



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission**

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION 2006

SPANISH

ORDINARY LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

HIGHER LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

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1. General Introduction

The Leaving Certificate Spanish Ordinary Level and Higher Level examinations are based on the current Spanish syllabus. This syllabus was examined for the first time in 1997. The most recent Chief Examiner's Report for Spanish was prepared following the 2003 examinations.

It is hoped that this report of the 2006 Leaving Certificate Examination will prove helpful to students and to teachers alike in their preparations for examinations in the coming years.

1.1 Background to the Report

The 2006 examination scripts contained evidence of excellent work and also indicated areas where candidates experienced some difficulties. This report attempts to present both strengths and weaknesses in a constructive and positive way, thereby assisting both students and teachers in assessing their progress.

It is intended that this report be read in conjunction with the relevant examination papers, CD and marking schemes. (The 2006 Marking Schemes are available at www.examinations.ie).

1.2 The Spanish Leaving Certificate Examination

Both Higher Level and Ordinary Level have four main components:

- Oral Test
- Reading Comprehension
- Written Production
- Aural Test (Listening Comprehension)

Allocation of Marks:

Both the Ordinary Level and the Higher Level 2006 examinations carried 400 marks and these were allocated as follows:

	Oral	Written	Aural
		(Reading Comprehension and Written Production)	(Listening Comprehension)
Ordinary Level	80 (20%)	220 (55%)	100 (25%)
Higher Level	100 (25%)	220 (55%)	80 (20%)

1.3 2006 Leaving Certificate Examinations

The Oral Examination is common to both Ordinary Level and Higher Level. In 2006 this component was examined in the two weeks between March 27th and April 7th. All candidates were recorded on cassette tape by the Assistant Examiners. In turn, these recordings were monitored in May, 2006 and a moderation process was carried out. (Subsequently, an Appeals Process was activated in September, 2006 for those candidates who appealed their results and moderation of marks applied where appropriate.)

The Reading Comprehension, Written Production and Listening Comprehension components were examined in June. The Reading Comprehension and Written Production were taken together in a two and a half hour examination. Candidates had a short break and then presented for a 40 minute Listening Comprehension Test.

The Written Production component had a number of elements which provided the candidate with choice.

- At Ordinary Level candidates were able to choose between a Note and a Diary Entry.
- At Higher Level in Section A, Question 1, candidates could have opted for either the literary text (*La aventura de Saíd*) or a journalistic passage. In Section B, Question 5, candidates had a choice of opinion piece. In Section C, Question 1, candidates were able to attempt either Dialogue Construction or Letter Writing. Finally, in Section C, Question 2, candidates were able to choose between a Diary Entry and a Note.

1.4 Numbers of Candidates taking Spanish 2002-2006

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Ordinary Level	739	643	743	837	996
Higher Level	963	908	1012	1135	1375
Total	1702	1551	1755	1972	2371

Whereas a fall in the numbers presenting for Spanish is evident for 2003, the trend is generally positive. The statistics show an increase in numbers of almost 40% in five years and indicate that the subject is experiencing significant growth at present which should continue into the future. This optimism is based, firstly, on the above trend at Leaving Certificate Level and, secondly, on the numbers sitting the Junior Certificate in 2006 (3928).

2. Oral Examination – Ordinary Level and Higher Level

2.1 Introduction

The following is based on the information supplied by both the advising examiners and the oral examiners in their reports. Their diligence in this regard is vital in providing the necessary feedback on how the Oral Examinations have proceeded and in making suggestions for improvements in the process. The ability of the oral examiners in putting candidates at their ease on the one hand, and in conducting proceedings in a most professional manner, on the other, needs to be acknowledged.

Since 2003 every candidate's examination has been recorded and retained for monitoring purposes. This allows for the inclusion of the Oral Examination in the appeal process and provides for greater transparency and accountability. In 2006 the Oral Examination ran smoothly and schools, in the main, provided very suitable accommodation for the best possible conduct of the examinations.

At Leaving Certificate level the Oral Examination is common to both Ordinary Level and Higher Level candidates. The breakdown of marks is as follows:

Higher Level 100 marks

Ordinary Level 80 marks

Candidates, at both Ordinary Level and Higher Level, were marked out of a total of 100 marks by the oral examiners. The marks for candidates at Ordinary Level were adjusted during the summer in the State Examinations Commission, Athlone, to allow for the fact that 80 marks rather than 100 marks (i.e.20%) were allocated to their oral examinations.

The oral examination consisted of two distinct (and compulsory) sections:

Section One

General Conversation 70 marks

Section Two

Role Play 30 marks

The Oral Examination consisted of a one-to-one interview with an oral examiner lasting approximately fifteen minutes during which candidates answered general questions on specific topics from the syllabus. The General Conversation was the first part of the examination and lasted approximately ten minutes. It was followed by a one minute break to allow candidates to quickly look over the Role Play. It is an integral part of the Oral Examination that candidates complete a Role-Play with the examiner – candidates will have been familiar with this role-play for the two years of the Leaving Certificate programme. Important areas where credit was given included communicative competence, grammatical and phonetic accuracy, syntactic integrity, and linguistic range and fluency. It is essential that teachers emphasise to their pupils the importance of trying to communicate in the Oral Examination and to encourage candidates to try their best, as effort will be rewarded.

The General Conversation carried 70% of the marks allocated to the Oral Examination at both Ordinary Level and Higher Level. The Role Play made up the remaining 30% of marks at both levels.

The Oral Examination was pioneered in the 1980s and when first introduced carried 15% of the total marks. The value of the Oral Examination in terms of stressing the communicative approach to language saw the value of the Oral Examination rise quickly to 25%.

2.2 Performance of Candidates

Satisfaction was expressed by examiners who felt there was a significant improvement in recent years in the fluency of the candidates and a much greater self-confidence in their ability to express themselves. In general, candidates were well-prepared by their teachers and this allowed them to be more relaxed and forthcoming with answers. Examiners commented on the obvious effort made by the candidates prior to the examination which was reflected in their enthusiasm for the Spanish oral examination. The examiners reported on the ability of well-prepared candidates to hold a natural conversation in the target language and also on their capacity to adapt to the various topics as they were introduced. Where candidates did less well, this was largely due to their not understanding the questions asked. This included even rudimentary questions about where they lived, about their school and/or about their pastimes. This reflected their incomplete preparation for the examination. Their answers were often short or mono-syllabic. They displayed a tendency to repeat the vocabulary used by the examiner and it appeared often that they did not understand that vocabulary.

2.3 Analysis of Candidate Performance

2.3.1 Literary Option within the General Conversation

No student took up this option.

2.3.2 General Conversation

The marking scheme distinguished between those candidates whose grasp of Spanish is such that they can adapt and use the language to respond in an authentic manner to the questions asked by the examiner, and those who have learned off large, inflexible 'chunks' of material which they attempted to deliver inappropriately and which they were incapable of adapting. Examiners are experienced in detecting this 'obviously learned-off material' and when they disengaged the candidates in a judicious manner from it, candidates were often found to be struggling. Candidates need to be aware that such stilted use of language is not beneficial to their performance. Examiners were advised to intervene judiciously in such monologues in an attempt to make the conversation more natural and to arrive at a valid assessment of the candidate's proficiency in the language.

