destructive/always getting into trouble.*

Incorrect response: He was a good dog.

Generally, this was very well answered. Most candidates were able to score full marks.

Part (f)

State two activities that got Fili into trouble.

Suggested response: *He bit shoes and destroyed everyone's things.*

Incorrect response: He always got into trouble.

Most candidates got the part where Fili destroyed shoes but many lost marks for the second part stating that he destroyed furniture.

Part (g)

How did the narrator's mother finally react to Fili's behavior?

Suggested response: *She got angry/shouted at him and did not allow him to enter the house.*

Incorrect response: *She told him he was a bad dog.*

Many candidates lost marks for only stating either that she got angry/shouted at him or did not let him into the house.

Part (h)

What was Fili's reaction to what the narrator did?

Suggested response: *He started to whimper/beg/cry.*

Incorrect response: He ran away from home.

On a whole, this was not answered well; very few candidates provided a correct response. Most candidates wrote that he was puzzled and told her he was sorry.

Part (i)

How did Fili explain his behavior in the narrator's dream?

Suggested response: *He was just playful.*

Incorrect response: He was not a bad dog.

Almost all candidates got this response correct.

Part (j)

Explain whether or not the narrator's dream became a reality.

Suggested response: *It did because in his dream Fili and his mother had made up and when he awoke Fili was still there which implied that they did in fact make up.*

Incorrect response: No because when he got up Fili had disappeared.

This part was well answered. Most candidates were able to score two of the three marks.

Recommendations

Candidates should take note of the following:

- Learn and revise vocabulary constantly.
- Ensure that revision goes back to the very beginning, basic Spanish.
- Engage in frequent practice using past papers. Past papers are easily available on CXC's website and in other places.

Paper 03 — Oral Examination

The CSEC Spanish oral examination tested candidates' ability to produce appropriate responses in Spanish to a number of situations testing specific functions, read aloud a short passage in Spanish and carry on a

conversation in the target language by responding to questions based on four out of six topics set out in the syllabus: Sports and Recreation, Shopping, Daily Life and Travel.

Section I — Responses to Situations/Instructions

This section required candidates to provide appropriate oral 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 candidates. Candidates who performed excellently in this section produced appropriate responses that were expressed correctly and that demonstrated 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.

Other candidates who scored in the middle range in this section, presented responses that demonstrated comprehension, however, errors in syntax, structural inconsistencies and incorrect vocabulary use were encountered.

Candidates who performed weakly in this section showed very little command of grammar and vocabulary to handle this oral part of the examination competently. In several cases, there was some attempt to produce an appropriate response but the language was flawed with grammatical inaccuracies, structural inconsistencies and limited vocabulary. Some candidates demonstrated a lack of comprehension of the questions and struggled to put their ideas together in Spanish, which often led to disjointed responses, the stringing together of arbitrary vocabulary, and the use of a number of anglicisms.

In a few cases, candidates translated the situations instead of directly answering them. Others who attempted a direct answer, demonstrated unfamiliarity with the correct registers when addressing someone and therefore used *tú* when *usted* was needed. Some candidates opted not to provide a response and requested to skip some of the situations.

Some noted grammatical errors included the following:

- Incorrect use of *ser* and *estar*
- Incorrect adjectival agreement in gender and number as well as incorrect use of irregular adjectives; incorrect positioning of adjectives in extended sentences
- Challenges with subject-verb agreement
- Lack of a range of vocabulary for basic functions such as giving an apology or extending an invitation
- Incorrect use of commands in the negative form
- Incorrect use of the superlative form of adjectives
- Incorrect reference to days of the week, for example, '*en domingo*'

- Confusion with the use of *tiempo* and *hora*
- Inaccurate conjugation of the future and past tenses
- Incorrect definite and indefinite articles
- Incorrect use of the construction '*me gusta/n*'
- Confusion between direct and indirect object pronouns

Recommendations

The syllabus is very clear as to the functions which candidates are expected to be able to use in order to perform well in this section. However, many candidates' responses suggested that they were not fully aware of these functions. Teachers are encouraged to develop exercises to adequately afford students the opportunity to practice these functions orally. Practice in responding to situations orally must begin in the early stages of the teaching/learning process and teachers must avoid the tendency to wait until the examination year to expose students to this skill. Candidates are use more complex vocabulary structures and idioms while moving away from cliché expressions and words.

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. 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. The topics covered this year included Online Shopping, Sports, Aztec Culture and Travel in Latin America.

Weaker candidates continue to be challenged by the reading component of the oral examination. It is 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, showing heavy influence of the mother tongue. They showed no knowledge of the importance of intonation and started and ended their reading passage in the same tone. Passages were not phrased correctly so meaning was lost. In addition, punctuation marks like commas and full stops were not observed. Little or no knowledge of the rules of accentuation and stress was displayed.

The following weaknesses in pronunciation were noted:

- Z as English z
- Ge/gi as gee
- 'c' pronounced like 'k' – *aceptan*
- H not read as silent
- Mispronunciation of the letter 'j'
- Y mispronounced or left silent
- English rendition of vowels, especially 'e'

- Anglicized or incorrect pronunciation of certain words, for example, *semejanzas, compleja, utilizaban, disfrutan, precauciones, disciplinados, países, especiales, región, cualquier, sanitarios, mayoría, trabajaba, aceptan, perjudiciales, escritorio, desarrollo* and *caracterizaban*

Recommendations

Challenges in fluency and intonation in reading typically 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. There is a great need for exposure to authentic listening activities using the target language.

Section III — Guided Conversation

This section of the oral examination tests candidates' ability to respond to a number of questions based on four topics. This year, the topics on which the candidates were tested were Sports and Recreation, Shopping, Daily Life and Travel. Candidates were asked four questions on each of the topics and were assessed on comprehension, spontaneity, fluency and expression.

Generally, candidates gave inaccurate responses to questions on community activities; this demonstrated a lack of comprehension. Some candidates were unable to answer the extended descriptive questions, and provided responses which were often two or three words strung together. Some candidates did not understand the terms *gastas* and *en línea* in questions on Shopping, and the use of *instalaciones* when referring to Sports and Recreation.

This section of the oral examination continues to be challenging for several 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 accuracy. However, other candidates struggled with this section, handicapped by limited vocabulary and poor knowledge of grammatical structures. Some candidates showed limited comprehension of the questions asked and constantly requested repetition.

The errors in grammar evident in this section included the following:

- Subject and verb agreement
- Adjectival agreement
- Confusion with subject pronouns
- Incorrect use of the subjunctive
- Misunderstanding of *de dónde vienen...*
- Use of the preterite and imperfect past tenses

- Agreement of articles
- Confusion between and misuse of *Ser* and *estar*

Some vocabulary inaccuracies stemmed from the following:

- Misunderstanding of the expression *de dónde vienen*
- Confusion with *instalaciones*
- Difficulty understanding the expression *tareas*

Recommendations

Teachers must ensure that they use the target language as far as possible in the classroom. This can be achieved through the use of radio stations and podcasts, and online oral and aural activities. Extensive use of Spanish in the classroom would not only ensure that students become comfortable hearing Spanish around them but would strengthen their listening and speaking skills, and also increase their confidence when conversing in Spanish. Exposure to native speakers would also assist in providing an authentic language experience for students. Teachers must encourage students to pay attention to the details which are required in the questions and particularly listen carefully to the demands of a question before responding.

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 2020

**SPANISH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY**

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GENERAL COMMENTS

In 2020, approximately 65 per cent of the candidates achieved Grades I–III compared with 70 per cent in 2019 and 2018. There was improved performance on Profile 3 (Speaking). The performance on Profile 1 (Listening) was comparable to 2019 while there was a decline on Profile 2 (Reading) and Profile 4 (Writing).

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 — Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprised two sections, assessed candidates' ability to listen to and understand a number of items in the target language, and to read and understand a number of written items. Both sections required candidates to demonstrate mastery of essential elements of grammar and vocabulary as prescribed in the CSEC syllabus. Performance on this paper was comparable with that of the previous year. Candidates' performance on the 60 multiple-choice items produced a mean score of 59 per cent.

Paper 02 — Free Response

Section I (Question 1) — Directed Situations

This question required that candidates read carefully the directions regarding each of ten situations described in English and then provide appropriate written responses in Spanish to each situation. It assessed candidates' knowledge of Spanish vocabulary, inclusive of idiomatic expressions, Spanish grammar rules and structure. Marks were awarded if responses included all details in the situation and adequately communicated meaning. Responses were categorized as appropriate or partially appropriate and were awarded marks accordingly, with penalties for errors pertaining to the quality of language. Inappropriate responses were awarded no mark even if the language of expression was perfect.

Candidates' Strengths

The situations were considered manageable. Most candidates responded in the target language. There were only a few candidates who did not attempt to respond to all situations or who used English for most of them. It was encouraging to note this level of response because face-to-face teaching had been interrupted in the second school term across the Caribbean and it was only in the latter part of Term 3 that such teaching resumed.

Candidates' Weaknesses

Candidates seemed weak in the use of correct/appropriate vocabulary to respond to the situations given. For example, they used the word '*arrivar*' or '*asistir*' for 'arrival' in Spanish. There were many candidates

who would have earned better scores if they had not made avoidable errors especially with regard to spelling.

An area of challenge for many candidates was converting what would be an appropriate answer in English to Spanish. In the process of doing so, general grammar and vocabulary errors were noted. Additionally, there were candidates who misinterpreted what they were expected to do with the information in the situation described and who therefore neglected to include all the elements required for a full response. There were also some candidates who unnecessarily complicated their responses, writing extended pieces where a shorter answer would have sufficed.

General areas of weakness included the following:

- Omission and/or the inclusion of accents and tildes where these affected the meaning for the context (such as *que/qué, mama/mamá, papa/papá, mi/mí, como/cómo, tu/tú, mas/más*).
- Omission of punctuation, especially the interrogative.
- Word order.
- Distinguishing between the use of *por* and *para, ser/estar, tu/ti*.
- The use of the subjunctive was often overlooked.
- Some candidates were also not cognizant of the familiar and polite forms of address, using *usted* and *tú* inappropriately or interchangeably.

Comments on Individual Situations

Situation (a)

On an application form for a summer job you are asked to write two reasons why you should be hired. What do you write?

The function being tested was explaining; a verb was needed with the two reasons.

Suggested response: *Soy trabajador y me porto bien con la gente.*

This response was handled quite well, with candidates being able to give to reasons why they should be hired. Most responses focused on characteristic traits such as *intelligent, hardworking* etc. Some candidates used physical characteristics which were also accepted.

The following common errors were encountered:

- Use of '*estar*' instead of *ser*, for example, '*Estoy honesto*'
- Unfamiliarity with the word '*y*' changing to '*e*' before words like '*inteligente*'

- Unfamiliarity with the uses of *saber* and *poder* resulting in responses like '*Yo puedo hablar dos idiomas.*'

Situation (b)

You feel sorry that you broke your friend's calculator. Write the note of apology you send saying how you will compensate for it.

The two-part function of *apologizing* and *offering compensation* was being tested.

Suggested response: *Lo siento pero voy a comprarte otra/Siento que haya roto tu computadora pero voy a comprarte otra/Siento haber roto tu computadora ...*

This response was also handled well, with candidates being able to offer an apology and some sort of compensation albeit with grammatical and spelling errors.

The following common errors were encountered:

- Use of '*tú*' instead of *usted*
- Incorrect spelling of 'computer' in Spanish
- Unfamiliarity with how one apologizes for something. Most candidates were unaware that when you apologize for something the *lo* is left out and *que* plus the subjunctive must be used or *siento* plus the infinitive. Examples of wrong uses are
 - '*lo siento por romper tu calculadora*'
 - '*lo siento que rompí tu calculadora*'.
- Unfamiliarity with the Spanish word for 'another', thus there were responses such as '*una otra*'
- Confusion regarding the word 'you' in Spanish. In this case *te* was needed but candidates gave responses such as '*voy a comprartu una calculadora.*'
- Confusion between the words *nuevo* and *nueve*.

Situation (c)

Your mother is not feeling well and is resting. Write the text she sends asking you to do two things when you get home.

This situation tested the function of *requesting* and two requests were required.

Suggested response: *¿Puedes lavar los platos y preparar la cena por favor?*

This response was also well handled. Candidates were able to use appropriate vocabulary to make requests, although many responses were riddled with grammatical and spelling errors.

The following common errors were encountered:

- Use of '*usted*' instead of *tú*
- Unfamiliarity with using the infinitive after verbs like *poder*, thus there were responses such as '*¿Puedes lavas los platos?*'
- Unfamiliarity with the use of the subjunctive after *cuando* when dealing with future time
- Agreement of adjectives causing responses such as '*Estoy enfermo*' (mother speaking)
- Misuse of *ser* and *estar*, for example, '*Soy enferma*'
- Unfamiliarity with the use of the imperative resulting in responses such as '*lavo los platos*'
- Use of '*llevar*'/'*llavar*' instead of *lavar*

Situation (d)

Your teacher has been called away from class. Write the note he/she leaves on the blackboard outlining two tasks to be done in his/her absence.

The function being tested in this situation was *giving instructions* and two instructions were required; the infinitive as a command form was acceptable.

Suggested response: *¡Escriban sus ensayos y hagan el ejercicio en la página diez!/Deben escribir el ensayo y hacer el ejercicio en la página a diez.*

This was one of the more challenging situations. There was misinterpretation of the giving of instructions for the tasks that were appropriate for a class setting. Many candidates did not respond well; they used expressions such as '*silencio*' and '*callate*' instead of citing a specific task. Candidates possibly did not understand what the word *task* implies.

The following common errors were encountered:

- Unfamiliarity with the use of imperatives, thus there were responses such as '*¡Hacen el ejercicio!*'
- Unfamiliarity with the use of the word '*aula*' (Please note that it is *el aula* but *las aulas*.)
- Incorrect spelling of words such as *ejercicio*, *ensayo*, *página*

Situation (e)

The library is closed today. Write the note that is placed on the door giving the reason for its closure and stating when it will reopen.

The functions that were being tested for this situation were *giving a reason* and *informing*. Both were required in the response.

Suggested response: *No hay electricidad hoy pero vamos a abrir/abriremos mañana.*

This was perhaps the most challenging situation. Many candidates struggled with appropriately expressing both elements required in the response to this situation. In many cases, one of the two elements was omitted.