To achieve a high mark in the General Conversation, the ability to discuss, describe and narrate, were necessary. Marks were awarded for the range of vocabulary, the range of tenses and the correct usage of these tenses. Also significant were the use of Spanish, accent, intonation and especially spontaneity. The number of candidates with a very secure grasp of oral Spanish is encouraging and the evidence from the Oral Examination is that most of the candidates would be capable of sustaining a conversation with a native speaker. A significant number displayed great flair and skill in the language, displaying highly authentic pronunciation and intonation, and were capable of achieving top marks without ever having visited Spain.

Almost all candidates made great efforts to communicate to the best of their abilities, something which reflects on the emphasis given in the classroom to the communicative domain. Teachers are to be congratulated for their efforts in this regard which presents Spanish as a living and worthwhile language. In many cases the teachers' love of the language and of its culture, (including Latin American culture) has been passed on to their pupils.

2.3.3 Role Play

The role play tests potentially real situations which candidates might encounter in a Spanish-speaking country. Candidates need to be reminded that it is not a translation exercise and that a wide variety of expressions/vocabulary may be deployed to express themselves accurately. Examiners reported that candidates who were well-prepared and familiar with the five '*situaciones*' did very well in this component.

While rote learning of materials was evident, many candidates displayed an ability to elaborate and expand and were particularly competent when coping with the 'unknown' questions at the end of the role play.

Examiners commented that many well-prepared candidates in the lower range achieved good marks in the role play, in some cases achieving almost as many marks as they managed in the general conversation. For many it was an indispensable prop in their attempt to achieve a D grade in Spanish. It was felt that candidates who scored poorly had not prepared sufficiently.

A small percentage of candidates gave the impression that they were seeing the '*situaciones*' for the first time and therefore had little or no preparation completed. They struggled to complete the role plays and were lacking in specific vocabulary and grammatical skills. Examiners also reported that a small number of candidates, despite encouragement from the examiners, refused to do the role play, thereby forfeiting thirty percent of the overall marks. This practice should be avoided, if at all possible, as candidates can sometimes manage to score marks on the 'unknown' questions at the end of the '*situaciones*'.

Interestingly, a small number of native Spanish speakers (usually external candidates unaware of the role play) struggled with the '*situaciones*' because of difficulties they had with the English text. Like all others, they are afforded one minute preparation time.

2.3.4 Problems Noted by Examiners

Grammar

Many examiners made worthwhile comments on the use of grammar in the General Conversation. The best performing candidates were able to use tenses correctly and imaginatively, including the subjunctive, and were very well prepared by their teachers. The ability to compose sentences, from the very simple to the more complex, depends on a sound grasp of the basic structures of the target language. This also allows speakers of varying abilities to respond correctly to the examiner, to cope with the unexpected and to avoid over-reliance on large tracts of learned-off material. The priorities are the main tenses of the verbs (including major irregular verbs), as well as conjunctions, prepositions and subordinate clauses.

With regard to candidates who scored in the mid-range, little use of the Imperfect Tense was evident as most opted excessively for the Preterite. Similarly, it was often difficult to extract the Future tense despite the best effort of examiners: candidates invariably and repeatedly used 'ir + infinitive' (which they are entitled to do). The avoidance of the regular Future ('hablaré, compraré, trabajaré' etc.) was, however, carried through to their use of the Conditional which was commonly confined to 'me gustaría'. Not surprisingly, problems were common with 'ser/estar'. Likewise, 'me gusta', or variations thereof, occurred frequently.

Candidates who scored in the lower range were noticeable in their usage of the present tense for all situations combined with a heavy reliance on the Infinitive. They often repeated the words of the examiner in their answers without understanding what they were saying. As the examination progressed, answers became more disjointed and were often monosyllabic. Nevertheless, it is heartening to report that there were very few candidates unable to attain a D grade in the Oral Examination.

Pronunciation

The following words (amongst others) caused problems with regard to pronunciation:

- *trabajar/trabajo*
- *juego/jugar*
- *difícil*
- *fácil*
- *interesante*
- *biología*
- *geografía*
- *física*
- *irlandés/Irlanda*
- *francés*
- *ciudad*
- *autobús*
- *tiempo*
- *vacaciones*
- *prefiero*
- *zapatos*

- *cumpleaños*
- *junio*
- *julio*
- *agosto*
- *miércoles*
- *jueves*
- *jóvenes*
- *familia*

Vocabulary and other problems

The quality and quantity ranged from the extensive to the inadequate. Many candidates had acquired a wide range of vocabulary, which enabled them to describe and discuss generally a wide variety of subjects or perhaps a limited number of subjects in greater depth. Below are listed some examples highlighting particular areas of difficulties.

- *Mucho* used instead of '*muy*' – when trying to say '*muy interesante*'
- Confusion of '*bien*' and '*bueno*'
- Frequent non agreement of nouns and adjectives
- Questions put by examiners in a Past Tense, although understood by candidates, were frequently replied to in the Present Tense
- Use of '*mañana*' by candidates to indicate the future but followed by the Present Tense
- Incorrect use of articles
- Not using subjunctive when required
- Responding to a question by repeating verb as used by the examiner
- '*¿Dónde vives?*', '*Vives en...*'.

2.4 Conclusions

- It is most encouraging to note that examiners commented on the high quality of Spanish spoken by many candidates and the great efforts made by the vast majority to hold a natural conversation with their examiner.
- Candidates who were well-prepared generally achieved very good marks in both the General Conversation and the Role Play.
- Many candidates had difficulty responding in the Past Tenses.
- There was evidence of candidates attempting to deliver learned-off passages of material inappropriately.
- A lack of command of basic grammar caused significant difficulties for many as the General Conversation progressed.
- Candidates who had not prepared for the Role play lost important marks in the Oral Examination.

2.5 Recommendations to Teachers and Students

Recommendations to Teachers

Teachers should:

- Use Spanish as the language of the classroom which is one of the most effective methods of ensuring that candidates gain the fluency and ease with which to express their ideas, both orally and in writing
- Include an oral component as part of all major school-based tests in First Year and thereafter
- Place emphasis on correct pronunciation right from the beginning of language learning
- Encourage students to look on each question in the General Conversation as an invitation to speak and to demonstrate their vocabulary. Some students are not aware of the importance of expanding their answers on familiar topics
- Ensure students have practice discussing all topics for the General Conversation
- Assist students to develop their answer more where they have an interesting answer to a question (because of some interesting event/fact in their lives), in case it comes up at examination or wherever they get an opportunity to introduce it
- Give students practice in the use of the Past and Future Tenses as much as possible in conversation with students as examiners will put questions to candidates using these tenses
- Dissuade students from delivering long, rehearsed answers to simple questions
- Try to organise mock oral examinations with a colleague in school or with another in a neighbouring school
- Vary the wording and format of questions so that students will not be caught off-guard by the wording of questions by the examiner
- Encourage students to prepare carefully and to interact with the examiner as they progress through the examination
- Ensure that students familiarise themselves with each of the five role plays. This process should usually begin immediately on entering Leaving Certificate Year 1 and not be delayed until Leaving Certificate Year 2
- Encourage Students to become involved in Spanish debates and/or projects
- Encourage students to watch Spanish television to familiarise themselves with sounds, vocabulary etc

- Encourage use of the Internet to learn more about Spanish culture, customs, literature, art and film
- Where practicable, encourage travel to Spain on school tours, exchanges or on holidays
- Where practicable, liaise with the Home Economics teacher(s) and try to have an occasional afternoon or double class learning about, and cooking, Spanish food.

Recommendations to Students

Students should:

- Be willing to speak Spanish as much as possible in class
- Prepare for the Oral Examination from the beginning of Senior Cycle
- Look on each question as an opportunity to show how much you have learned. You get marks for speaking Spanish even if you make mistakes
- Remember that the examiner is positively disposed towards you and wants to give you as many marks as possible. Examiners are trained to give credit for what you say, not to take off marks for any mistakes made
- Learn the Future and Past Tenses because these will be tested
- If you do not understand a question, say so in Spanish and the examiner will rephrase it for you
- Practise Spanish idioms and turns of phrase as they are very beneficial for both the General Conversation and the written examinations
- Attempt to try and express their own ideas rather than attempting to learn off material on specific topics
- Make use of Spanish television, radio and other resources to help gain confidence with the language
- Make use of the Internet for projects and in accessing newspapers and magazines.

3. Ordinary Level Written and Aural

3.1 Introduction

The Spanish Ordinary Level Leaving Certificate examination comprised four components:

Oral Production	80 marks
Reading Comprehension	160 marks
Written Production	60 marks
Listening Comprehension/Aural	100 marks

Number of candidates taking Spanish at Ordinary Level:

Year	Total	% of total Spanish candidature
2003	643	41.45%
2004	743	42.34%
2005	837	42.44%
2006	996	42.00%

Written Paper

The Written Paper contained two sections – **Section A** tested reading comprehension and **Section B** tested written production.

Section A	Section B	Total
160 marks	60 marks	220 marks
50+25+20+25+40	40+20	

Section A: 160 Marks

This Section consisted of five reading comprehension pieces of varying levels of difficulty. The first comprehension had a series of questions in Spanish which had to be answered in Spanish. The subsequent comprehensions had questions in English or Irish which were answered in English or Irish. All the reading comprehensions were to be attempted.

This year the marks were allocated as follows:

Question 1	50 marks
Question 2	25 marks
Question 3	20 marks
Question 4	25 marks
Question 5	40 marks

Section B: 60 Marks

This Section consisted of two questions. Question one was an informal letter which was written in Spanish and was a compulsory item. The second question had two parts and candidates were able to choose between writing a note and writing a diary entry.

Listening Comprehension/Aural Test: 80 Marks

In 2006 the Listening Comprehension had seven parts divided as follows:

1. *Un anuncio*
2. *Diálogo*
3. *Diálogo*
4. *Descriptivo*
5. *Descriptivo*
6. *El Tiempo*
7. *Una noticia*

3.2 Analysis of Candidate Performance

The following table shows the number of candidates who presented for the Ordinary level examination and the grades awarded for 2004, 2005 and 2006.

	Total	A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	E	F	NG
2004	743	0.3	1.7	4.7	7.7	11.8	14.7	11.8	13.3	11.3	7.3	8.7	5.0	1.6	0.0
2005	837	0.7	1.1	4.5	6.5	13.3	13.9	12.5	13.0	11.6	7.6	7.3	6.8	1.1	0.1
2006	996	0.3	1.0	4.8	8.5	13.6	14.5	12.8	11.9	11.9	8.7	6.4	4.9	0.6	0.0

The total number taking the Ordinary Level in 2006 was 996, an increase of 159 candidates over the corresponding figure for 2005. Of the total entry, 67.4% obtained a Grade C or higher. Grade D was achieved by 27% of the candidates and 5.5% of the total candidature obtained Grade E or lower. The results indicate a pattern similar to that of recent years, although the percentage achieving a Grade A has declined somewhat.

3.2.1. Oral Production

A comprehensive account of the functioning of the oral component appears at the beginning of this report.

3.2.2. Reading Comprehension

Question 1. *La vida de un español a los dieciocho años*

The majority of candidates answered quite well, indicating a well-chosen text and an appropriate level of questioning.

Excess and irrelevant quotation (i.e. over-transcription) adversely affected candidate performance to a considerable extent. This was evident in parts (b), (d), (g), (h) and (j), in particular.

In Part (b) many candidates understood that *'Bilbao'* was the answer here. However, some candidates gave too much information, opting to include *'Le gusta vivir allí y dice que es la ciudad donde quiere vivir siempre'*.

Another example of superfluous information was in Part (d) where some candidates included *'los seis juntos'* in their answer.

Yet another example occurred in Part (j) where answers included the full sentence: *'Tiene ordenador en su dormitorio pero prefiere estar con los amigos o ir al salón de la casa a charlar con sus padres'*.

Parts (a), (c), (e), (f) and (i) were the best answered in Question 1. This question which required answers in Spanish, was well-attempted by most candidates. In general, candidates need to be precise with their answers thereby showing their comprehension of detail.

Question 2. *El trabajo deja a los españoles sin ocio, sin familia y sin amigos*

Parts (a) and (b) were well answered. However, some candidates lost marks in (b) by not giving full details: most wrote *'family and friends'* but omitted *'social life'*.

Parts (c) and (d) were challenging for some candidates.

Part (e) was well answered.

Question 3. *Un enorme iceberg pone en peligro la vida de miles de pingüinos*

Part (a) was well answered.

Part (b) required *'160 km in length/160 km long'* in the answer.

Part (c) was well attempted by all.

In Part (d) only those candidates who achieved high marks overall scored full marks.

Question 4. *La vuelta al mundo en bicicleta*

Most candidates scored well in this section.

Part (d) proved difficult for some as not enough information was provided – many omitted the information that he would like to learn.

Question 5. *Aprehendidos 250 kilos de cocaine en un barco cerca de Llanes*

Generally, this question was well answered.

In Part (a) the majority scored 3 marks: *'more than'* was required to be awarded full marks.

In Parts (b), (c), (d), (e) and (f) many candidates scored full marks but some lost marks in Part (e) by not specifying *'since'*.

Part (g) required full details and this proved difficult for some.

Part (h), by contrast, was answered correctly by virtually all candidates.

Diligent practice with authentic Spanish texts will improve answering in this Section.

Examiners pointed out that the questions/answers did not follow sequentially through the text and may have created difficulty for some candidates.

3.2.3. Written Production

This section clearly highlighted the various categories of ability of candidates examined. Generally, those candidates who achieved high marks overall performed very well in Section B by being more meticulous and by paying more attention to detail, thus scoring higher grades overall. This was in sharp contrast to those candidates who did not achieve so well, a very few of whom did not even attempt answers. Some of those that did, tended to skim over questions and answer with a lot less accuracy. They also tended not to develop points and they experienced grammatical difficulties, especially with tenses. Many candidates had no clear idea of the basic verbs or prepositions. Nevertheless, despite these drawbacks, some candidates managed to make a good attempt to convey their opinions and ideas, particularly in the letter, and were rewarded for their efforts.

Question 1. Informal Letter

In the main, the five turns of the letter were attempted by all. While grammar and tenses were not always correct, candidates obtained marks by being able to get the message across and through good use of vocabulary:

- Spelling was a challenge for some, notable examples being *'agosto'* and *'vacaciones'*
- *'School finished'* was a problem for many
- *'You have started'* caused similar problems
- On the fourth turn, many candidates found the Conditional + Infinitive within their grasp
- On the fifth turn, only those candidates who achieved well overall attempted to develop points here with some explanation of what they would like to do on their holidays – common phrases included *'iré a la playa'* and *'iré a los bares y restaurantes'*.

Question 2(a). The Note

Overall, this was well attempted. Difficulties were encountered with ‘*sunbathing*’, ‘*catch*’ and ‘*bus*’. For example, instead of ‘*coger un autobús*’, many offered ‘*iré en autobús*’. ‘*He decidido*’ also proved difficult, and many candidates did not use ‘*hacer*’ with ‘*sol*’. Otherwise there were no major problems.