The following common errors were encountered:

- Using the word '*librería*' for *biblioteca*
- Expressing a date in Spanish
- Unfamiliarity with the use of the word 'on' with a day, thus there were responses such as '*Vamos a abrir en domingo.*'
- Misuse of *ser* and *estar*, for example, '*la biblioteca es cerrada*'
- Agreement with noun and adjective, for example, '*la biblioteca está 'cerrado*'
- Gender usage, for example, *La biblioteca 'está cerrado*' was used instead of *está cerrada*.
- Use of '*porque de*' instead of *a causa de*, for example, '*la biblioteca no está abierta porque de una tormenta.*'

Situation (f)

You give your teacher a gift for his/her birthday. Write the note he/she sends thanking you and expressing how he/she feels about the gift.

This situation tested the functions *thanking* and *expressing feelings*.

Suggested response: *Muchas gracias por el reloj, me gusta muchísimo.*

This situation was well handled. Candidates were very comfortable with the function of expressing gratitude and were able to show appreciation for the gift.

The following common errors were encountered:

- Misuse of *por* and *para*, for example, '*Gracias para el regalo*'
- Misuse of '*regla*' for *regalo*
- Incorrect use of *gustar* resulting in responses like '*Me lo gusta*'/'*Me gusta los zapatos*'

Situation (g)

Students in your school send a letter to the principal protesting poor school conditions. Write two specific recommendations they make to improve the current conditions.

The function tested in this situation was *recommending* and candidates needed to make two recommendations.

Suggested response: *Necesitamos ventiladores en las aulas y wifi en toda la escuela.*

Many candidates had an understanding of what improvements they wanted to see in their school but struggled with appropriately expressing the request. Recommending an action was challenging.

The following common errors were encountered:

- Unfamiliarity with use of the subjunctive after phrases like *recomendar que*
- Use of 'tú' instead of *usted* when addressing the principal
- Unfamiliarity with vocabulary related to school, for example, *laboratorios, canchas*
- Misuse of the words *mejor* and *mayor*, for example, '*Necesitamos mayores preofesores*'

Situation (h)

A storm is approaching your island. Write the text message alerts you receive advising of two precautions to take during this period.

The function tested was *advising* and candidates were expected to include two precautions as advice given.

Suggested response: *Compren todo lo que necesitan y no salgan durante la tormenta.*

This situation was well done. Candidates were very well versed in expressing the preparations for a storm in Spanish; hence, they were able to make recommendations for precautions. Many smart candidates used vocabulary from the Reading Comprehension to respond to this situation.

The following common errors were encountered:

- Unfamiliarity with the use of imperatives for both positive and negative commands
- Use of '*storma*' for *tormenta*
- Incorrect placement of 'a' after *escuchar* and *mirar* resulting in responses like '*Escucha a la radio*'/'*Mira a la television*'
- Unfamiliarity with the difference between *el televisor*, *la television*, *el radio* and *la radio*

Situation (i)

Your best friend has just won an island scholarship. Write the congratulatory text you send saying how you feel about his/her achievement.

This situation tested the function of *congratulating* but candidates also needed to express feelings.

Suggested response: *Felicitaciones por tu beca y estoy muy orgullosa de ti.*

This situation was very well done. Candidates were very knowledgeable about the function of expressing congratulations.

The following common errors were encountered:

- Incorrect spelling of the word 'congratulations' in Spanish, for example, *felizitaciones/felcitaciones, felizidades/felcidades, congratulaciones/congratulationes*
- Incorrect use of *ser* and *estar* resulting in responses such as '*Soy orgulloso de ti*'
- Misuse of the words *bien* and *bueno*, for example, '*Muy bueno/Buen hecho*'
- Confusion regarding the use of *tú* and *ti*, for example, '*Estoy orgulloso de tú*'

Situation (j)

Your friend is about to do something that you know will get him/her in trouble. Write the text you send warning him/her of the consequences of his/her actions.

The function tested in this situation was *warning with consequences*. Both warning and consequences are the essential elements.

Suggested response: *No debes luchar en la escuela porque vas a ser castigado/a.*

Many candidates misinterpreted the instructions, especially the element of consequences. Many candidates did not respond to this situation or gave a partial response.

The following common errors were encountered:

- Use of '*usted*' instead of *tú*, for example, *No 'debe' luchar*
- Incorrect placement of the word '*te*', for example, *Tus padres castigarán te*
- Use of '*a*' instead of *en* for '*at*' when referring to a place, for example, '*a casa*' or '*a la escuela*'

Recommendations to Teachers

- Frequent sessions using sample directed situations from various CXC past papers with a focus on the language functions can be facilitated. This can help students to gain greater awareness of the role of the language functions, achieve accuracy and formulate appropriate responses.
- Grammar sessions in thematic contexts: students can learn varied vocabulary and verbs in the context of topics such as shopping, travel, school, home and family etc.
- The provision of more opportunities for students to spell vocabulary expressions perhaps through dialogues, spelling quizzes, basic translations and audio visual means should be facilitated.
- Utilize spelling exercises especially with words that bear close similarity to English words. Make students aware of which consonants cannot be doubled in a Spanish word; *b* and *v* and *d* consonants

in Spanish words need extra practice in spelling exercises. Emphasis should also be placed on // vs y. Activities that allow students to practise and teachers to reinforce the correct spelling of other words in the target language should be included in teaching/learning activities.

- Use review and reinforcement grammar activities to cement the use of
 - *ser* and *estar*
 - y particularly with words that follow commencing with the letter 'i'
 - both formal and informal registers when advising or making recommendations
 - expressions of commands
 - agreement between adjectives and nouns
 - the preterit and imperfect tenses
 - the conditional and future tenses.
- It is important that students read questions carefully, provide the specific information required and recognize the function which is required. In guiding students' writing, teachers should emphasize the need for students to underline the key words and phrases in the situation so that they do not omit important information when constructing their responses.
- A significant number of students were unable to respond in one sentence so practice in this area is necessary.
- Many students also omitted the interrogation marks at the beginning and end of questions. Writing questions should be reinforced.
- Many of the responses revealed the need for teachers to emphasize the importance of accents as too many students failed to include them.
- Modern language departments should work in tandem with English departments because there is a general breakdown in the comprehension of English words.
- There were situations where students were required to provide more than one set of information and this proved to be challenging for them as their responses were too verbose and/or long-winded in some instances. More practice in this area needed.
- There is an urgent need to reiterate the importance of using correct grammar. Continue doing vocabulary exercises to strengthen this skill.

Recommendations to Candidates

- Candidates are encouraged to write more legibly, especially when writing accents or dots above vowels.
- Many candidates seem to write and erase and then write again (maybe from pencil to pen). This creates a type of double print when copying is done and is difficult to read.
- Many candidates could have improved their performance by simply reviewing what they wrote.
- Improvements in this area of the examination require some basic rules that candidates need to follow. Candidates need to be brief and direct in responding to situations. They should avoid long responses and avoid giving a preamble to the response. Those responses which were longest tended to be a lot more disjointed.
- Exposure to more idiomatic expressions and the development of a wider range of vocabulary would improve the quality of responses.

- Candidates are encouraged to practise writing in the target language.
- Candidates need to learn how to use *lo siento/siento* correctly.
- Candidates need to remember that *escuchar* means *to listen to*, so there is no need to use a word for *to* when saying *escuchar la radio*.
- Candidates are to avoid writing within the margins of the response sheet as these responses will not be scanned properly.
- Candidates should read and highlight the key functions being tested in each situation before attempting a response to ensure that responses are appropriate

Section II (Question 2 — Letter)

Candidates were required to write a letter, using 130–150 words, based on four given cues. They were assessed on use of language, accuracy, coherence and clarity of expression. The demands of the question were within candidates' scope of knowledge. The cues were not narrowly structured and allowed candidates to express themselves in language which would have been within their ability. Even candidates whose vocabulary and grammar might have been limited would not have been disadvantaged. The question demanded the use of a wide range of tenses which included the present, preterite, imperfect and future.

Letter

Your Spanish friend has spent some time in your country and has returned home. He/she left before a big concert was held. Write the letter you send to him/her about the concert in which you include

- (i) when it was held, who you went with and how you went
- (ii) specific details about performances at the concert
- (iii) something interesting that happened at the concert
- (iv) plans you will make for his/her next visit.

Candidates' Performance

Candidates' performance ranged from very limited to excellent, with a very large number falling in the moderate range. A few candidates offered no response but the majority attempted to give responses using all the cues given. Even the weaker candidates gave what was considered to be comprehensible responses. A small number of candidates chose not to respond completely in the target language but included in their response some English, some French or even Portuguese, while a smaller number wrote entirely in English.

Candidates' Strengths

Most candidates were able to produce the following appropriately and correctly:

- The date (*23 de julio de 2020*)
- A salutation (*Querido/a hola*)
- An ending (*Cariñosamente/Con cariño/Tu mejor amigo*)

In the opening lines there was some improvement in the quality of Spanish written even among weaker candidates, who were able to produce some grammatically correct expressions and sentences, which included the following:

- *¿Qué tal estás?*
- *tanto tiempo que no nos hablamos*
- *siento no poder escribir antes*
- *espero que estés bien al recibo de mi carta*
- *gracias por tu última carta*

Use of Tenses

Most candidates correctly used the tenses which were required. The preterite, imperfect and future were used sensibly and correctly. Some examples include the following:

- *Yo fui al concierto con mi amigo*
- *Mis amigos y yo estábamos contentos*
- *Yo bailaba con mi amiga cuando empezó a llover*
- *Cuando visites la próxima vez, iremos a la playa*
- *El concierto tuvo lugar el 23 de julio*
- *Cuando vengas a mi país vamos a ir de compras*

Use of Idiomatic and Other Expressions/Well-constructed Sentences

There was an abundance of idiomatic expressions, even from weaker candidates. Examples include the following:

- *Empecé a llorar a lágrima viva cuando me llamó*
- *Llovió a cántaros*
- *No pude dar crédito a los ojos*
- *El coro interpretaba un sinfín de canciones*
- *Terminó a las altas horas de la madrugada*

There were also some well-constructed sentences including the following:

- *Sin embargo pedí prestado un teléfono para llamar a mi madre*
- *Yo estaba tan feliz que rebosaba de gozo*
- *La muchedumbre parecía enloquecerse cuando mi cantante favorito comenzó a cantar*
- *El climax fue cuando tuve la oportunidad de sacar fotos con Koffee*
- *Un señor se desmayó debido al calor*

Use of the Subjunctive

The subjunctive (present and past) was in evidence throughout the letter — from the first paragraph to the end. Examples include the following:

- *Espero que te encuentres bien*
- *Mi madre quiere que yo compre un nuevo teléfono móvil*
- *Mis padres prefieren que nos visites en diciembre*
- *Puedes visitarme cuando quieras*
- *Quería que vinieras también*

Length

Fewer candidates failed to observe the rubrics regarding the length of the letter, many abided by the 130–150 word limit.

Candidates' Weaknesses

A lack of knowledge, poor use of vocabulary, grammar and other structures were major hurdles for many candidates. Too many candidates continue to have difficulty producing a correctly written date, a salutation and ending. (An example of a correctly written date was provided earlier in the report.) Candidates should note that only the month is spelt out in words, not the day (23) nor the year (2020). Candidates must remember that this is a friendly letter so 'Estimado' as a salutation and 'Atentamente'/'Sinceramente' as an ending are inappropriate.

The following common errors were encountered:

- Omission of and misplacement of accents, for example, '*¿Como esta tu familia?*', '*¿Que tal estas?*', '*la musica*', '*con mi papa/mama*' '*el dia del concierto*'.
- Errors in agreement between subject and verb, and noun and adjective, for example,
 - *yo **fue** al concierto*
 - *mi amigo fui a hablar con su cantante favorito*
 - *el concierto tuvo lugar en el estadio*

- *Marisol y yo bailo mucho*
- *nosotros estaban lleno **de alegría***
- *los artistas **llevaba** camisas **rojo**.*
- Errors in spelling, for example, '*famillia*', '*comerrcial*', '*interessante*', '*querrido*', '*ocurir*', '*desafortunamente*', '*bilar*'.
- Lack of essential vocabulary: some vocabulary which was needed in order to treat the topic adequately was absent, leaving many to use whatever they perceived as being adequate. Among the unknown were the following:
 - *el cantante*, the singer
 - *disfrutar(de)*, to enjoy
 - *interpretar/ejectuar*, to perform
 - *divertirse*, to have a good time
 - *el concierto*, the concert
 - *el artista*, the artiste
- Absence of prepositions '*a*' or '*de*' after some verbs, for example, '*Shakira comenzó bailar*'; '*cuando terminó cantar*'; '*vamos asistir un concierto*'.
- Failing to use contractions
 - *a + el = al*: *fuimos al estadio/al concierto*
 - *de + el = del*: *la mejor parte del concierto*
 - with me = *conmigo*: *mis padres fueron conmigo*
- Inability to differentiate between words, for example,
 - *vez vs. tiempo vs. hora*: *la próxima tiempo; recuerdo la vez en que este artista cantaba muy bien; ¿a qué tiempo regresamos?*
 - *atender*, to attend to vs *asistir (á)*, to attend or to be present at
 - *muy*, very vs *mucho*, a lot
 - *tocar*, to play (an instrument) vs *jugar*, to play (a game)
 - *llorar*, to weep vs *llover*, to rain vs *llevar*, to wear/carry.

Recommendations

- The teaching of grammar might appear to be burdensome to many but it cannot be overlooked. The need for good grammar must be emphasized. Constant drilling is required.
- The use of good idioms in students' letter writing must also be encouraged. Idioms add some measure of delight to what is written.
- More time and effort must be spent on understanding the need for the use of the subjunctive. There is no escaping the use of the subjunctive.
- Conjugation of verbs and more particularly, irregular verbs, needs more attention.
- Regular practice in letter writing and activities that allow candidates to acquire a pool of idiomatic expressions, which might enhance the quality of their production, are required.

- There must be greater effort to be competent in the use of verbs particularly irregular verbs. Certain verbs are almost sure to be needed in any Spanish exam. These may include *tener, ir, decir, hacer, ver*.
- Practice in writing the responses as assignments and under test conditions must be undertaken.
- Attention needs to be paid to learning vocabulary.
- More attention needs to be paid to applying correct grammatical rules.
- It is necessary that candidates be guided in the correct use of a dictionary to alleviate the incorrect use of vocabulary.
- The importance of accents must be stressed.
- Language learnt in junior classes ought not to be ignored.
- Games and drills should be used to practise the language.
- Candidates can be directed to appropriate websites for further practice. Once again, prospective candidates are encouraged to use their smartphones, tablets, etc. to access websites where learning the language may be easier.