Question 2(b). Diary Entry

Most difficulty was experienced in the first two tasks. Adequate vocabulary was used by most but some problems were experienced with details about Granada and with ‘*important sights*’. ‘*Hay*’ was not known by a high number of candidates and they struggled with an alternative. No past tenses were needed.

3.2.4. Listening Comprehension/Aural

It is clear that teachers and candidates are spending a lot of time and effort on the Listening Comprehension and the marks achieved by candidates indicate that this thorough preparation paid off in 2006. However, teachers need to emphasise that specific answers are vital. Some candidates failed to give sufficient detail in their answers. Care needs to be taken in reading the questions accurately and in maintaining concentration throughout the test. Constant practice here will achieve the desired results. It has to be realised that only answers in Irish or English are acceptable.

Question 1. *Anuncio: Charlas por internet*

Some students did less well here than in other parts, possibly because they had not settled fast enough before the first listening.

In (a) ‘*meet friends*’ was a common answer. Few managed to give the complete answer and answered with ‘*chat to new friends*’.

In (b) most candidates managed the concept of changing one’s name but not one’s age.

Part (c) was very well answered even by less able candidates.

Question 2. *Diálogo: Luis va a una fiesta*

Part (a) produced good, general answers but many answers lacked the required specifics. Parts (b) and (d) were well answered.

Part (c) proved to be problematic for many. A lot mentioned ‘*music*’, ‘*helped with music*’, or ‘*helped with food and drinks*’. The vast majority did not understand the verb ‘*escoger*’.

Question 3. *Diálogo: Una astronauta española que vive en una nave espacial*

This was the best answered question of the seven aural sections with all candidates doing well in all parts. A notable exception was Part (a), where several candidates put down *14*. This serves to highlight the need to cover the basics.

Question 4. *Descriptivo: Preparándose para los exámenes*

Parts (a), (b) and (c) were all well answered but some candidates did not get ‘*school library*’ in (a).

Part (d) proved challenging and was a good example of the lack of precision when answering. Many wrote ‘*students/kids/children/people/others playing football*’. However, a specific answer ‘*boys*’ or ‘*boys and girls*’ was required.

Question 5. *Descriptivo: Prohibido fumar en los trenes españoles*

Part (a) proved difficult for some as they opted to put down the names of both countries in Spanish, *Cuba*, of course, not creating a problem.

Question 6. *El Tiempo*

All students did well in this section, clearly reflecting very thorough classroom preparation.

Question 7. *Una noticia: un famoso traje de novia*

Overall this proved difficult for most candidates with a 50% success rate. Part (a) proved to be the easiest of the sections.

3.3 Conclusions

- The 2006 examination paper proved fair and accessible to Ordinary Level students. Examiners’ reactions to the examination were generally positive as texts seemed suitable for this level.
- Candidates did best at the Oral Examination, Reading Comprehensions and the Listening Comprehension.
- The Written Production was the area which proved to be the most challenging. It will remain so until basic grammar skills improve, an aspect which will require great perseverance of teachers at this level.
- A weakness in vocabulary prevented some candidates from maximising marks in the reading comprehensions.

3.4 Recommendations to Teachers and Students

- When practising for the aural examination care should be taken to ensure repeated practice at numbers, dates and times.
- Students should try and be settled at the start of the aural examination and should concentrate throughout the aural test. They should be careful when writing down the time/date/number heard as the first one may not be the one required. Candidates should keep checking their answers as the CD is replayed.
- Teachers should strive to cultivate greater grammar awareness in students at this level.
- Teachers should try and develop in their students the skills to extract precise and relevant information from texts/CDs.
- Candidates should be exposed to a wide variety of authentic texts.
- Particular attention should be paid to both the Future and Past Tenses.
- Students should be constantly reminded to answer the Reading Comprehension questions in the language required.

4. Higher Level Written and Aural

4.1 Introduction

The Spanish Higher Level Leaving Certificate examination comprised four components:

Oral Production	100 marks
Reading Comprehension [incl. Literary Option]	170 marks
Written Production	50 marks
Listening Comprehension/Aural	80 marks

Number of candidates taking Spanish at Higher Level

Year	Total	% of total Spanish candidature
2003	908	58.54%
2004	1012	57.66%
2005	1135	57.55%
2006	1375	57.99%

Written Paper

The Written Paper contained three sections:

Section A	Section B	Section C	Total
70 marks	100 marks	50 marks	220 marks
50+20	15+15+5+15+50	30+20	

Section A: 70 Marks

Question 1, (50 marks). Candidates had a choice between the Prescribed Literature, *La aventura de Saíd*, and a Journalistic Text.

Question 2, (20 Marks). In 2006, this comprised two short information retrieval comprehensions with three questions on each passage.

Section B: 100 Marks

This tested both reading comprehension and written production. There were four main questions and these were structured to examine the candidate's ability to understand a lengthy authentic text in the target language.

A fifth question, (the Link Question), challenged the candidates to express their opinion in Spanish on a related topic. The importance of this fifth question was emphasised by the fact that it carried 50 marks, the equivalent of the four preceding questions combined. Candidates hoping for a high grade in Spanish must be able to attempt this question in a meaningful way as it is a key element of the examination. However, care must be taken when managing their time, that candidates do not spend too much time on this component.

Section C: 220 Marks

In this section, which tested written production, candidates chose two of four different types of productive Spanish writing.

In Question 1, candidates chose between **Dialogue Construction** and **Letter Writing**.

In Question 2, there was a choice between a **Diary Entry** and a **Note**.

Note: In the productive writing sections of the paper, equal marks were allocated for content (including communication) and language.

Listening Comprehension/Aural Test

In 2006, the Listening Comprehension had seven parts divided as follows:

1. *Un anuncio*
2. *Diálogo*
3. *Diálogo*
4. *Descriptivo*
5. *Descriptivo*
6. *El Tiempo*
7. *Una noticia*

4.2 Analysis of Candidate Performance

The following table shows the number of candidates who presented for the Higher level examination and the grades awarded for 2004, 2005 and 2006.

	Total	A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	E	F	NG
2004	1,012	10.6	7.3	7.1	9.2	9.1	11.7	11.5	9.6	10.7	5.4	5.6	1.9	0.4	0.0
2005	1,135	7.5	6.9	7.8	10.4	9.5	11.9	12.0	9.6	11.4	6.9	4.5	1.8	0.0	0.0
2006	1,375	9.7	9.7	7.7	9.1	9.3	9.2	12.2	10.6	9.3	8.5	3.3	1.2	0.1	0.0

The total number of candidates was 1,375, an increase of 240 candidates over the corresponding figure for 2005. Of the total figure, a Grade C or higher was obtained by 77.5% of the candidature. Grade D was obtained by 21.1% of candidates and this was roughly in line with previous years. Grade E or less was obtained by 2.2% of candidates.

While the above statistics are broadly in line with previous years, two things need to be commented upon. Firstly, Grade A was achieved by 19.1% of candidates and was

significantly up on previous years. This reflects the continuing presence of increasing numbers of Spanish and Latin American nationals presenting at this level. Secondly, it has to be pointed out that a large number of candidates in the D3 sub-grade was very close to Grade E, indicating that perhaps they were at the limit of their abilities and taking Spanish at the wrong level. This is something that teachers and candidates need to bear in mind when deciding at which level to take Leaving Certificate Spanish. A number of Examiners commented in their reports on this difficulty.

4.2.1. Oral Production

A comprehensive account of the functioning of the oral component appears at the beginning of this report.

4.2.2. Written Paper-Section A and Section B

Section A

Question 1(a): Prescribed Literature: *La aventura de Saíd*: Josep Lorman

This novel was examined for the first time in 2006. It was selected by approximately 4% of the candidature. Nevertheless, those that did take this option scored very highly as they showed a clear understanding of the novel. Some candidates attempted this option without having read the novel, something which became readily apparent when they attempted the global question.

The book is short, topical, contemporary and well within the capabilities of higher level Leaving Certificate students. It offers teachers an opportunity to explore new possibilities with their students as it is a novel to which the students can readily relate. The vocabulary also makes it accessible to most at Higher Level.

Question 1(b): Journalistic Text: *El policía que rescató a diez estudiantes*

This was an interesting text with a clever storyline and was easy to read. Most candidates did not manage to score full marks because of the amount of detail required. Nevertheless, the average score was 40/50.

Question 1(a): This was answered well by nearly all candidates.

Question 1(d): Here only a few of the candidates understood '*disfrazado*'.

Question 2 (a): The word '*tranquilizar*' was correctly substituted for '*calmar*' by most of the candidates.

Question 2 (c): Here '*audaz*' was understood only by a small number of candidates. The majority of whom mistakenly wrote '*portavoz*'.

Question 3 (a): This was handled well by most of the candidates.

Question 3 (b): Most found this hard to manage. The two words that caused difficulty were

'maniobre' and *'conseguir'*.

Question 3 (c): The word *'paso'* confused most candidates and many failed to understand the meaning of *'entrara'* in this context.

Question 4: This was attempted by most of the candidates and, in fact, the majority scored fairly well. However, there were still a few who failed to follow the instructions given and translated the phrase. This is a recurring problem and students need to be reminded of the instruction: *'Explica (o expresa de otro modo) EN ESPAÑOL una de las frases siguientes:'* in other words, a translation is not what is sought.

Question 2: Short Comprehension Passages

In 2006, as in many previous years, these passages represented a very real opportunity for candidates to achieve a D grade on a paper where a lower grade might have been awarded were it not for these passages. This happened again this year for three main reasons:

- Firstly, the passages gave some students a chance to get started on something that was not too demanding and thus had a settling effect. This was clearly seen in that many candidates answered this question first.
- Secondly, because the comprehensions were short, a candidate who did not understand one passage, had the chance of falling back on the other, and thereby accumulated some very valuable marks.
- Thirdly, some students who performed reasonably well at the oral and aural components were not as well equipped as others when it came to dealing with lengthy written texts, texts that they might find difficult to cope with even in their mother tongue. Therefore, they usually found these passages more to their liking and abilities.

Question 2 (a): Una diseñadora famosa

Part (i): Most of the candidates understood this question.

Part (ii): In this part most of the candidates realised that the client helped her get the money back. However, some missed out on how she got the money back because they did not understand *'abogados'*.

Part (iii): Practically all candidates scored the full 4 marks here.

Question 2 (b): Irlanda es elegido el mejor país para vivir en 2007

Part (i): Here the word *'mezcla'* was not understood by a number of candidates. Although they understood the idea of a thriving economy, they did not realise that *'tradicionales'* was an adjective and, therefore, translated it as traditions. Similarly, *'valores'* was misunderstood by many.

Part (ii): There were 5 choices here and, because only 2 were required, most of the candidates managed to score full marks.

Part (iii): A lot of candidates understood '*nivel de vida*' to be '*quality of life*' and '*not standard of living*' and therefore lost marks. However, a surprisingly large number understood that '*va de mal en peor*' meant that the standard of living was getting worse.

Section B

Long Comprehension Passage: *Esclavos del Siglo XXI* - (Questions 1-4)

This was answered well by most candidates (particularly Questions 1 and 4). The average mark for this section (at 36/50) was higher than in many previous years.

Question 1: This was well answered and many candidates who did not achieve high marks overall gained 9/15 marks. The major setback for the majority that lost marks was either putting in extra words or leaving out essential words.

Question 2: As always, this question challenged candidates. Candidates with a good command of English were able to use the same to good advantage in giving excellent answers which showed they understood the subtleties involved in the Spanish text and were able to convey these accurately in English.

Many candidates did not realise that '*dificultan*' was a verb and also had difficulty with '*escolarización*'.

In part (c) the most difficult words proved to be '*deuda*' and '*imprescindibles*'. It is worth noting in passing that '*imprescindibles*' was not understood by many: this is particularly interesting as in several cases the word was used by the same candidates with enthusiasm in the Link Question. It is a classic example of a word learned off but the meaning of which is clearly not understood by those using it.

Question 3: This question proved easier than previously with the majority getting at least 3/5 marks. Once again lack of precise material lost marks here. The most challenging word was '*ingresos*'.

Question 4: This did not create a difficulty for most candidates.

4.2.3. Written Production Section B

The Link Question: (Section B, Question 5)

In this section candidates were asked to express their personal opinions on a statement related to the comprehension passage. It is important to realise that candidates are not expected to refer to the comprehension text (or to quote from it) as the statements are meant to act as a starting point or springboard for their own ideas. The candidates were assessed on the coherence, relevance and accuracy of their writing. Candidates need to be taught to express their opinions in a coherent way, devoid of inappropriate learned off sentences/paragraphs.

As in previous years, candidates were given a choice of two topics. In 2006 these were:

Tener un empleo no perjudica los estudios

and

Tenemos que hacernos consumidores responsables

Both choices were very accessible to candidates, particularly the first one.

Of those who chose the former, many candidates wrote good essays and approached the subject from a personal point of view. This is the preferred way of dealing with this component and is the one most likely to maximise the candidate's opportunities of being successful.

Those who did less well in this section experienced one, or more, of a number of difficulties. Many candidates:

- (a) did not understand the word '*perjudica*'
- (b) reproduced stock phrases or paragraphs of learned-off material
- (c) wrote about '*laboral infantil*'
- (d) transcribed sentences or picked out bits of the text here and there as they wrote their essay
- (e) did not express their own opinions on the topic.

The second option proved more difficult than the first. However, several candidates introduced information on fair trade, recycling and care of the environment and did very well as a result.

The most common difficulties were the following:

- (a) '*consumidores*' was not understood by a large number
- (b) some understood that this was a consumer but from their essays it was apparent they did not understand what a consumer meant in English
- (c) whole essays were written about responsibility without any connection to consumption
- (d) many of these essays included phrases and, indeed paragraphs, of learned-off material on responsibility in general. Sentences were connected by using 'y' and '*pero*' but with little evidence of any obvious coherence or overall meaning.

This year there were three main problems with the Link Question:

- Candidates did not fully understand the title and often wrote quite good essays on the wrong topic.
- There was a strong tendency to transcribe sentences/ phrases from the text rather than produce original material.
- Candidates used so many learned-off phrases that their opinion piece made little sense. The candidates' opinions are required, whether for or against the topic, or whether they incorporate ideas from both sides of the argument.

When candidates cannot deal with basic everyday grammar and vocabulary, they sometimes resort to learning off stock phrases/paragraphs/essays. Because they do not understand this material, they cannot use it purposefully. The result is a mix of often meaningless, irrelevant and incoherent sentences which score very few marks. These candidates are, in many cases, sitting Leaving Certificate Spanish at the wrong level.