Section III (Question 3) – Contextual Dialogue

This section required candidates to complete a contextual dialogue. Cues in English were provided. The contextual dialogue was in keeping with the information outlined in the syllabus and therefore within the scope of candidates' ability.

Contextual Dialogue

You and your family are about to travel to another country to celebrate a relative's birthday. You and your mother are making final preparations before leaving the house. Responses to all of the cues listed below must be included in the completed dialogue:

- Purpose of the trip and preparations for travel
- Information about the gifts that you and your siblings bought for your aunt
- Arrangements to ensure the house is in order before leaving
- Organization of travel documents
- Your reassurance that everything will be fine

For all cues to have been used well and appropriately, candidates should have provided the following utterances:

- Purpose of the trip and preparations for travel
 - 1st yo: Agreeing that it is a good idea and saying something about the aunt liking surprises
 - 2nd yo: Saying where siblings are and what they are doing
 - 3rd yo: Mention of what things are in their suitcases

- Information about the gifts that you and your siblings bought for your aunt
4th yo: Mention of what gifts were bought
- Arrangements to ensure the house is in order before leaving
5th yo: Mention of what was done to ensure that all was in order in the house
- Organization of travel documents
6th yo: Saying what essential documents you have
- Your reassurance that everything will be fine
7th yo: Telling the mother not to worry and that nothing has been forgotten
8th yo: Reassurance that all will go well

Candidates' Performance

Generally, performance on this question was satisfactory. Although it was within the scope of candidates' ability, a few candidates did not attempt to answer the question at all. In spite of this, it was noted that most cues were generally handled well, with candidates losing marks mainly for grammatical incompetence. With respect to the responses submitted, the following are the trends that were noted.

Candidates who attempted the question often misused the first cue and in the first utterance, failed to express that their aunt loves surprises. As a result, their response did not flow well with the next response given. The second utterance was consistently well done, with candidates simply stating where the brothers were. The use of *ser* vs *estar* proved to be problematic here. With respect to the third utterance, most candidates were able to satisfactorily itemize what items were in the suitcases but did not include themselves. Instead they stated what the others packed. This was shown by how they conjugated the verb *poner*. The fourth utterance was generally satisfactorily handled. Candidates stated the gifts bought; however, correct word order and noun-adjective agreement were problematic for many. In the fifth utterance, many candidates were able to state what chores they did to put the house in order and for the sixth utterance, they itemized the necessary documents they had in order to travel. However, in the seventh and eighth utterances, many gave assurances of everything being in order using constructions where the subjunctive was necessary but lacking.

The following common errors were encountered:

- The verb *gustar*: correct conjugation was lacking in many scripts, for example, '*ella gusta*' with '*le*' being omitted.
- *Ser* vs *estar* in expressing where the brothers were
- Lack of personal '*a*'
- Improper use of *poner* or lack of knowledge of its conjugation
- Incorrect positioning of words, for example, '*negra falda*'

- Lack of agreement of singular/plural, gender etc.
- Lack of comprehension/improper use of the present perfect tense
- Lack of use of the subjunctive in reassuring the mother that all will be well

Recommendations

- More time should be spent on this component of the examination. Students need to be taught how to do a contextual dialogue, using the utterances that come before and after to help them to formulate their response. They should also be encouraged to write their own dialogues so that they understand how dialogues flow.
- Students need to be given more practice in the preparation and writing of contextual dialogues as well as oral practice, reflecting themes and format. The reading of dialogues from texts, newspapers and magazines should be encouraged. In addition, students should be given completed dialogues (along with other possible responses) and should discuss the tenses, vocabulary and structures used in the exercise.
- Candidates are encouraged to read the dialogue before inserting their responses, to allow for the natural flow of conversation. Furthermore, they should be made aware that the order of the cues does not necessarily mean that the dialogue is written in the same order.
- Students need to be encouraged to avoid writing in English and then translating, when writing in and out of the classroom.
- Students need to build and strengthen their vocabulary base and be exposed to and learn idioms, synonyms and antonyms in the target language, to incorporate in their writing.
- Students should be helped/taught how to manage working with word limits. In addition, teachers need to encourage students to review and reread their work at all times. Teachers can plan and structure review time into each lesson to help students get into the habit of looking over their work before submission.

Section IV (Question 4) — Reading Comprehension

Candidates are required to read a passage in Spanish and write their answers in the language of the question, which is English.

Candidates' Strengths

Most candidates understood the information required to answer Parts (a), (b), (c), (d), (g), (h) and (i) and responded appropriately.

Candidates' Weaknesses

In answering Parts (e) and (f), many candidates did not give the expected responses. These questions appeared to have created confusion in the minds of the candidates as some responses overlapped. Most

candidates had difficulty responding to Part (j), as they were unable to fully express themselves in order to obtain full marks. Their responses required more in-depth analysis and better expression. This question was worth the most marks in this section, that is, three marks.

Comments on Individual Questions

Part (a)

What kind of child is Maria?

Suggested response: Curious/inquisitive/nosy

Incorrect response: Intelligent

The responses to this question were generally correct, as most candidates took a hint from the cognate *inquisitiva* from the passage. A few candidates stated 'smart', 'talkative' or 'an only child', which were all inaccurate. Although some candidates misspelt the word *inquisitive*, writing 'inquisite' instead, they were awarded the mark. Additionally, a few candidates used *macocious* and were awarded the mark because it is a Caribbean term. Notably, the cognate *inquisitiva* was quite recognizable. Limited knowledge of vocabulary in the area of descriptive words could be the main reason why a few candidates got this question wrong.

Part (b)

What did Maria always like to do?

Suggested response: Listen in/eavesdrop on adults'/parents' conversations.

Incorrect response: They liked to be in adults' conversations.

There were few incorrect responses. Generally, candidates understood the cognates in *las conversaciones de los adultos*. However, some were confused by *escuchaba*, which they misinterpreted as 'liked to be in' instead of *listened to*.

Part (c)

What was Maria's family discussing?

Suggested response: The arrival of/preparations for Esteban (the storm).

Incorrect response: They visited Esteban.

Full marks were awarded even if candidates stated Esteban's visit. However, a few candidates misunderstood the cognate *visita* and assumed Esteban was a place. Candidates who read the passage a few times would have realized that Esteban was a storm and so were able to respond correctly. The passage clearly stated *la visita de Esteban* yet candidates misinterpreted *de* as 'to' and so scored zero.

Part (d)

How was Maria feeling and why?

Suggested response: Excited about meeting Esteban

Incorrect response: Knowing about Esteban

Most candidates got at least one mark for *excited* in this question. However, some candidates misinterpreted the *de* in *excitada de conocer* as knowing about Esteban and responded incorrectly. Additionally, a few candidates did not comprehend *conocer* and interpreted it as 'seeing him', which was also incorrect. These few automatically assumed that the author was excited to see Esteban instead of the appropriate response as stated in the passage.

Part (e)

How were Maria's parents feeling?

Suggested response: Worried/preoccupied and disappointed/dismayed

Incorrect response: Confused and delusional

Some candidates repeated the response for Part (d) in Part (e), without reading the passage further, and got *excited* wrong. They seemed to have been excited to recognize a familiar vocabulary word at the beginning of paragraph 3 and so produced the same response for Part (e). The cognates *preocupados y desilusionados* made it very easy for candidates to get full marks in this question. However, many candidates wrote 'delusioned' instead of *disillusioned* and lost a mark for their spelling error. In this case, the incorrectly spelt word has a different meaning. Unfortunately, some candidates gave only one adjective instead of two and lost the opportunity to get a full score in the first place. Students should be trained how to pay attention to the mark scheme for individual questions in the Reading Comprehension.

Part (f)

What were Maria's parents asking themselves?

Suggested response: What surprises Esteban would bring/had in store for them

Incorrect response: Asked themselves what they would need for the trip

Many candidates had difficulty responding correctly to this question. Some of them were able to recognize the cognate *sorpresas* as surprises but the rest of the response in the passage was difficult for them to interpret. The sentence from the passage which contained the response had the word *viniera*, the imperfect subjunctive, which seemed to have confused candidates. The subjunctive mood may have contributed to candidates making up an answer instead of taking their response from the passage. In many cases, candidates gave the answer to Part (g) and so scored zero.

Part (g)

What preparations did Maria's family make for Esteban's visit?

Suggested response: Shopping for essentials and securing the house

Incorrect response: Made accommodation

Generally, candidates responded well to this question and seemed to use the rubric as their guide. The cognate *supermercado* made it easy for most candidates to obtain a mark in the first part of the answer. The vocabulary was generally straightforward, which made it easy for candidates to obtain full marks.

Part (h)

Describe what happened on the Friday.

Suggested response: There was a lot of rain and heavy winds. Schools and airports were closed.

Incorrect response: Announcement on the radio.

Most candidates scored full marks on this question. Surely, they can relate to schools and airports being closed, as is the case during the Covid-19 lockdown. Notably, many candidates translated the expression *llover a cántaros* correctly and seemed to have been very familiar with the vocabulary, which they are likely to have learnt when they first encountered the language in secondary school.

Part (i)

What did Maria ask her mother?

Suggested response: She asked how uncle Esteban would arrive if the airport was closed.

Incorrect response: How are we going to get Tío Esteban?

Most candidates stated that the airport was closed and scored a mark. This was stated in a paragraph in the passage, which made it easy for candidates to respond correctly. However, candidates had to read the passage a few times to interpret the question Maria asked her mother *¿Cómo va a llegar el tío Esteban?* Many candidates understood the verb *llegar* but mixed up who was going to arrive because of the position of the noun *Esteban* placed after the verb instead of the usual placement of the noun before the verb.

Part (j)

Explain how Maria's mother reacted to her question.

Suggested response: She thought it was funny because she realized Maria thought they were talking about the arrival of a person/relative instead of a storm.

The requirements for this question included providing the mother's reaction and stating why she reacted the way she did. A wide variety of responses were accepted here. Quite a few candidates were able to

get a mark or two for having part of the answer. In a few cases, *falso amigo tormenta* confused candidates who inaccurately translated the weather condition *storm* as torment and responded incorrectly.

Further Comments and Recommendations to Candidates

- Candidates are now aware that their booklets are being scanned, so it is important that they take care with their handwriting and the kind of pen they use.
- Candidates are encouraged to read more, both in English and in Spanish so they can learn the meanings of words, learn the synonyms for words in Spanish and English, how to spell and how to use language.
- It is important that candidates read the given instructions carefully and avoid including Spanish in their answers.
- Candidates are advised to read the entire passage before they begin to answer the questions. It is also very important to pay keen attention to what is required for each question and to give precise and concise answers. Providing additional, irrelevant information indicates a lack of comprehension, as well as detracts from the answers, and sometimes results in the loss of marks. Candidates should make use of the information about marks allocated to individual questions. A response worth more than one mark hints at the amount of detail to be provided.
- Candidates are to be commended for adhering to the rubric. However, answering in a complete sentence does not mean that answers that are not in the passage should be supplied. Neither should candidates provide answers that are required for other questions (for example, *To remain friends* for Part (d) instead of Part (f)).
- Take time to explore all that the technology has to offer with regard to foreign language learning.

Further Comments and Recommendations to Teachers

When practising the 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:

- Vocabulary is important to comprehension. Students ought to keep revising vocabulary using revision techniques that work for different learning styles.
- Grammar is also critical in understanding the passage. A lot of practise is required, especially for irregular verbs and the preterite tense.
- Students should read the passage at least three times in order to understand the story.
- It is recommended that teachers continue to dedicate quality time to Reading Comprehension exercises with their CSEC final year students, at least once per week.
- Teachers can also employ the use of skimming and scanning as well as other scaffolding exercises to help students achieve their potential in the skill.
- Teachers are encouraged to continue the good practice of exposing students to the relevant vocabulary that is covered in the syllabus. Vocabulary can be tested/built through games, quizzes,

oral presentations, role play and puzzles, among other things. The use of technology in the teaching and learning process could also enhance students' acquisition of necessary vocabulary and reading comprehension skills. Doing storyboards in Spanish will help students build the necessary vocabulary also.

- In incorporating reading comprehension activities in classes, teachers must continue to ensure that students are engaged in exercises that mirror the format of the CSEC examination and that students clearly understand that the responses to the Reading Comprehension are to be in Spanish.
- Teachers are again encouraged to try to explore all that the internet has to offer to facilitate instruction. Please refer to past reports for websites which have been recommended. Teachers may also find the following websites helpful.
 - <https://www.teachervision.com> (synonyms)
 - <https://quizlet.com> (synonyms/antonyms)
 - www.talkingpeople.net (skimming and scanning)
 - www.reallygoodstuff.com (teaching reading comprehension)
 - www.superteacherworksheets.com (reading passages)
 - www.spanishplayground.net (reading comprehension)
 - www.readingrockets.org (cognates)

Paper 03 — Oral Examination

The CSEC Spanish oral examination tested the ability of candidates to produce appropriate responses in Spanish to a number of situations testing specific functions, read aloud a short passage in Spanish and carry on a conversation in the target language by responding to questions based on four out of six topics set out in the syllabus — School, Travel, Shopping and Daily Activities

Section I – Responses to Situations/Instructions

This section normally requires candidates to produce appropriate oral responses in Spanish to situations/instructions described in English in keeping with the function specific to the situation. As a result of a modification in the examination format because of the Covid-19 pandemic, this section of the examination was not assessed for the examination period August 2020.

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. This year an improvement was seen in performance. Overall, fluency and pronunciation were quite acceptable. Candidates conveyed understanding of the passage using appropriate intonation and stress. 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. They showed no knowledge of the importance of intonation and started and ended their reading passage in the same tone. Passages were not phrased correctly so meaning was lost. Also, punctuation like commas and full stops were not observed. Little or no knowledge was displayed of the rules of accentuation and stress.

The following are some of the problems that candidates presented:

- Demonstration of weakness in pronunciation caused the following errors:
 - Mispronunciation of the following sounds/letters:
 - Z as English z
 - E pronounced as English ee
 - H not read as silent
 - Incorrect pronunciation of h, j and g before the letters e and i
 - Mispronunciation of rr
 - Incorrect rendition of cc
 - English rendition of vowels
 - Incorrect stress on syllables
 - Giving a double ll sound to words with only one l
- Anglicized or incorrect pronunciation of certain words: *razón, socializar, hacen, hijos, aprendan, aislados, erróneamente, inconvenientes, ejercicio, infraestructura, relación, hechos, desarrollo, coordinación, inmoralidad, exclusivamente, coinciden, causa, zonas, cuidar, proteger, religiosos, creencia, cooperar, constantemente, estereotipos, accesorios, función, inconvenientes, educación, popular, alternativa, esencial, generación, cualquier, cuidar, realice, industria*

Recommendations

Challenges in fluency and intonation in reading as outlined above typically 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. There is great need for exposure to authentic listening activities from the target language.