4.2.4 Section C Written Production

This was the most challenging part of the examination for candidates because it discriminated accurately between the different levels of proficiency. A number of examiners commented on the excellent grammar skills of some candidates but, unfortunately, these were very much in the minority. There is a need for candidates to develop a basic grasp of simple Spanish grammar as otherwise they will have great difficulty in expressing themselves. In many cases a good knowledge of the foundations of grammar would allow candidates to get their point across (without the need for elaborate constructions). Candidates without an understanding of the fundamentals of the language will always find it very challenging to negotiate this section of the Higher Level examination.

In order to achieve high marks in this section, candidates needed to have developed their grammatical skills and their range of vocabulary. They should learn to express their own ideas and to avoid approaching this section with inappropriate learned-off material. Another item to be kept in mind is the need to communicate rather than translate in Section C.

Question 1(a): Dialogue Construction

The majority of candidates in 2006, as in many previous years, chose the **Dialogue Construction**. However, very few managed to get 6/6 for each turn because of the amount of information required and the grammatical and/or vocabulary challenges involved.

Common grammar errors included the following:

- *Sacar fotos*
- *Subir al autobús*
- Problems with *fui* and *fue*
- *Me di cuenta de que*
- *Recuerdo sacar*
- *No lo tenían*
- *Es posible que...* followed by the subjunctive
- Use of perfect subjunctive
- *Sé que.*

Vocabulary problems:

- *Una cámara*
- *Un proyecto*
- *Con urgencia*
- *Un bar*
- *Seguro/seguramente/ciertamente*
- *Una taza de café*

- *Darse Cuenta*
- *La oficina de objetos perdidos.*

The use of '*estar*' for a place/location was a problem for many candidates. Similarly, the difference between '*saber*' and '*conocer*' was not understood by many.

Question 1(b): Letter Writing

Quite a few candidates selected the Letter Writing option in 2006 but, unfortunately, too many approached it as a translation exercise. This was a lost opportunity for a lot of candidates as this component allowed for the use of imagination and gave the candidates a large degree of autonomy in the use of vocabulary selected. Although this is a guided letter, candidates have extensive opportunities when it comes to how they develop and expand the various points. Teachers might usefully bring this more forcefully to their students' attention and encourage them to be more creative with their answers. Most candidates who underperformed here did so as a result of translating and not developing the points.

This question also illustrated the point that candidates did not know how to use '*gustar*' (and similar verbs) as they were not able to say '*no les gusta*'.

Marks were also lost because candidates did not know the mechanics of setting out a formal letter.

Vocabulary

The most common problems arose when trying to say '*adolocentes*', '*compartir*', '*la música*', and '*la ropa*'. The latter comes up on a regular basis and is often put in the plural, as are the accompanying adjectives and verb.

Question 2(a): Diary Entry and Question 2(b): Note

In 2006, both these options were very manageable as was borne out by the fact that even the candidates who did not achieve high marks overall were rewarded with high marks in this question.

Candidates showed considerably greater creativity here than they did with the Letter Writing component.

Common Errors

- Lack of agreement of adjectives, something which is inevitable if the candidates do not know whether the nouns they are using are masculine or feminine.
- Gender of '*discoteca*' and confusing it with '*un disco*'.
- Difficulty with '*I have been invited*'.
- Problem in getting across '*as usual*'. The use of '*estar*' for place.
- Incorrect verb usage.

4.2.5 Listening Comprehension/Aural

Question 1. *Anuncio: Charlas por internet*

This was a very appropriate passage to ease the candidate into the Listening Comprehension and to become focussed. Many candidates liked the topic as they felt it was relevant to their lives.

A number of candidates lost marks here mainly because of the lack of detail by omitting precise information: ‘*new friends*’; ‘*exchange of information*’.

In (d) ‘*You can be identified*’ was frequently left out.

Question 2. *Diálogo: Luis va a una fiesta*

This was well answered by most candidates. A number of candidates lost marks here mainly because of lack of specific details:

In (a): ‘*home of a school friend*’ was required.

In (b): ‘*He was the only boy among a group of girls*’.

In (c): ‘*He selected the music*’.

Question 3. *Diálogo: Una astronauta española que vive en una nave espacial*

In (b) a number of candidates did not understand ‘*atado a la cama*’.

In (d) many candidates did not understand ‘*tierra*’.

Question 4. *Descriptivo: Preparándose para los exámenes*

This was well answered.

In (c) many had difficulty with ‘*reservada*’.

In (d) the most common mistake was that candidates missed the word ‘*work*’ and instead answered about football.

Question 5. *Descriptivo: Prohibido fumar en los trenes españoles*

Some found this challenging.

In (a) some candidates missed the meaning of ‘*sistema de ventilación*’.

In (b) a number of candidates did not understand ‘*reservar asientos*’.

Parts (c) and (d) was answered well.

Question 6. *El Tiempo*

Most candidates managed very good scores here thanks to thorough preparation by their teachers. However, despite similar items on the weather in past examination papers, some missed basic vocabulary.

In (a) some did not understand '*cielos despejados*' or '*vientos flojos*'.

In (b) there were similar problems with '*chubascos fuertes*'.

In (c) some candidates failed to mention minimum and maximum temperatures.

Question 7. *Una noticia: un famoso traje de novia*

This section tended to be either well answered or badly answered.

In (a) '*suspendió*' proved very difficult for some.

In (b) many did not understand '*el traje de novia que compró ella misma*'.

In (c) the difficulties were '*puesto en un armario*', '*olvidado*', '*envuelto en papel*' and '*en su caja original*'.

For (d), as noted in the marking scheme, the question was void and the marks allocated were distributed between (a), (b) and (c).

4.3 Conclusions

- Overall, most involved felt the examination was fair and accessible. Examiners expressed satisfaction with the comprehension passages and thought the candidates were examined on a wide range of topics.
- While the comprehension passages were accessible to most candidates, the Journalistic Text was considered more manageable than the '*Esclavos del Siglo XXI*'.
- Candidates who gave 'the meaning in context' in the comprehension passages, rather than those who translated word for word, scored higher marks.
- A significant number of candidates did not cope well with the written paper and succeeded in passing the examination thanks to their marks in the oral and aural examinations.
- Candidates performed very well in the Listening Comprehension/Aural section in 2006 and their marks in this component certainly boosted their overall results. The element of choice proved helpful for many candidates.

4.4 Recommendations to Teachers and Students

- Candidates should be advised about selecting the appropriate level at which to sit the examination.
- The importance of a strong foundation in the basics of Spanish grammar should be emphasised.
- Teachers should examine the possibility of getting their students to attempt the new Prescribed Literature option, '*La aventura de Saíd*', as it is very relevant to events in Spain today. Another reason that should be emphasised for doing the novel is the undoubted sense of achievement felt by students who finish reading, what is for many, their first book in a foreign language. It is a real confidence-booster for the student and is a good introduction to the literature and culture of Spain. It can also be a very rich source of possibilities for the teacher to branch out from the more usual classroom activities and methodologies. Time and effort spent on the novel should also be beneficial when it comes to the comprehension passages.
- Students should concentrate on building up their vocabulary and get practice using it in simple, uncomplicated sentences.
- Spanish should become, as far as possible, the language of the classroom from the time students begin their second level education.
- Candidates should be careful not to quote too much from the text when following instructions such as '*escribe en español las frases/las palabras del texto que tengan el mismo sentido que las siguientes*'. Candidates should only quote the relevant phrase or words, as marks will be deducted for quoting too much from the text.
- Teachers should encourage students to listen to cassettes/CDs from previous examinations.
- Students should benefit from plenty of practice at the careful reading of examination questions.
- Candidates, in general, should be advised not to write too much on the Link Question. Those who write two or three foolscap pages in this section are losing out on time etc that might be spent on other questions. Reference to the text is not essential in answering the Link Question.
- Time management was an issue for some candidates, particularly those who spent too much time on the Link Question. This was most noticeable when candidates attempted questions in Section C – in many cases greater care and more urgent attention were required in this section. Candidates should consider alternative ways of expressing an idea before immediately writing a rushed answer. Too many are also resorting to translating in this section.
- Students should be encouraged to express their own opinions and ideas rather than writing meaningless learned-off material. There is a great need for relevance and

authenticity in both language and content. The use of large chunks of learned-off material was rarely helpful and most often counterproductive. Stimulus material at Higher Level is prepared so as to elicit a personal response. It rarely accommodates memorised paragraphs or phrases.