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 candidates were tested were School, Travel, Shopping and Daily Activities

Candidates were asked four questions on each of the topics and were assessed on comprehension and spontaneity, fluency and expression. There was an improvement in performance in this section as many candidates were able to handle the questions posed to them. 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, weaker candidates still experienced challenges in answering many questions. Many struggled with this section, handicapped by a limited vocabulary and poor knowledge of grammatical structures. Some candidate exhibited limited comprehension of the questions asked and constantly requested that the questions be repeated. Some candidates had a strong French influence in their responses, '*Bien sûr, normalement, de temps en temps*'.

Questions on parents' professions received inaccurate responses from many candidates, which demonstrated a lack of comprehension. Some candidates were unable to answer the extended descriptive questions and provided responses which were often two or three words strung together. The topics which posed the greatest challenges for candidates included Shopping (1–3), Travel (1, 2, 6, 7) and School (4, 6). The errors in grammar evident in this section included the following:

- Subject/verb agreement
 - *Mis favoritas tiendas es...*
 - *Mis responsabilidades en mi casa es...*
- Omission of articles when needed
 - *Estudio domingo*
 - *Como almuerzo...*
- Incorrect use of structures to express opinion
 - *Mi opino es...*
 - *Creo es...*
 - *Ser vs estar*
 - *Me gusta estar profesora*
 - *Por vs para*
 - *Tomar and tener*
 - *Yo tengo el almuerzo...*
- Inconsistency with *gustar*
 - *Se gusta commonly used*
 - *Mi gusto...*
- Adjectival agreement
 - *Mis profesores son my simpatico*

- Use of the preterite and imperfect past tenses
- Inaccurate use and formation of the future tense
- Incorrect choice of tense for some responses
- Agreement of articles
- Difficulty distinguishing between *mi* and *yo*
 - *Mi opino...*
 - *Mi hermano y mi...*

Recommendations

Teachers must expose students to consistent use of the target language in the classroom through radio stations and podcasts, online oral and aural activities. Exposure to native speakers will also assist in providing an authentic language experience for students. Extensive use of Spanish in the classroom will not only strengthen students' listening and speaking skills, but will also increase their confidence when conversing in Spanish. Students must be encouraged to pay attention to the details which are required in questions and, in particular, to listen carefully to the demands of questions before responding.

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 2021

**SPANISH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY**

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GENERAL COMMENTS

In January 2021, 222 candidates wrote the Spanish examination; this represents a decrease in the number of candidates when compared with the 275 candidates who wrote the examination in 2020. In this sitting, 55 per cent of candidates achieved acceptable grades, Grades I–III, in comparison with 67 per cent in 2020 and 60 per cent in 2019. Candidates' performance decreased on all four profiles — Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing.

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 and vocabulary as prescribed in the CSEC syllabus. There was a decline in the performance on this paper when compared with the previous year.

Candidates' performance on the 60 multiple-choice items produced a mean score of 53 per cent.

Paper 02 — Free Response

Section I (Question 1) — Directed Situations

This question required that candidates carefully read the directions regarding each of ten situations described in English and then provide appropriate written responses in Spanish to each situation. It assessed candidates' knowledge of Spanish vocabulary, inclusive of idiomatic expressions, Spanish grammar rules and structure. Marks were awarded if the responses included all details in the situation and adequately communicated meaning. Responses were categorized as appropriate or partially appropriate and were awarded marks accordingly, with penalties for errors in quality of language. Inappropriate responses were awarded no mark even if the language of expression was perfect.

Candidates' Performance and Strengths

The situations were considered manageable. Most candidates responded in the target language. There were only a few candidates who did not attempt to respond to all situations or used English for most of them. It was encouraging to note this level of response, since across the Caribbean face-to-face teaching had been interrupted for much of the school terms and only resumed for a short time before the exam.

Candidates' Weaknesses

Candidates seemed weak in the use of correct/appropriate vocabulary to respond to the situations given. Examples include using the words '*arrivar*' or '*asistir*' for arrival in Spanish. There were many candidates who would have earned better scores if they had not made careless errors especially with regard to spelling.

An area of challenge for many candidates was in converting what would be an appropriate answer in English to Spanish. In the process, general grammar and vocabulary errors were noted. Additionally, there were candidates who misinterpreted what they were expected to do with the information in the situation described and therefore neglected to include all the elements required for a full response. There were also some candidates who complicated their responses unnecessarily by writing extended pieces where a shorter answer would have sufficed.

General Areas of Weakness

- Omission and/or the inclusion of accents and tilde where these affected the contextual meaning, for example, *que/qué, mama/mamá, papa/papá, mi/mí, como/cómo, tu/tú, mas/más*)
- Omission of punctuation, especially interrogative
- Word order
- Distinguishing between the use of *por/para, ser/estar, tu/ti*
- Overlooking the use of the subjunctive
- Confusing the familiar and polite forms of address – using *usted* and *tú* inappropriately or interchangeably

Comments on Individual Situations

Situation (a)

You need to leave school early today. Write the note that your mother sends to your teacher asking permission for you to leave with a reason. (Function: Asking permission, giving a reason)

Full response: *Mi hijo necesita ir al médico, ¿puede salir temprano?*

This response was problematic for some candidates in that they were unable to express the asking permission part. Quite a few candidates omitted the asking permission and only gave a reason. In a few instances, candidates wrote the response as if it were coming from them and not a parent; they were penalized for that.

The most common errors included the following:

- Use of '*permitir*' instead of *permitir*
- Use of the '*tú*' form to address the teacher
- Confusion with the use of *ser* and *estar*: *Mi hijo no 'es' bien*
- Misuse of *bien*, *buen* and *bueno*: *Mi hijo no está 'buen/bueno'*
- Omission of *que* after *tener*: *Mi hijo 'tiene salir' de la clase...*
- Subjunctive after *permitir que*: *Puede permitir que mi hijo 'salir' de la clase*
- Omission of *de* after *salir*: *Pedro necesita 'salir la clase' porque...*

Situation (b)

Your uncle has been offered a job abroad. Write the message he sends in the family chat group mentioning one detail about the job and how he feels about it. (Function: Giving details and expressing feeling)

Full response: *Trabajo en un restaurante y estoy muy excitado.*

This response was handled well, with candidates being able to give a detail and express an emotion whether positive or negative.

The most common errors included the following:

- Use of the verb *trabajar* instead of the noun *trabajo*: *Es un buen 'trabajar'*
- Use of '*excitante*' instead of *excitado*: *Estoy muy 'excitante'*
- Use of article before a profession: *Soy 'un' medico*
- Misuse of *ser* and *estar*: *'Soy' muy contento porque trabajo en un restaurante*

Situation (c)

You and your friend have arranged to go to the beach on Saturday. Write the text message you send to him/her suggesting another activity and one reason for your suggestion. (Function: Suggesting with a reason)

Full response: *Sugiero que vayamos al cine porque estará lloviendo el sábado.*

This response was also well handled. Candidates were able to use appropriate vocabulary to make a suggestion with a reason. Some candidates however misinterpreted suggesting another activity to mean suggesting an additional activity, and therefore gave responses about doing something else, for example, going to the beach. Some lost marks for not giving the reason for wanting to do something else.

The most common errors included the following:

- Unfamiliarity with using *el* with a day of the week to mean *on*: *en el sábado*
- No use of subjunctive after *sugiero que...*: *Sugiero que 'vamos'...*
- Confusion with the use of *saber* vs *poder*: *No 'puedo' nadar*
- Misuse of *ser* and *'estar'*: *Mi familia 'es' en la playa*
- Unfamiliarity with expressing weather: *El tiempo es muy mal*
- Misuse of *mucho* and *muy*: *Es 'mucho' grande*
- Misuse of *bien* and *bueno*: *La película es muy bien*
- Incorrect conjugation of *poder*: *'Puedemos' ir...*
- Lack of noun–adjective agreement: *la playa es muy 'divertido'*

Situation (d)

Your cousin has just returned from a vacation abroad. Write the text message he/she sends you saying what he/she liked most about his/her vacation and why. (Function: Expressing likes with a reason)

Full response: *Me gustó ir de compras porque hay muchos centros comerciales en Nueva York.*

Most candidates were able to give an appropriate response to this situation although many responses were riddled with errors. A few candidates did not give a reason for what they liked most and lost marks for this.

The most common errors included the following:

- Unfamiliarity with the use of the verb *gustar* and *encantar*: *'Gusté/Me gusté' la playa. 'Encanté/Me encanté' la playa*
- Use of the present tense to express something they like: *'Me gusta' la playa*
- Incorrect spelling of *vacaciones*: *Mis 'vacciones' eran...*
- Incorrect noun–adjective agreement: *Mis vacaciones eran 'divertido'*

Situation (e)

Your aunt is ill. Write the message you send in a greeting card wishing her well and promising to do something with her when she gets better. (Function: Wishing well and promising)

Full response: *Espero que estés bien pronto y vamos a ir de compras cuando te sientas mejor.*

This was one of the more challenging situations, with many candidates unable to find vocabulary to express well wishes. Also, many omitted parts of the required response, expressing either good wishes or promising to do something but not both. Where this occurred, candidates lost marks.

The most common errors included the following:

- Unfamiliarity with vocabulary to wish someone well
- Not using subjunctive after *espero que*: *Espero que 'estás' bien*
- Unfamiliarity with the use of imperatives: *'Sientas' mejor pronto*
- Misuse of *bien* and *bueno*: *Espero que estés 'bueno'*
- Unfamiliarity with the use of *cuando* with future time: *Cuando 'estás' mejor vamos de compras*
- Confusion with the use of *siento* and *lo siento*: *'lo' siento que estés enferma/ Siento que 'estás' enferma*
- Misuse of the words *tu*, *tú*, and *ti*: *Voy a rezar por 'tu/tú' and Voy de compras 'con tú'*
- Use of *'promiso'* for *prometo*
- Omission of *que* after *prometo*: *'Prometo vamos' de compras*
- Use of *'ir en'* instead of *ir a*: *Prometo 'ir en' el centro comercial contigo*

Situation (f)

Your mother has to go out and leaves a note for you and your sister outlining what she needs done today. Write the note she leaves indicating the two tasks to be done. (Function: Giving instructions)

Full response: *Tienen que lavar los platos y hacer la cama.*

This situation was well handled. Candidates found an alternative way to express these instructions aside from using the imperative. However, in some instances, instructions were given as if to one person and marks were lost for this.

The most common errors included the following:

- Unfamiliarity with the use of *que* after *tener*: *'Tienen sacar' la basura*
- Use of *las ropas* instead of *la ropa*: *Tienes que lavar 'las ropas'*
- Unfamiliarity with use of the imperative: *'Lavas' los platos*
- Incorrect spelling of *lavar*: *Tienen que 'llavar' la ropa*

Situation (g)

Your friend missed an important football match between his/her favourite teams. Write the text message you send to him/her mentioning two things that happened during the match. (Function: Providing information)

Full response: *Tu jugador favorito marcó tres goles y tu equipo ganó.*

This was one of the more difficult situations where candidates were at a loss for vocabulary to talk about things that happened at the match. Some candidates did not mention concrete things that happened during the match but rather gave responses such as 'The match was interesting'.

The most common errors included the following:

- Use of the preterite tense
- Unfamiliarity with vocabulary related to football such as *partido/partido de fútbol, capitán, marcar un gol*

Situation (h)

You see an advertisement for a clearance sale in a certain store but some information is missing. Write the text message you send to your aunt who works at the store asking for two specific details about the sale. (Function: Asking for details)

Full response: *¿Cuándo comienza la venta y cuándo termina?*

Most candidates struggled to give an appropriate response to this situation mainly because of lack of vocabulary to deal with stores and sales.

The most common errors included the following:

- Unfamiliarity with the vocabulary related to sales: *venta, descuento, precio*
- Unfamiliarity with interrogatives

Situation (i)

Your father was supposed to travel abroad tomorrow but the flight has been cancelled. Write the message he receives from the airline indicating the reason for cancellation and advice on what he can do. (Function: Providing reason and giving advice)

Full response: *Hay una tormenta pero usted puede llamar mañana para ver si hay vuelos.*

Most candidates were able to provide an appropriate response for the situation; many cited bad weather as the reason for cancellation and suggested another course of action such as taking a bus or travelling at another time. A few lost marks for not giving any advice.

The most common errors included the following:

- Use of the familiar form when addressing the traveller: '*Puedes*' *viajar la semana que viene*
- Wrong vocabulary for flight: '*vuelto*', '*volo*', '*flighto*', '*plano*'

Situation (j)

Your community is having a special event for the public. Write the note you put on the community notice board inviting members of the public and giving one specific reason why they should attend. (Function: Inviting with a reason)

Full response: *Ustedes deben venir a la fiesta de navidad porque habrá mucha comida y muchas bebidas.*

Most candidates attempted to respond to this situation although responses were riddled with errors. Many lost marks for issuing an invitation with no reason or a reason with no invitation.

The most common errors included the following:

- Unfamiliarity with imperatives: *'viene/venir'* a la fiesta
- Wrong noun–adjective agreement: *Hay 'mucho' comida* and *'mucho' actividades*
- Use of *atender* instead of *asistir*: *Deben 'atender' porque será divertido*
- Omission of *a* after *asistir*: *Deben 'asistir la fiesta'*
- Numerous spelling errors: *asistir, interesante, divertidida, invitación*
- Unfamiliarity with use of *a* to indicate where something is: *la fiesta es 'al' parque/habrá mucha comida 'a la' fiesta*

Recommendations to Teachers

- Frequent sessions using directed situations from various CXC past papers with a focus on the language functions can be done. This would help students to gain a greater awareness of the role of the language functions and to achieve accuracy and appropriateness of responses.
- Grammar sessions in thematic contexts: Students can learn vocabulary and verbs in the context of topics such as Shopping, Travel, School, Home, Family etc.
- The provision of more opportunities for students to spell vocabulary expressions perhaps through dialogues, spelling quizzes, basic translations, audio visual means: Spelling exercises can be done with a focus on words that bear close similarity to English words and to highlight awareness of consonants which cannot be doubled in a Spanish word. Spanish words that use the *b* and *v* and *d* consonants as well as the use of *ll* versus *y* need extra practice in spelling exercises. Activities that practice and reinforce correct spelling of other words in the target language should be included in the teaching/learning activities.
- Use of review and reinforcement grammar activities to further reinforce the use of *'ser'* and *'estar'*; the conjunction *y* particularly with words that follow commencing with the letter *'l'*; advising or making recommendations using both the formal and informal registers; expressing commands; agreement of adjectives with nouns in Spanish; the preterite and imperfect tenses; the conditional and future tenses.
- It is important that students read the question carefully, be specific to the information required and recognize the function which is required. In guiding students' writing, teachers should emphasize

the need for students to underline the key words and phrases in the situation so that they do not omit important information when constructing their responses.