5. Exemplars of Standard (Ordinary Level)

(All of the candidates' own spelling, punctuation etc. have been retained.)

Section B

1. Write a letter to your pen pal in Spanish telling him/her about your summer so far. (40 Marks)

Use all the points mentioned below:

- Say that school finished a week ago.
- You have started work in a local shop.
- You are happy now because you earn some money.
- Mention something you would like to buy and why.
- Describe your holiday plans for August.

Querido Juan:

20 Junio 2006

Yo terminé la escuela hace una semana. Yo he comenzado trabajo en una tienda local. Estoy Feliz ahora porque yo puedo ganar algún dinero. Me gustaría comprar un nuevo coche porque yo podría ir conduciendo a la ciudad de Dublin cuando tengo una semana libre.

Mis planes para las vacaciones de Agosto son. Quiero ir a Espana particularmente a Málaga en el sur de España para descansar despues de mis exámenes. Durante este mes de Agosto voy a leer algunos libros que yo he comprador esta semana.

Entonces Juan nos verémos.

Saludos de....

(Marks 34)

Comment: Candidate has dealt with all five turns in a very competent fashion.

Communicative intention is clear throughout the letter. Vocabulary is appropriate and, despite some small errors, there is some very nice usage of phrases.

Querido john,

Hola ¿Que tal estas? Gracias por tu carta recibo el semmana pasada. Tengo no tuve Colegio para un semana. Tengo un trabajo en una tienda cerca mi casa. Estoy muy feliz porque tengo dinero para mi. Quiero el nuevo 'Kelly Clarkson' CD porque me gusta escuchar a su musica. En Augusto mi y dos de mí amigas quieres ir a salou para dos semanas en el sol!

Escribame pronto!

(Marks 19)

2. Attempt either (a) or (b).

(20 marks)

(a) You are spending three weeks with Paco, your Spanish friend, at his home in Spain. While he is shopping with his mother, you leave a note, in Spanish, including all of the following details:

- It is very sunny today so you have decided to go sunbathing.
- You are going to catch a bus to the beach.
- You will meet some of your Spanish friends there.
- You expect to be back at around 7 o'clock.

La familia-

Hace mucho sol hoy y fue a la playa porque me gustaba tomar el sol.

Cogeré un autobús a la playa. Estaré en Málaga con unos amigos españoles y volveré a casa a las siete(más o menos).

¡Abrazos!

(Marks 15)

Comment: Although this is a short note, it addresses all the required turns.

The candidate scores highly because of accuracy: ‘*Hace mucho sol*’, ‘*Cogeré*’, ‘*Estaré*’, and ‘*volveré*’.

Paco,

Esta un día bonito, voy a ir a la playa en un autobús. Me encuentro Esteban y Marisol a la playa y volver a casa a las siete. Tengo mi teléfono móvil.

(Marks 9)

OR

(b) You have just arrived in Granada where you are going to spend three weeks with your Spanish friend, Carmen. Write a diary entry, in Spanish, including all of the following details:

- Granada is a lovely city – give two details.
- Say you are going to visit the important sights tomorrow.
- The weather is very hot but there is a swimming pool near your house.
- You hope to speak a lot of Spanish with Carmen and her family.

Me gusta Granada.

Mi visitar TV stations set

Tá hot y playa cerca mi casa

Llaman Espanola tú familia.

(Marks 3)

Comment: The candidate found it difficult to cope with the Diary Entry.

6. Exemplars of Standard (Higher Level)

(All of the candidates' own spelling, punctuation etc. have been retained.)

Section A

Question 1(a): Prescribed Literature: *La aventura de Saíd*: Josep Lorman

Because this was the first year that this particular text appeared on the examination and because so few candidates attempted this question, it was not possible to obtain suitable exemplar material.

Question 1(b): Journalistic Text: *El policía que rescató a diez estudiantes*

Question 1(a): *He went into a university room with a gun and stopped 10 students from leaving the building. He screamed out that he wanted one and a half million euros or he'd harm the students.*

(Marks 4/4)

Comment: Everything was clearly understood and nothing was omitted.

Question 1(b): *He tried to calm the situation by going to the other side of the door of the classroom and talking with Roberto.*

(Marks 4/4)

Question 1(c): *That if Roberto let Carlos do a little bit of work, Carlos could get one million euros for Roberto. But Roberto would have to give something in exchange so that everyone would see that Roberto was a good person. 6 of the 10 students were thus let go.*

(Marks 4/4)

Question 1(d): *He suggested that the hostages were hungry and that he would bring them food. An agent, disguised as a pizza delivery man, and Carlos, brought the food to the classroom, and when Roberto opened the door they attacked him and freed the hostage.*

(Marks 4/4)

Question 1(e): *He failed his summer exams and he needed money to pay for repeating the course.*

(Marks 4/4)

Comment: Either part of the above answer was sufficient for full marks.

Question 4:

Hubo un feliz enlace:

Al final todo salió bien:

(Marks 6/6)

Todo terminó bien':

(Marks 6/6)

Se lanzó a una aventura desesperada:

Tomó un riesgo en desesperación:

(Marks 5/6)

He ventured on a desperate adventure: (Marks 0/6)

Comment: The answer had to be in Spanish.

Section B

Esclavos del Siglo XXI

The Link Question (Section B Question 5) (50 marks)

Tener un empleo no perjudica los estudios

No estoy de acuerdo con esta afirmación. No cabe duda de que estudiar utiliza mucha energía y por eso para sacar buenas notas, no es una buena idea intentar a trabajar también.

Por ejemplo, personalmente, yo no trabajo porque soy estudiante y entiendo que es importante que dirija mi atención a los estudios si quiero ir a la universidad. Tengo que pasar seis horas por lo menos en el colegio cada día y después siempre hay deberes para hacer. Si tuviera empleo, no podría hacerlos correctamente.

Pero sé que tengo suerte porque aquí en Irlanda entendemos la importancia de la educación y el gobierno le pone énfasis. En otros países del mundo, la educación es un lujo y tener un trabajo se trata de sobrevivencia. A mi juicio, eso no es justo. Todo el mundo debería tener derechos iguales relacionado a la educación. Creo que debería haber un ley mundial que no permite a los niños trabajar antes de los 16 años y cualquier país que no lo obseise debería pagar una multa a las Naciones Unidas.

Es imposible trabajar y estudiar al mismo tiempo y los jóvenes no deberían tener que elegir entre los dos. Lo más importante es recibir una buena educación cuando eres joven para que puedas conseguir un buen empleo en el futuro.