- A significant number of students were unable to fit the response into one sentence so practice in this area is necessary.
- Many students omitted the interrogation marks at the beginning and end of questions; the format for writing questions needs to be reinforced.
- Many responses revealed the need for teachers to emphasize the importance of accents as too many students failed to acknowledge them.
- Modern language departments should work in tandem with the English departments because there is a general breakdown in the comprehension of English words.
- There were situations where students were required to provide more than one set of information and it proved to be challenging for them as their responses were too verbose and/or long-winded in some instances. More practice is needed in this area.
- There is an urgent need to reiterate the importance of using correct grammar. Teachers should continue doing vocabulary exercises to strengthen this skill.

Recommendations to Candidates

- Candidates are encouraged to write more legibly, especially when writing accents or dots above vowels.
- Many candidates seem to write and erase and then write again (maybe from pencil to pen). This creates a type of double print when copying is done and is difficult to read.
- Many candidates could have improved their performance by simply reviewing what they wrote.
- Improvements in this area of the examination require some basic rules that candidates need to follow. Candidates need to be brief and direct in responding to situations. Avoid long responses and avoid giving a preamble to the response. Those situations which were longest tended to be a lot more disjointed.
- Exposure to more idiomatic expressions and the development of a wider range of vocabulary would improve quality of responses.
- Candidates are encouraged to practice writing in the target language.
- Candidates need to learn how to use *Lo siento/Siento...* correctly.
- Candidates are to avoid writing within the margins of the response sheet as responses will not be scanned properly.

Section II (Question 2) — Letter

Candidates were required to produce a continuous piece of prose in the form of a letter within the range of 130–150 words, based on one topic about which four cues were given.

A good response would contain the use of a wide range of tenses, vocabulary as well as relevant idiomatic expressions.

The letter

You have just been elected as your community youth leader. Write a letter to your Cuban friend outlining your plans for the youth in your community. Be sure to include:

- (i) How you felt about being elected
- (ii) The issue of lack of facilities in your community for young people
- (iii) Young people's opinion about this situation
- (iv) Plans for improving the situation

Candidates' Strengths

Most candidates were familiar with the format needed for writing a letter. The date, the salutation and an appropriate ending were evidenced in most cases. The body of the letter contained good opening lines such as

- *¿Cómo estás?*
- *¿Qué tal estás?*
- *Espero que te vaya bien y que tu familia esté de buena salud*
- *Tanto tiempo sin oír de ti.*

Many candidates attempted to treat all the given cues and remain within the desired count of between 130 and 150 words. Some candidates produced grammatically correct and attractive sentences/phrases, for example,

- *Te escribo para decirte que yo soy el nuevo líder de mi comunidad*
- *Los jóvenes se vuelven delincuentes*
- *Me escogieron para ser la persona encargada*
- *Hay un tema de falta de instalaciones.*

Candidates' Weaknesses

Too many candidates failed to write the date correctly. There was the constant incorrect use of *el* before the date and too often words were used instead of the corresponding digits. A correctly written date would be: *12 de enero de 2021*. Note that the first letter of the month is not capitalized.

The most common errors included the following:

- The frequent misspelling of words like *Querido/a, comunidad, comercial*. Note only one 'm' in Spanish
- Incorrect use of *ser* when dealing with feelings. *Estar* must be used in the following examples: *Yo estoy contento, mi familia está bien, estamos ansiosos, yo estoy emocionado*
- Lack of knowledge of required vocabulary, for example, *instalaciones* (facilities), *seleccionar* (to select), *el líder* (the leader)
- Widespread omission of required accents. Written accents are an important part of the Spanish language

Recommendations

- Candidates are encouraged to engage themselves in regular practice at letter writing in order to prepare adequately for this examination.
- Many candidates are unable to include idioms in their responses. Candidates are reminded that the use of appropriate idioms improve the quality of their presentations; examiners are always impressed by what they may consider as 'colourful' language.
- It must be emphasized that one achieves mastery of grammar through constant practice and study.

Section III (Question 3) – Contextual Dialogue

This section required candidates to complete a contextual dialogue. Cues in English were provided for both options. The contextual dialogue was in keeping with the information outlined in the syllabus and therefore within the scope of candidates' ability.

Contextual Dialogue

Your class will be going on a field trip to the Mexican embassy. You and your classmate Pablo are discussing your preparations before leaving.

Responses to all of the cues listed below must be included in the completed dialogue:

- (i) Your excitement to go on the field trip with your class.
- (ii) Information about what you plan to say when you meet the ambassador.

- (iii) Organization of items you will take, including lunch.
- (iv) Recommendations on what to do after the field trip.
- (v) One thing you are looking forward to doing.

Generally, the performance on this question was satisfactory. The majority of candidates demonstrated an understanding of what was required and made a valiant attempt to respond appropriately. Very few candidates did not attempt to answer the question at all. It was noted that most cues were generally handled well, with candidates losing marks mainly for grammatical incompetence. With respect to the responses submitted, the following are trends that were noted.

Use of Cues

The first and second responses were generally handled well. However, in the third response, many candidates failed to state what they were carrying in relation to 'taking notes'. As a result, their response was not an appropriate answer to the question that came before. In the fourth response, many candidates did mention the meals and drinks that they would carry but failed to mention that their mother was preparing it. Many also did not offer a reminder concerning money in the fifth response. The sixth, seventh and eighth responses were generally handled well with respect to flow, with candidates losing marks for grammatical errors which will be outlined below.

Frequent errors encountered included the following:

Vocabulary

- '*Emocionante*' for *emocionado*
- '*Excitadamente*' for *emocionado*
- *mucho* instead of *muy*
- *dinero* instead of *dólares*
- Misinterpretation of *llevar*: it was used in the context meant *to carry* but candidates misinterpreted it for *llegar* or *llevar – to wear*; in some instances it was also taken to mean *to leave*.

Grammar

- Omission of *me* – '*siento*' *muy bien*
- Use of the definite article
- *Ser* vs *Estar* – '*Soy*' *ansiosa*
- Lack of use of the infinitive after *tener que...*, *ir a ...*
- Use of the preterite instead of the future tense.
- Incorrect conjugation of the future tense for irregular verbs. *Teneré* and *deciré* were quite common.

- Use of *tú* instead of the *usted* form in addressing the Ambassador.
- Generally poor subject – verb agreement.
- Omission of *para*, for example, *Tengo 50 dólares 'visitar' el centro.*
- Omission of *le*, for example, *'diré' que es inteligente.*
- Omission of *a*, for example, *'Vamos' mirar una película*
- Incorrect use of pronoun/preposition, for example, *Tengo comida para 'tu'*

Spelling and Accents

- *nervoso* for *nervioso*
- *para te* for *para ti*
- *mi mama* for *mi mamá.*
- *si* for *sí*

Recommendations

- Candidates must be encouraged to read the dialogue before inserting their responses, to allow for the natural flow of conversation. Furthermore, they should be made aware that the order of the cues does not necessarily mean that the dialogue is written in the same order.
- Students need to be encouraged to avoid writing in English and then translating, when writing in and out of the classroom.
- Candidates need to build and strengthen their vocabulary base as well as be exposed to and learn idioms, synonyms and antonyms in the target language, to incorporate in their writing.
- Students should be helped/taught how to manage working with word limits. In addition, teachers need to encourage their students to review and reread their work at all times. Teachers can plan and structure review time into each lesson to help students get into the habit of looking over their work before submission.

Section IV (Question 4) — Reading Comprehension

This question tests a candidate's 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.

This reading comprehension passage for this examination was of a level that was quite appropriate for a candidate who would have already attempted this question in the previous year. The level of vocabulary and grammar was such that candidates should have consistently scored between 18 and 20 marks out of a total of 20.

Candidates' Performance

On the whole candidates performed at a very good level. The instances where candidates gave answers that had nothing to do with the passage were few and far between, although there were many more candidates than last year who made no response to more than half the questions. Nevertheless, candidates demonstrated a very good understanding of the passage, and therefore gained between 15 and 19 marks. Most were tripped up by two questions which will be discussed shortly. In questions where more than one mark was awarded, unless the candidate did not understand the entire passage, candidates generally gained at least 1 mark, at most, 2.

Candidates' Strengths

- Instructions were adhered to quite well.
- Where questions were awarded more than 1 mark, many candidates at least managed to gain 2 out of 3 or 1 out of 2.

Candidates' Weaknesses

- Even though a translation for *palillos* was given this was apparently not much help to candidates.
- Candidates seemed to have a problem with having the correct English words at hand to express their understanding of the passage. This indicates a weakness in reading and vocabulary building to aid comprehension.

Comments on Individual Questions

Part (a)

What were Mr. and Mrs. Martinez doing in the kitchen?

Suggested response: *They were preparing dinner.*

Incorrect response: They were preparing breakfast.

This part was well answered except where candidates did not know that *cena* meant *dinner*.

Part (b)

Why were Mr. and Mrs. Martinez concerned?

Suggested response: *That there would soon be a battle with their two children to eat their vegetables.*

Incorrect response: That their sons played all the time.

Most candidates knew this answer and easily earned the two marks. Some omitted the part about battle/struggle or fight.

Part (c)

What did the children like to do?

Suggested response: *They played every chance that they got.*

This question was well answered.

Part (d)

Why did the parents have to be creative?

Suggested response: *They had to find a way to get their children to eat what was prepared.*

Incorrect response: They had to be creative because the children played all the time.

Many candidates had some difficulty expressing themselves clearly, especially when attempting to respond that the parents had to find a way to get the children to eat their vegetables.

Part (e)

How did the parents normally get the boys to do as they asked?

Suggested response: *The parents would threaten them or make promises.*

Incorrect response: They bribed them.

On the whole, this was well answered although many candidates were unfamiliar with the word *amenaza*.

Part (f)

What did Mrs. Martinez prepare for dinner that night?

Suggested response: *She cooked rice and vegetables.*

Incorrect response: She cooked an exotic meal.

Most candidates were able to answer this correctly except that some candidates took *legumbres* or *verduras* for beans.

Part (g)

What new strategy would be used tonight?

Suggested response: *They were going to use chopsticks and the dish would be given an exotic name.*

Incorrect response: They would be creative.

Some candidates only got the second part right even though the translation for *palillos* was given.

Part (h)

Describe the boys' reaction to the new strategy.

Suggested response: *They were curious/puzzled and intrigued/excited/enthusiastic/they ate everything.*

Incorrect response: They kissed their mother.

Most candidates answered this question well.

Part (i)

How did the boys show their appreciation?

Suggested response: *They kissed their mother.*

Incorrect response: They washed the dishes.

There were some good responses given to this part of the question.

Part (i)

Explain the look between the parents.

Suggested response: *They were happy because they had finally found a way to get their children to eat vegetables/They exchanged a secret look because their plan had worked.*

Incorrect response: They had an inward smile.

Generally, candidates were able to come up with a part of the explanation.

Recommendations to Candidates

- Now that candidates' booklets are being scanned, it is important that care is taken with handwriting and the kind of pen that candidates use.
- Candidates are encouraged to read more, both in English and in Spanish, so they can learn the meanings of words, the synonyms for words in Spanish and English, how to spell and how to use language.
- It is important that candidates read instructions carefully and avoid including Spanish in the responses for this section.
- It is advisable to read the entire passage before beginning to answer the questions. It is also very important to pay keen attention to what is required for each question and to give precise and concise answers. Many times when candidates give additional irrelevant information, it indicates a lack of comprehension, detracts from the answer and sometimes causes candidates to lose marks. Candidates should also take note of marks allocated to the individual questions; a response worth more than one mark hints at the amount of detail to be provided.
- Candidates are commended for adhering to the rubric. However, answering in a complete sentence does not mean that candidates should supply answers that are not in the passage. Neither should they provide answers that are required for other questions.

- Candidates should take time to explore all that technology has to offer with regard to foreign language learning.

Recommendations to Teachers

- When 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.
- Vocabulary and grammar are critical in understanding the passage. Teachers should ensure that students keep revising vocabulary using revision techniques that work for different learning styles; a lot of practice is required, especially for irregular verbs and the preterite tense.
- Teachers should get students in the practice of reading a passage at least three times in order to understand the story.
- It is recommended that teachers continue to dedicate quality time to reading comprehension exercises with their CSEC final year students, at least once per week.
- Teachers can employ the use of skimming and scanning as well as other scaffolding exercises to help students achieve their potential in the skill.
- Teachers are encouraged to continue the good practice of exposing students to relevant vocabulary that is covered in the syllabus. Vocabulary can be built and tested through games, quizzes, oral presentations, role play and puzzles, among other things. The use of technology in the teaching and learning process could also enhance students' acquisition of necessary vocabulary and reading comprehension skills. Doing storyboards in Spanish will help students build the necessary vocabulary also.
- In incorporating reading comprehension activities, teachers must continue to ensure that students are engaged in exercises that mirror the format of the CSEC examination, and that the students clearly understand that the responses to the Reading Comprehension are to be in Spanish.
- Teachers are again encouraged to try to explore all that the internet has to offer to facilitate instruction. Referring to past reports on the examination is recommended. Also, once again, we offer a listing of websites that would be helpful.
 - <https://www.teachervision.com> (synonyms)
 - <https://quizlet.com> (synonyms/antonyms)
 - www.talkingpeople.net (skimming and scanning)
 - www.reallygoodstuff.com (teaching reading comprehension)
 - www.superteacherworksheets.com (reading passages)
 - www.spanishplayground.net (reading comprehension)
 - www.readingrockets.org (cognates)

Paper 03 — Oral Examination

The CSEC Spanish oral examination tested candidates' ability to

- produce appropriate responses in Spanish to a number of situations that tested specific functions
- read aloud a short passage in Spanish
- carry on a conversation in the target language by responding to questions based on four out of six topics set out in the syllabus — Home and Family, Travel, Sports and Recreation and Daily Routine

Section I — Responses to Situations/Instructions

This section normally requires candidates to produce appropriate oral responses in Spanish to situations/instructions described in English, in keeping with the function specific to the situation. Generally, candidates performed fair to satisfactory in this section. In a few centres, candidates either were not administered this section or were not prepared for it thinking that situations were not going to be administered because of the Covid 19 pandemic. However, a few very good to excellent responses were given by candidates who were prepared.

The main areas of difficulty included the following:

- Misinterpretation of situations thus giving incorrect responses.
- General control of grammatical structures
- Lack of appropriate vocabulary to respond to situations
- Incorrect use of tenses
- Use of infinitives where conjugated verbs were needed
- Incorrect use of subject-verb and noun –adjective agreement
- Incorrect use of *tú* and *usted*
- Inability to use imperatives
- Lack of infinitive after a conjugated verb
- Incorrect use of *ser* and *estar*

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. This year's performance was average. A few 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. They showed no knowledge of the importance of intonation and started and ended their reading passage in the same tone. The passages were read as if candidates did not understand what they were reading, so the meaning was lost. Also, punctuation like commas and full stops were not observed and little or no knowledge of the rules of accentuation and emphasis was displayed.

Some of the problems candidates encountered included the following:

- Demonstration of weakness in pronunciation caused the following errors:
 - Mispronunciation of the following sounds/letters:
 - Z as English z
 - E pronounced as English ee
 - H not read as silent
 - Incorrect pronunciation of h, j and g before the letter e and i
 - Mispronunciation of rr
 - Incorrect rendition of cc
 - English rendition of vowels
 - Incorrect stress on syllables
 - Giving a double // sound to words with only one 'l'.
- Anglicized or incorrect pronunciation of certain words:
juicio, tradicional, causa, compñia, ferozmente, asegurarse, verguenza, sonríe, popular, ejercicio, chateando, especial, congregarse, socializer, desarrollo, hogares, género, melodrama, villanos, triunfantes, actutudes, independencia, conducta, público, conseguir, señales, billete, seguir, averiguar
- Diphthongs
- Unfamiliarity with the rules of accentuation and stress thus putting the stress on words ending in a vowel: *forman, trabaja*

Recommendations

Challenges in fluency and intonation in reading as outlined above typically 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. There is a great need for exposure to authentic listening activities from the target language.

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 candidates were tested were: Home and Family, Travel, Sports and Recreation and Daily Routine.

Candidates were asked four questions on each of the topics and were assessed on comprehension and spontaneity, fluency and expression. Performance in this section was lower than in previous years. A few 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, weaker candidates experienced challenges in answering many questions. Many who struggled with this section were handicapped by a limited vocabulary and poor knowledge of grammatical structures. For some candidates, there was limited comprehension of the questions, and they constantly requested repetition. The questions that required a description or a more lengthy response were quite challenging to many.

The errors in grammar evident in this section included the following:

- Subject/Verb agreement
 - *Mi familia 'van'.....*
 - *Los turistas 'visita' ...*
- Omission of articles when needed
 - *Sábados yo juego fútbol.....*
 - *Como almuerzo...*
- Conjugation of second verb instead of use of infinitive
 - *Prefiero 'miro' programar de acción...*
 - *Me gusta 'viajo' a Canadá*
- *Ser vs estar*
 - *Mi persona favorita 'está' mi madre*
 - *Mi padre 'está' policía*
- *Por vs para*
- Inconsistency with *gustar*
 - *Se gusta commonly used*
 - *Mi gusto*
- Adjectival agreement
 - *Mis profesores son my simpático*
- Use of the preterite and imperfect past tenses
- Incorrect choice of tense for some responses
- Agreement of articles
- Difficulty distinguishing between *mi* and *yo*
 - *Mi opino*
 - *Mi amigo y mi.....*

Recommendations

Teachers must expose students to the consistent use of the target language in the classroom – through radio stations and podcasts, online oral and aural activities. Exposure to native speakers would also assist in providing an authentic language experience to students. Extensive use of Spanish in the classroom will not only strengthen students' listening and speaking skills but will also increase their confidence when conversing in Spanish. Students must be encouraged to pay attention to the details which are required in the questions and particularly listen carefully to the demands of the question before responding.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

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

MAY/JUNE 2021

**PORTUGUESE
GENERAL PROFICIENCY**

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INTRODUCTION

This guide has been put together using student responses to the 2021 May/June examination in CSEC Portuguese. We have kept the answers according to the original design of the examination paper.

In May/June 2021, approximately 88 candidates sat the Portuguese General Proficiency examination. Approximately, 79 per cent of candidates achieved Grades I–III compared with 80 per cent in 2020. There was an improvement in performance in Profiles 1, 2 and 3 (Listening, Reading, and Speaking) respectively. While Profile 4 (Writing) showed a decline.

PAPER 01 – MULTIPLE CHOICE

This paper, which comprised two sections, assessed 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. There was an improvement in candidates' performance in 2021 compared with 2020.

PAPER 02 – FREE RESPONSE

Question 1 — Directed Situations

This question required that candidates carefully read the directions regarding each of ten situations described in English and then provide appropriate written responses, in Portuguese, to each situation. Candidates' knowledge of Portuguese vocabulary inclusive of idiomatic expressions and Portuguese grammar rules and structure were key elements used to assess candidates' competency in tackling this question. Marks were awarded if the response included all details in the situation and adequately communicated meaning. Responses were categorized as appropriate or partially appropriate and were awarded marks accordingly, with penalties for errors in quality of language. Inappropriate responses were awarded no mark even if the language of expression was perfect.

Candidates' Performance

Overall, performance of candidates can be described as good. Some candidates were able to respond correctly to each situation while there were a few who clearly lacked the vocabulary to competently express themselves. There were some exceptional responses where candidates demonstrated a level of creativity and command of accurate grammar and wide vocabulary. Most candidates understood/recognized the function which needed to be addressed and attempted to provide appropriate responses.

Candidates' Strengths

Candidates generally observed the rubric and responded with precision and language accuracy. The quality of responses revealed that some candidates were well prepared for the exam. These candidates demonstrated an understanding of the requirements of the question, applied the lessons they had learnt to each situation and showed great ingenuity in answering questions that called for more than a straightforward answer. The range of vocabulary used was impressive.

Candidates' Weaknesses

The main challenge was answering Part (c) correctly, as most candidates seemed to have difficulty correctly identifying the Portuguese word for matches (fósforos) or box of matches (caixa de fósforos). There were many candidates who would have earned better scores if they had not made careless errors especially with regard to spelling. Candidates were penalized for the omission and/or the inclusion of accents and tilde where these affected meaning for the context.

An area of challenge for many candidates was in converting what would be an appropriate answer in English, into Portuguese. In the process, general grammar and vocabulary errors were noted; these include the failure to make gender and number agree.

Comments on Individual Situations

Extract from candidate's response to Part (g): gosta de brinca futebol.

Many candidates do not distinguish between brincar, jogar and tocar, as the three translate to the same word in English. Teachers are encouraged to explicitly explain the difference by means of showing examples such as the following:

- *Ela brinca de boneca com as amigas.*
- *Ela joga futebol.*
- *Ele toca guitarra.*

Due to pronunciation and oral knowledge of Portuguese, some candidates also do not differentiate between brincar (infinitive) and brinca (third person singular), sometimes even writing it as 'brincá'. A similar case is exemplified in Part (j) with the response 'eu gostaria de té um laptop', clearly showing that candidates' oral knowledge of Portuguese is impacted by their formal education in English. In such cases, it is recommended that teachers tackle these challenges individually.

An answer for Part (d) also illustrates a typical case where candidates sometimes do not differentiate when English and Portuguese words seem similar but are in fact very different. Spanish may also interfere. For example, candidates presented 'Obrigado por invitação' instead of the correct response, obrigado pelo convite. In such cases, it is recommended that teachers explain the differences to students, making it clear that even if a word or expression sounds correct as a Portuguese word/expression, it may not necessarily be correct but may be the result of an incorrect assumption based on their knowledge of English and/or Spanish.

Samples of Candidates' Answers

Candidate's Answers to Part (a)–(j): Sample 1

- (a) Your friend who is next to you in the bus is speaking loudly on his/her cellular phone. What do you to say to get him/her to speak quietly?

Amiga ✓ fica ✗ mais ✗ calado ✗ silêncio ✓
.....
.....

(3 marks)

- (b) You need to borrow some money from your aunt. Write the note you send asking her for the money and giving ONE reason why you need it.

Oi Tia Lucy bom dia eu quero
 emprestar dinheiro de voce porque
 eu tenho que comprar a sandalia
 pra mim. (3 marks)

- (c) Your six-year-old brother is playing with a box of matches. What do you say to him and what reason do you give?

Para de brincar com phospho phosphor
 fusturo
 phospho, voce vai queimarse.
 (3 marks)

- (d) You had a wonderful time at your friend's birthday party. Write a note thanking him/her for the invitation and telling him/her what you enjoyed most.

Oi Amiga eu so queria te dizer
 obrigada pelo tudo que voce fez
 pra mim na dia do seu aniversario
 eu mais gostei comendo bolo, porque
 taq - deliciosa. (3 marks)

- (e) You bought an interesting movie that your friend wanted to see. Send a note inviting him/her to your home to watch it.

Oi amiga eu tenho a filme interessante
 que voce mais adora eu quero voce
 vem a tarde aqui na minha casa
 Tchau
 George
 (3 marks)

- (f) There is a special place where you normally go on weekends. Send a message to your friend telling him/her where the place is located and what you like about it.

Oi amiga eu tem tenho lugar onde
 sempre eu vou passar fim de semana
 e tao legal tem muito de flores roses;
 eu gosto (3 marks)

Ideia completa, pequenos erros de pronúncia

- (g) Your mother wants to know about your friends at school. Describe TWO of them.

liziaria ^{nome dela}, ela é ^{outra} e bem
linda e tem cabelo preto, outra ^{nome}
dela é Lissandra ela é tem cabelo
louro. (3 marks)

- (h) Your uncle wants to take you to the cinema. Thank him and ask when you will be going.

obrigado ^{que dia} muito tio, mas quando vai
a gente vão tio? (3 marks)

- (i) Your mom informed you that she is going to have a baby. Express how you feel and inquire when the baby will be born.

Mae eu ^{sinto} tão ^{aleg} porque eu
vou ter a outra irmã e irmão,
mae quando o bebe vai nascer?
pequenos erros de escrita/ortografia (3 marks)

- (j) Your dad wants to know what he can buy for your birthday present. Tell him that you would like to have a laptop and thank him for it.

Pai eu quero um ^{laptop} ~~tablet~~ por meu
presente de aniversario obrigado
pai te amo (3 marks)

Examiner's Comments

The candidate demonstrated knowledge to express ideas reasonably clearly. However, there were some spelling and verb tense mistakes, incorrect prepositions and words mixed with Spanish language.

Candidate's Answers to Part (a)–(j): Sample 2

- (a) Your friend who is next to you in the bus is speaking loudly on his/her cellular phone. What do you say to get him/her to speak quietly?

Luis, fale a ~~voz~~ ~~baixa~~ ~~por favor~~

(3 marks)

- (b) You need to borrow some money from your aunt. Write the note you send asking her for the money and giving ONE reason why you need it.

Tia Ana, eu quero pedir emprestado cinquenta real
porque eu quero comprar a comida rápida

(3 marks)

- (c) Your six-year-old brother is playing with a box of matches. What do you say to him and what reason do you give?

Alex, Robert ^{voce}, ~~15~~ não deve jogar ~~com o~~ fósforo
porque é muito perigoso

(3 marks)

- (d) You had a wonderful time at your friend's birthday party. Write a note thanking him/her for the invitation and telling him/her what you enjoyed most.

Olá Ana Maria, muito obrigado pela convite, eu
gostei mais a comida

(3 marks)

- (e) You bought an interesting movie that your friend wanted to see. Send a note inviting him/her to your home to watch it.

Eu te convido para minha casa para ~~assistir~~
"The Shining."

(3 marks)

- (f) There is a special place where you normally go on weekends. Send a message to your friend telling him/her where the place is located and what you like about it.

Normalmente eu ~~gostaria de~~ ~~shopping~~ ~~go to~~ ir
a Highland Mall em Turkey, porque é muito grande
e ~~tem~~ ^{tem} muitas coisas.

(3 marks)

- (g) Your mother wants to know about your friends at school. Describe TWO of them.

Marco é ~~q~~ alto, magro e muito gentil, e ~~alfonso~~
é um ~~pequeno~~ ~~de~~ ~~trabalhador~~

(3 marks)

- (h) Your uncle wants to take you to the cinema. Thank him and ask when you will be going.

Muito obrigado, tio Roberto, quando ~~nos vamos~~
~~vamos~~ ir?

(3 marks)

- (i) Your mom informed you that she is going to have a baby. Express how you feel and inquire when the baby will be born.

*Estoy. Minha mãe, ~~estoy~~ estou muito feliz, quando
ele vai ~~nata~~ ^{nato}?*

(3 marks)

- (j) Your dad wants to know what he can buy for your birthday present. Tell him that you would like to have a laptop and thank him for it.

Eu quero ter uma laptop, e obrigado pelo presente.

(3 marks)

Examiner's Comments

The candidate correctly answered the situations using the correct words. Minor spelling mistakes were observed as well as some incorrect verb tenses.

Overall, most candidates seemed to lack knowledge about verb tenses and in some cases, there was a literal translation of phrases from English into Portuguese.

Candidate's Answers to Part (a)–(j): Sample 3

- (a) Your friend who is next to you in the bus is speaking loudly on his/her cellular phone. What do you say to get him/her to speak quietly?

Speak quieter

(3 marks)

- (b) You need to borrow some money from your aunt. Write the note you send asking her for the money and giving ONE reason why you need it.

Aunt Shamair I need some money for school. X

(3 marks)

- (c) Your six-year-old brother is playing with a box of matches. What do you say to him and what reason do you give?

Do not play with that it will burn you. X

(3 marks)

- (d) You had a wonderful time at your friend's birthday party. Write a note thanking him/her for the invitation and telling him/her what you enjoyed most.

Obrigade ✓ invit'ed ✓ me, ✓ by ✓ for ✓
my part. X

(3 marks)

- (e) You bought an interesting movie that your friend wanted to see. Send a note inviting him/her to your home to watch it.

See you at my house next Friday I've
bought the new movie. X

(3 marks)

- (f) There is a special place where you normally go on weekends. Send a message to your friend telling him/her where the place is located and what you like about it.

My special place to visit is at the top of
the hills on the high way. X

(3 marks)

- (g) Your mother wants to know about your friends at school. Describe TWO of them.

Doi minha amigas. Quora o. Julia. h.
Voês bonita o inteligente. ✓

(3 marks)

- (h) Your uncle wants to take you to the cinema. Thank him and ask when you will be going.

Obrigada, Que horas? X

(3 marks)

- (i) Your mom informed you that she is going to have a baby. Express how you feel and inquire when the baby will be born.

Parabéns, mas,

P

(3 marks)

- (j) Your dad wants to know what he can buy for your birthday present. Tell him that you would like to have a laptop and thank him for it.

Eu gosto um laptop, Obrigada muito.

(3 marks)

Examiner's Comments

The candidate answered all the questions in English, using only a few isolated words in Portuguese. This is unacceptable.

Question 2 – Letter

Candidates were required to write a letter, 130–150 words based on four given cues. They were assessed on use of language, accuracy, coherence and clarity of expression. The demands were suitable, adequate and within candidates' life experiences. The cues were not narrowly structured and allowed candidates to express themselves in language which would have been within their ability. Candidates whose vocabulary and grammar might have been limited would not have been disadvantaged.

Letter

Your sister is going to get married to a young foreign doctor who lives and works in your country. The wedding will take place on Valentine's Day next year. Write a letter to your aunt who lives in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in which you

- (i) greet and inquire about her and family
- (ii) share some details about the wedding plans (when, where, wedding preparations)
- (iii) enquire on what date she will arrive and ask if your cousins will come
- (iv) suggest TWO places you can visit after the wedding.

Candidates' Performance

Most candidates remained within the required word count, a 150-word limit. Candidates had some difficulty with the main vocabulary required for the topic "wedding". It must be noted that, although examiners are encouraged and in fact, are required to ensure that as far as possible all scripts are read thoroughly in order to arrive at the correct grade, one cannot always be certain that this can be achieved because of handwriting which is extremely difficult to decipher. Candidates need to expend more effort in producing legible scripts. It is also regrettable that what might be considered the main theme of the letter could not be rendered adequately in Portuguese by a significant number of candidates.

Candidates Strengths

Some candidates demonstrated a strong command of the language and used a very wide range of expressions. In describing activities in which they participated, these candidates not only incorporated the usual required expressions but there was also a good use of idioms. The use of the subjunctive, when necessary, was also sometimes present. Most candidates were familiar with the format for letter writing. The date, the salutation and the opening and closing paragraphs were well written by most candidates.

Candidates' Weaknesses

The omission of required accents was widespread. There were some candidates who seemed to lack knowledge of basic vocabulary that is expected to be known at this level. A number of candidates seemed unable to structure a sentence and indicate its end by putting a full stop. Many times, words flowed from one idea to another with no punctuation and no capitalization of proper nouns or the first word in a new sentence or idea.

Not many candidates were able to adequately formulate sentences related to the topic "wedding". In addition, a very large number of candidates committed errors ranging from the very basic writing of the date in Portuguese to the more complex use of the preterite and subjunctive tenses. Candidates also tended to capitalize words in Portuguese because they are capitalized in English. In the majority of scripts, there were problems pertaining to the date order, day-month-year.

Samples of Candidates' Answers

Candidate's Answers to Question 2 – Sample 1

22 São Paulo.
O doze de julho de dois mil.
22 São Paulo.
O doze de julho de dois mil vinte e um.
Querido tia Amará:
Como vai você e a sua família? Tudo está bem aqui...
e espero tudo estar bem. Também: Eu espero que está tudo certo!
cheque você em boa saúde.
Eu estou escrevendo esta carta para falar com você e a sua
família que a minha irmã está tendo casar. O casamento é no cinco
de junho e noze de fevereiro de dois mil vinte e dois. É à igreja em Roma
e o recepção. É ao Prince Carlton hotel. A minha irmã acabou
recebendo de dela, os convites são terminando fazendo e as
comidas e os bebidas são cuidadas.
Tão logo nos estamos eventualmente indo para terminar com
tudo os coisas. Tia, o que data você é vindo. Eu espero é antes
a semana ou mês antes casamento. E também são os meus primos
vindo. Tia, depois o casamento eu gostaria nos ao centro
commerical, o zoologico e a praia junta.
Eu não posso ver tudo o mundo. Diga oi para uma
família para mim com muitos abraços e beijos. É sempre um prazer ficar

contato com você. Eu estou acabando agora, por favor, ^{me} escreva logo.

A sua amamente,

Danika.

Examiner's Comments

The candidate developed the answer following the hints in the question. Frequent errors were verb tense, prepositions and words sequence in the sentence which compromised the fluency of the text.

Candidate's Answers to Question 2: Sample 2

Sunny Lane,

Dorcott Street, Vardela

Segunda-feira, 12 do Julho, 2022

Querida Lucia,

Como ~~voce~~ ^{voce} esta e sua familia? Estou

muito animada porque a minha irmã se casará no

dia 14 do fevereiro, 2022. O casamento ~~seja~~

à igreja na praia em Zulandia do Guyana chamada

"St Peter's ~~Atolls~~ Hall". Nós decidimos que seja

decorações rosa e branco porque a cor favorita

da minha irmã é rosa. Ela me convidou ser

a dama de honra então eu necessitarei um vestido

rosa. Ela falou também que seja muitas comidas e

bebidas lá tipo cerveja, vinho, suco, água, macarrão,

arroz do aipo, peixe assado, frango grelhado e

um bolo de chocolate grandíssimo.

Voce vai o casamento. Voce vai permitir

Ela e Fam vir. Eu espero que voce virámas

porque eu desejaria que nós ~~vist~~ ^{visitemos} ~~mas~~ ^{depois o casamento} ~~muitos~~

lugares interessantes juntos tipo a praia mais

Write your answer to **Question 2** here.

velho perto da igreja e o monumento da "Casa do Fil"
Estou muito animada pelo casamento. Vejo você em
breve.
Beljinha
Sara

Examiner's Comments

The candidate had an excellent notion of Portuguese grammar structure, with a few mistakes relating to verb tenses and matching gender pronouns, and some minor spelling errors. The overall parameters required for the exercise were met. The candidate was also very familiar with the vocabulary required and key words for the assignment were properly spelt.

Candidate's Answers to Question 2: Sample 3

12
20 de Julho de 2021.

Prezada tia,

Como vai senhora e sua família? Espero que tudo esteja bem. O casamento da minha irmã, Lisa, é em breve. Será realizada aqui na Guiana, em 14 de fevereiro, ano próximo. Eu tenho atualizada sobre os preparativos do evento. Identifiquei as damas de honra e os padinhos. Eu serei uma dama de honra.

A recepção será realizada ao Seaview Hotel & Resort. As decorações serão na cores que o noivo tiver escolhido. Comidas como peru assado e bebidas serão preparadas. Lisa estará chegando em dezembro. Seus primos estarão comparecendo. Depois do casamento, eu sugiro que visitamos a praia e o parque para tirar fotos.

Eu estou tão animada para este evento e feliz para Lisa. Se cuida, tia!

Abraços e beijos,

Amara.

Examiner's Comments

Here is also an example of a candidate with perfect grasp of grammar and letter writing structure. Again, incorrect usage of verb tense was observed and some minor spelling errors were present. The text was shorter than what was required, but all elements were present.

Candidate's Answers to Question 2: Sample 4

Boa Vista, 12 de Julho, 2021.

Querida Tia,

Olá! Como a senhora está? E a família?

Espero que vocês estão bem. Estou com saudade de vocês. Eu estou escrevendo esta carta para explicar os planos de casamento de minha irmã, Ana.

Ana vai casar no próximo ano, dia 14 de fevereiro. O casamento vai acontecer em Boa Vista em As Pragas das Águas. Todo mundo tem que vestir no color roxa e preto. As mulheres tem que usar uma vestido roxa e preto ou uma saia preto e uma blusa roxa. Os homens tem que vestir calças preto e camisa roxa. A senhora e meus primos, Maria, Deuzarina, Raul e Ivan com nós: mãe, pai e eu vamos vestir no color ouro. Ana e Roberto vão vestir em branco.

Mãe e Tia Ricardo vão cozinhar a

se escrever
a contê

comida. Eles vão preparar arroz, frango frito, feijões,
pastel, carne e ^soupa. Eu vou preparar brigadeiro
e bolo. Também, vamos decorar As Pragas da Águas
no color branca, roxa e preto. Há muito borboletas
branca e flores roxa.

~~Depois de casamento, podemos visitar a praia~~
~~para nadar~~ Quando ^{a senhora} ~~você~~ vai chegar? Antes
ou no mesmo dia? Penso que: ~~a~~ senhora vai
trazer meus primos. Espero que a senhora ~~va~~ trazer
eles. porque depois de casamento, podemos ir
a praia para nadar e ~~um~~ visitar o Parque Nacional.
~~Nacional~~ para caminhar.

Estou muito feliz que nós vamos celebrar
o casamento de Ana com Você. Estou muito ansioso
para ~~se~~ responder. Um beijo e um abraço.

Sinceramente,

Adriana

Examiner's Comments

The candidate developed the reasoning fluidly and followed the tips proposed in the question. Minor accent, concordance and verb tense mistakes were observed. However, the candidate demonstrated good knowledge of grammar structure and good repertoire, which made communication clear and intelligible.

Recommendations

- The teaching of grammar might appear to be burdensome, but it cannot be overlooked. The need for good grammar must be emphasized. Regular drilling is required.
- The use of good idioms in letter writing must also be encouraged. Idioms add some measure of delight to what is written.
- More time and effort must be spent on ensuring that students understand the subjunctive as it a critical component of the language and students are bound to encounter it.
- Conjugation of verbs and more particularly, irregular verbs, needs some more attention.
- It must be clear that the use of the gerund is very different in Portuguese when compared to its use in English.
- Regular practice at letter writing and acquiring a pool of idiomatic expressions are important; both will enhance the quality of candidates' responses.
- There must be greater effort at developing competence in the use of verbs, particularly irregular verbs. Certain verbs are necessary for any Portuguese exam. These include *ter, ser, ir, dizer, fazer, ver*.
- Candidates should practice writing responses both as assignments and under test conditions.
- Attention needs to be paid to learning vocabulary. It is necessary that students be guided regarding the correct use of a dictionary; this can help alleviate the incorrect use of vocabulary.
- More attention needs to be paid to applying correct grammatical rules.
- The importance of accents must be stressed.
- Games and drills may be used to enhance the learning experiences while practising the language.
- Candidates should be directed to appropriate websites for further practice. Candidates are encouraged to use their smart phones, tablets, etc. to access sites which make learning the language easier.

Question 3 – Contextual Dialogue

This section required candidates to choose to complete a contextual dialogue. Cues in English were provided for both options. The contextual dialogue was in keeping with the information outlined in the syllabus and therefore within the scope of candidates' ability.

Contextual Dialogue

Having achieved exceptional results in the CXC examinations, your friend Malcolm received a full scholarship to study at a university in the city where you live. Give Malcolm brief instructions on how to get to the city from the airport and recommend places to visit during his stay.

Responses to all the cues listed below were to be included in the completed dialogue.

- Greetings and congratulations
- Inquiries about his receipt of the scholarship
- Transportation arrangements from the airport
- Recommendations on tourist attractions
- Thanks and farewell

Candidates' Strengths

Most candidates observed the rubric of the question and attempted to address at least three of the cues. There was a fairly good manifestation of grammatical competence and good vocabulary. Most candidates managed to properly produce recommendations on tourist attractions.

Candidates' Weaknesses

Some candidates who attempted the question failed to show a solid command of grammar and knowledge of relevant vocabulary and structures. Candidates frequently omitted the articles where they were required. Many candidates did not know how to describe the transportation arrangements from the airport.

Samples of Candidates' Answers

Candidate's Answers to Question 3: Sample 1

Malcolm: Oi meu amigo, bom dia, tudo bem com você?

Você: Oi mano, bom dia, tudo bem, ^{obrigado} graças a deus e
você? Tudo bem? ✓

Malcolm: Tudo bem. Eu tenho boas notícias para você. Eu consegui uma bolsa de estudos para estudar em sua cidade.

Você: Parabéns amigo! ✓ Que bom! ✓ Estou orgulhoso ✓
de você e muito feliz. ✓ Quantas matérias
fez? ✓ tirou? ✓

Malcolm: Eu tirei boas notas em 20 matérias. Preciso viajar para poder me matricular e começar a estudar na universidade no próximo semestre. Você pode me ajudar? Eu não sei como chegar até sua casa.

Você: Que bom! ✓ Claro que sim! ✓ Quando sair o aeroporto,
anda segue em frente da estrada Ponto Verde e paga
o próximo esquerda. Minha casa é a primeira casa. ✓

Malcolm: Obrigado pela informação sobre como chegar do aeroporto até a sua casa. Como é a sua cidade?

Você: A cidade é muito grande e tem muito
barulho mas é muito bonita. ✓




Malcolm: Que legal! A cidade parece muito interessante. Eu estou muito animado. Eu também quero visitar o zoológico e o museu.

Você: O zoológico e o museu são muito divertidos
para visitar mas tem lugares mais
interessantes. ✓



Malcolm: É verdade? Há outras atrações turísticas bonitas?

Você: Claro que sim! ✓ Tem o Parque Nacional, ✓
um Centro comercial, as praias ✓ e o Jardim
de Borboletas. ✓

Malcolm: OK! Parece que vou me divertir em sua cidade.

Você: ~~Sim~~  ~~Minha~~ Minha cidade é muito
divertido  e interessante. É uma experiência 
~~maravilhosa~~ boa

Malcolm: Obrigado pela ajuda. Até logo!




Você: De nada Malcolm.  Até mais! 
.....
.....

Examiner's Comments

The candidate read all the cues correctly and moved seamlessly from one question to the next, producing the contextual dialogue required by the exercise. Once again, the main problem was with situating the verb tense correctly and some minor spelling errors. The candidate showed skillful use of expressions connected to the dialogue.

Candidate's Answers to Question 3: Sample 2

Malcolm: Oi meu amigo, bom dia, tudo bem com você?

Você: Oi, bom dia Malcolm. muito bem 
obrigado 


Examiner's Comments

The candidate correctly answered the first item but left all others unanswered. Perhaps, the candidate did not have enough time to respond.

Candidate's Answers to Question 3: Sample 3

Malcolm: Oi meu amigo, bom dia, tudo bem com você?

Você: Oi Malcolm, bom dia, eu estou muito bem e você? ✓

Malcolm: Tudo bem. Eu tenho boas notícias para você. Eu consegui uma bolsa de estudos para estudar em sua cidade.

Você: Parabéns meu amigo, como você conseguiu uma bolsa de estudos? ✓

Malcolm: Eu tirei boas notas em 20 matérias. Preciso viajar para poder me matricular e começar a estudar na universidade no próximo semestre. Você pode me ajudar? Eu não sei como chegar até sua casa.

Você: Claro que sim. Eu posso ajudar. Ao chegar ^{do aeroporto} em ~~minha~~ cidade, você pode pegar um taxi e ir a minha casa. ✓

Malcolm: Obrigado pela informação sobre como chegar do aeroporto até a sua casa. Como é a sua cidade?

Você: Minha cidade é moderna e grande. Também tem muitos lugares ~~interessantes~~ como o parque nacional, o museu e o zoológico. ✓

Malcolm: Que legal! A cidade parece muito interessante. Eu estou muito animado. Eu também quero visitar o zoológico e o museu.

Você: Claro que sim, nós vamos visitar os lugares. ✓

Malcolm: É verdade? Há outras atrações turísticas bonitas?

Você: Claro que sim. Há muitas atrações como a catedral do São Jorge e muitos rios. ✓

Malcolm: OK! Parece que vou me divertir em sua cidade.

Você: Sim, você vai se divertir em minha cidade. ✓

Malcolm: Obrigado pela ajuda. Até logo!

Você: Fica feliz por ajudar. Até logo meu amigo.

Examiner's Comments

The candidate demonstrated knowledge and fluency in the language. There were only a few pronoun and preposition mistakes.

Candidate's Answers to Question 3: Sample 4

Malcolm: Oi meu amigo, bom dia, tudo bem com você?

Você: Olá bom dia, tudo bem, e e você? ✓

Malcolm: Tudo bem. Eu tenho boas notícias para você. Eu consegui uma bolsa de estudos para estudar em sua cidade.

Você: ~~Prazer, eu espero minha cidade, você~~
~~Parabéns!~~ Parabéns ^S eu espero ^S você ~~como~~, minha ~~muito~~ cidade. ✗

Malcolm: Eu tirei boas notas em 20 matérias. Preciso viajar para poder me matricular e começar a estudar na universidade no próximo semestre. Você pode me ajudar? Eu não sei como chegar até sua casa.

Você: Sim, eu ~~estou~~ ^{voce} pode ajudar ~~vo~~ ^{Voce de}. ~~Nos~~ ~~podemos~~
~~ir do aeroporto~~ ~~as~~ ~~unidades~~ ~~para~~ ~~ir~~ ~~o~~ ~~universario~~ ~~de~~
~~visitamos~~ ~~a~~ ~~praia~~ ~~e~~ ~~biblioteca~~ ~~a~~ ~~fazenda~~ ~~e~~ ~~o~~ ~~banco~~
~~onibus~~ ~~depois~~ ~~do~~
~~commercial~~ ~~..~~ ~~Chegar~~ ~~do~~ ~~aeroporto~~ ~~de~~ ~~onibus~~ ~~para~~ ~~o~~ ~~universario~~

Malcolm: Obrigado pela informação sobre como chegar do aeroporto até a sua casa. Como é a sua cidade?

Você: Minha cidade é grande e bonita, ~~está~~ ~~mu~~to
..... lugares, como o ~~centro~~ ^{centro} ~~comercial~~ ^{comercial}, o ~~fazenda~~ ^{fazenda} ~~mu~~ltas
..... escolas, o ~~zoológico~~ ^{zoológico} ~~e~~ ^e ~~o~~ ~~biblioteca~~ ^{biblioteca} ~~e~~ ^e ~~o~~ ~~museu~~ ^{museu}

Malcolm: Que legal! A cidade parece muito interessante. Eu estou muito animado. Eu também quero visitar o zoológico e o museu.

Você: Tudo ~~vo~~s ~~visita~~mos o ~~zoológico~~ ^{zoológico} ~~e~~ ^e ~~o~~ ~~museu~~ ^{museu}
..... de ~~taxi~~ ^{taxi} ~~depois~~ ^{depois} ~~nos~~ ^{nos} ~~visita~~mos o ~~centro~~ ^{centro} ~~comercial~~ ^{comercial}

Malcolm: É verdade? Há outras atrações turísticas bonitas?

Você: Sim, lá ~~é~~ ^é a ~~praia~~ ^{praia} ~~grande~~ ^{grande} ~~e~~ ^e ~~o~~ ~~bosque~~ ^{bosque}
..... bonito
.....

Malcolm: OK! Parece que vou me divertir em sua cidade.

Você: Sim, eu ~~espero~~ ^{espero} ~~voce~~ ^{voce} ~~pi~~
.....
.....

Malcolm: Obrigado pela ajuda. Até logo!

Você: De ~~nada~~ ^{nada} ~~me~~ ^{me} ~~tem~~ ^{tem} ~~um~~ ^{um} ~~um~~ ^{um} ~~bom~~ ^{bom} ~~dia~~ ^{dia} ~~tchau~~ ^{tchau}

Examiner's Comments

The candidate made several errors regarding grammar, spelling and verb tenses, but had a good grasp of the required vocabulary and understood the cues although one or two did not connect to the next.

Recommendations

- More time should be spent on this component of the examination. Students need to be taught how to do a contextual dialogue using the utterances that come before and after to help them put together their response.
- Students need to be given more practice in the preparation and writing of the contextual dialogues as well as oral practice, reflecting themes and format. The reading of dialogues from texts, newspapers and magazines should be encouraged. Also, students should be given completed dialogues (along with other possible responses) to discuss the tenses, vocabulary and structures used in the exercise.
- Candidates are encouraged to read through the dialogue before inserting their responses; this would allow for the natural flow of conversation. Furthermore, candidates should be made aware that the order of the cues does not necessarily match the order in which the dialogue is written.
- Students need to be encouraged to avoid writing in English and then translating, whether writing in or out of the classroom.
- Students need to build and strengthen their vocabulary base. Teachers therefore need to expose students to idioms, synonyms and antonyms in the target language, to incorporate in their writing.
- Students should be taught how to manage word limits and not just be told what the word limit is. In addition, teachers need to encourage students to always review and reread their work. Teachers can plan and structure review time into each lesson to help students get into the habit of looking over their work before submission.

Question 4 – Reading Comprehension

This question tests candidates' ability to read a passage in Portuguese and then demonstrate comprehension skills by responding in English to questions posed in English and based on the passage they have read.

The reading comprehension passage for the CSEC June 2021 examination was of a level that was appropriate for candidates. The level of vocabulary was such that candidates should have been able to understand the passage and answer the questions in English.

Candidates' Performance

Most candidates showed that they have the necessary vocabulary skills to fully comprehend the passage. As the general context of the passage proved easily comprehensible, many candidates were able to achieve full marks. However, weaker candidates displayed a lack of knowledge of certain key vocabulary items in the passage; this proved to be challenging.

Too many candidates continue to ignore the instructions to answer in English and instead, they respond in either Portuguese or a combination of Portuguese and English. Candidates are advised that there are penalties for failure to observe the rubric.

Candidates' Strengths

Most candidates understood the information required to answer most questions and responded appropriately.

Candidates' Weaknesses

For Part (f), some candidates had difficulty describing the two men correctly.

Samples of Candidates' Answers

Candidate's Answers to Parts (a)–(j): Sample 1

- (a) Describe the author's uncle.

The author's uncle is a very rich man. ✓

(1 mark)

- (b) Where did the author's uncle live?

~~The author's uncle lives on the fifth floor of a big, in a big apartment~~

The author's uncle lives on the fifth floor ✓ of the building, in a big apartment ✓ in a big city. ✓

(2 marks)

- (c) What THREE things did the author's uncle enjoy doing?

The author's uncle enjoyed going shopping ✓, wearing expensive clothes ✓ and lots of jewellery ✓

(3 marks)

- (d) Where did the author and his uncle meet the two men?

The author and his uncle met the two men inside of the elevator of the uncle's apartment building. ✓

(1 mark)

- (e) Why were the author and his uncle at the place where they met the two men?

The author and his uncle were in the elevator because they were ~~on their way to~~ leaving the building ✓ to go to the mall. ✓

(2 marks)

- (f) Describe EACH of the men whom the author and his uncle met.

The first man was very tall and was wearing the colour purple ~~and~~ and the other was very short ~~with~~ with a green shirt.

(3 marks)

- (g) What event occurred after the author and his uncle met the two men?

After they met the two men, upon leaving the elevator, they took the author's bag and watch and they left the elevator ~~running~~ running out of the elevator.

(2 marks)

- (h) Who did the author and his uncle see after the event in (g)?

After this event, they saw a group of policemen who were looking in their direction.

(2 marks)

- (i) What did the persons whom the author and his uncle saw, after the event, manage to do?

The policemen managed to capture the suspects quickly.

(1 mark)

- (j) Do you think that the author and his uncle were lucky? Explain.

Yes, I do think that the author and his uncle were lucky because, just as ~~their~~ before the suspects who robbed them took off with their belongings, a group of persons working in law enforcements were able to apprehend the suspects and return their expensive items. If they had not been there, the suspects would have been free.

(3 marks)

Total 20 marks

Examiner's Comments

The candidate demonstrated a correct understanding of the whole story, making small mistakes regarding the "red cap" boné vermelho, translation which was a general difficulty.

Candidate's Answers to Parts (a)–(j): Sample 2

- (a) Describe the author's uncle.

The author uncle is a very rich man. ✓

(1 mark)

- (b) Where did the author's uncle live?

His uncle lived in a huge apartment. ✓

(2 marks)

- (c) What THREE things did the author's uncle enjoy doing?

1) He like to use money. ✗
2) He liked to go out and party. ✗
3) He liked to use jewels. ✗


(3 marks)

- (d) Where did the author and his uncle meet the two men?

They met the two men in the elevator. ✓


(1 mark)

- (e) Why were the author and his uncle at the place where they met the two men?

They were going going back home. 



(2 marks)

- (f) Describe EACH of the men whom the author and his uncle met.

The men were tall, looked suspicious, scary, and strong. 


(3 marks)

- (g) What event occurred after the author and his uncle met the two men?

They were about to be robbed however police showed up to stop the robbery.  

(2 marks)

- (h) Who did the author and his uncle see after the event in (g)?

They saw the officers catch the suspects and later saw the person they saw earlier. 

(2 marks)

- (i) What did the persons whom the author and his uncle saw, after the event, manage to do?

Call the police. 

(1 mark)

Examiner's Comments

The candidate demonstrated understanding at some points in the story, but at others seemed totally unaware of the meaning, such as the three things the uncle liked to do, Part (e) regarding why the author and his uncle were there when he had the attack. In fact, most of the candidates missed Part (e).

Candidate's Answers to Parts (a)–(j): Sample 3

- (a) Describe the author's uncle.

The author's uncle is a man that is quite rich

(1 mark)

- (b) Where did the author's uncle live?

The author's uncle lives in a big apartment

(2 marks)

- (c) What THREE things did the author's uncle enjoy doing?

The author's uncle likes to go shopping, wear expensive clothing and accessories.

(3 marks)

- (d) Where did the author and his uncle meet the two men?

The author and his uncle met the two men in an elevator.

(1 mark)

- (e) Why were the author and his uncle at the place where they met the two men?

They had decided to go to the City Hall

(2 marks)

- (f) Describe EACH of the men whom the author and his uncle met.

The first man was tall with a yellow top and the other man was short with a green top

(3 marks)

(g) What event occurred after the author and his uncle met the two men?

The short man had grapped the author's purse and
the tall man had grapped the author's watch in which
they both ran away.

(2 marks)

(h) Who did the author and his uncle see after the event in (g)?

They spotted the Police that were walking in their direction.

(2 marks)

(i) What did the persons whom the author and his uncle saw, after the event, manage to do?

The Police captured the suspects.

(1 mark)

(j) Do you think that the author and his uncle were lucky? Explain.

I believe that the author and ~~his~~ their uncle was indeed
lucky because if they had not spotted the Police then
it would have been very difficult to retrieve the stolen
items; especially, in terms of time.

(3 marks)

Examiner's Comments

Overall, this candidate demonstrated a good level of comprehension. Two of the elements – the uncle living on the fifth floor of the apartment and the man in the elevator with the red cap – were the main difficulties encountered. Some of the questions seemed to be quite easy and were correctly answered by the majority, perhaps due to certain similarities within the root of the words in Portuguese and English (elevador, policial, grupo etc).

Recommendations

For Candidates

- Since booklets are being scanned, it is important that candidates take care with their handwriting and the kind of pen that they use.
- Candidates are encouraged to read more, both in English and in Portuguese so that they can learn the meaning of words, the synonyms for words in Portuguese and English, how to spell and how to use language.
- It is important that candidates read the given instructions carefully and avoid including Portuguese in their answers when English is required.
- It is advisable to read the entire passage before you begin to answer the questions. It is also very important to pay keen attention to what is required for each question and give precise and concise answers. In many instances, candidates give additional irrelevant information; this indicates a lack of comprehension. It also detracts from the answers and sometimes causes candidates to lose marks.
- Candidates should pay attention to the allocation of marks to individual questions. The marks allotted to a response hint at the amount of detail required.
- Candidates are 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 the passage. Neither should they provide answers that are required for other questions.
- Candidates should take the time to explore all that technology has to offer regarding foreign language learning.

For Teachers

When practising reading comprehension, teachers should encourage students to be as precise and concise as possible in their responses especially where only one mark is being awarded. It is hoped that teachers and future candidates will take note of the following recommendations:

- Vocabulary is important to comprehension. Teachers should ensure that students constantly revise their vocabulary using revision techniques that work with different learning styles.
- Grammar is also critical in understanding the passage. Teachers should give students much practice, especially with irregular verbs and the preterite tense.
- Teachers need to emphasize that students read the passage at least three times in order to understand the story.
- It is recommended that teachers continue to dedicate quality time to reading comprehension exercises with their CSEC final year students, at least once per week.
- Teachers can employ the use of skimming and scanning as well as other scaffolding exercises to help students achieve their potential in their reading comprehension skill.
- Teachers are encouraged to continue the good practice of exposing students to the relevant vocabulary that is covered in the syllabus. Vocabulary can be built and tested through games, quizzes, oral presentations, role play and puzzles, among other things. The use of technology in the teaching and learning

process could also enhance students' acquisition of necessary vocabulary and reading comprehension skills. Using storyboards in Portuguese can help students build the necessary vocabulary also.

- In preparation for the examination, reading comprehension exercises in the classroom should mirror the format of the CSEC examination.
- Teachers are encouraged to explore all that the internet has to offer to facilitate instruction.