(Marks 50– Content 25, Language 25)

Comment: This was a clear and straightforward argument – communicative intention was never in doubt. The appropriate register was used. Good use of idiomatic Spanish displayed. Personal opinions and experience were given. Points were well developed, moving effortlessly from personal comment to a global context. There was no over dependence on rote-learned material or inappropriate inclusion of Subjunctive.

Tener un empleo no perjudica los estudios

Yo no estoy de acuerdo con la afirmación de arriba. Sí que tener un empleo perjudica los estudios.

En primer lugar, es muy difícil trabajar y estudiar al mismo tiempo. Muchos jóvenes dicen que no hay problema. Dicen que es muy fácil trabajar los fines de semana y algunas tardes mientras que van al colegio durante el día. Yo dudo mucho que eso sea la verdad. Uno tiene que ver los resultados de estos jóvenes. Sí que habrá unos estudiantes con buenos resultados en sus exámenes pero la mayoría de ellos tendrán malos resultados. Eso es terrible.

Es más, si un joven tiene un empleo, tiene que trabajar y estudiar. Eso daña la salud. El joven va al colegio y después de volver a casa, tiene que ir a trabajar. ¿Cuándo tiene tiempo para descansar? ¿Cuánto tiempo dedica al ocio y a su vida social? ¡No mucho tiempo! Por eso, no estudia bien. Es un desastre.

Yo entiendo el que los jóvenes quieran trabajar para tener dinero para sus gastos personales. ¡Yo también soy joven! Es muy importante para ellos. No creo que haya problema en relación con el trabajo durante el año escolar si uno está en 'el año de transición'. Yo mismo trabajé en una tienda durante ese año. Da igual – no perjudica los estudios. Sin embargo, uno no debería trabajar durante los otros años escolares. Uno debería ahorrar mucho dinero durante los veranos y 'el año de transición', entonces no tendrá ningunos problemas en lo que se refiere al dinero.

Al fin y al cabo, yo creo que tener un empleo perjudica muchísimo los estudios. A pesar de eso, muchos jóvenes tienen un empleo durante el año escolar. A mi parecer, no vale la pena. (Marks 47 – Content 24, Language 23)

Comment: A number of personal opinions were given. Good use of idiomatic Spanish displayed. There was a good variety of tenses in the piece and these were well handled. There were some complex sentences involved. Few mistakes in verbs, agreement or spelling. There was an appropriate use of Subjunctive and was not overdone.

Section C

In this section the answers of two different candidates have been placed, one after the other, to help illustrate the difference in skill level and ability to cope with the challenges.

Question 1(a): Dialogue Construction (30 marks)

You are visiting Madrid and you realize that you have lost your camera. You go to the Police Station to report the loss.

Complete IN SPANISH your side of the following DIALOGUE.

First Turn (6 marks)

Policía Buenos días. ¿En qué puedo servirle?

Tú Explain that you have lost your camera and say how you feel. You need to find it urgently. You are doing an important project and you need to take some photos of the city centre.

Buenos días. Hoy desgraciadamente he perdido mi cámara y estoy triste y enfadado. También necesito encontrarla cuanto antes, es muy urgente. Ahora, estoy haciendo un proyecto muy importante y necesito sacar algunas fotos en el centro de la ciudad.

(Marks 6/6)

Hola, me perdido mi camera, y estoy muy triste y preocupado. Tengo que retornarlo. Estoy en un proyecto muy importante y tengo que fotografía el centro del ciudad.

(Marks: 3/6)

Second Turn (6 marks)

Policía ¿Cuándo fue la última vez que la vio?

Tú You have no idea. When you got on the bus this morning you definitely had it. Mention two places you visited and say you remember taking photos there.

No tengo ni idea. Cuando cogí el autobús esta mañana, la tuve. Visitó el Palacio Real y la Catedral y recuerdo sacando fotos allí.

(Marks 5/6)

No sé. Tengo el camera en el autobus este mañana. Estuve en el plaza de toros y en el calle principal y me fotografía estes países.

(Marks 2/6)

Comment: All three preterite verbs were missed. As well as that, there was non-agreement with ‘*este mañana*’, ‘*el plaza*’ and ‘*el calle*’. These latter mistakes are very glaring ones for a candidate doing Higher Level Spanish as all of these words would be familiar to most First Year pupils.

Third Turn (6 marks)

Policía Y después ¿qué hizo usted?

Tú Say you did some shopping in the Corte Inglés and later you went to a bar to have a cup of coffee. Suddenly you noticed you did not have your camera.

Pues entonces fui de compras en el Corte Inglés y más tarde fui a un bar para tomar un café. De pronto vi que no tuve mi cámara.

(Marks 6/6)

Fui de compras en el Corte Inglés y mas tardi fui a un bar como un taza de café. Realizó que no tuvé el camero.

(Marks 3/6)

Fourth Turn (6 marks)

Policía ¿Recuerda haber estado en algún sitio donde haya podido dejarla por equivocación?

Tú You know you didn't leave it in the Corte Inglés because you went to the Lost Property Office and they didn't have it there. It's possible that someone stole it in the bar.

Buenos días, sé que no la dejé en el Corte Inglés porque fui a la Oficina de Objetos Perdidos y no la tuvieron allí. Es posible que alguien la robó en el bar.
(Marks 5/6)

Sabé que no en el Corté Inglés porqué fui a la oficina de veces perdidos y no era en la oficina. Es posible que una persona desapareció con mi camera en el bar.
(Marks 3/6)

Fourth Turn (6 marks)

Policía Si quiere, puede describirme la cámara por si la traen aquí, a la Comisaría. ¿Cuánto vale y dónde la compró?

Tú Describe your camera: colour, size and make. Say what you paid for it and where you bought it. Tell the police officer where you can be contacted.

Sí claro. Mi cámara es negra, pequeña y es de la marca Casio. Me costó 400 euros y la compré en Nueva York. Si la encuentran, se pueden poner en contacto, llamando al 626746451. Gracias.
(Marks 6/6)

Mi camera es un Kodak. Es muy pequeño y es blanco con un lenso negro. Cuestan tres-cientos euros, y la comprarlo en Dublín, en dixons. Estoy en el hotel cinco estrellas en calle San Antonio, en dormitorio veinte uno.
(Marks 4/6)

Comment: The difference between these candidates should be obvious.

The high-scoring candidate consistently gets the message across. There are occasional minor mistakes but the vocabulary is very good, as are the verbs and the communicative intention is always clear.

With regard to the lower-scoring candidate, there are problems with basic grammar, some basic vocabulary and with agreements of nouns and adjectives. Obvious examples are the following:

- *mi camera* – (even though this is given in the question on turn 5).
- *tengo que fotografía*
- *este mañana*
- *el plaza*
- *el calle*
- *mas tardi*
- *un taza*
- *veinte uno*

Question 1(b): Letter Writing (30 marks)

In a Spanish newspaper a journalist suggests that parents can no longer understand their teenage children. You have your own opinions on the matter so you write a LETTER in Spanish to the Editor.

(You may loosely base your letter on the points mentioned below, either agreeing or disagreeing with all or some of them. You should make five relevant points and each of these points should be expanded and developed.)

- Teenagers see the world differently from their parents.
- Parents don't always share a teenager's taste in music, clothes, friends.
- Is too much expected of teenagers at school and at home?
- Teenagers are always presented in a negative way by the media.
- Most parents and teenagers get along fine.

[Candidate's name and address included as well as address of newspaper in Spain.]

Estimado/a señor/a,

Escribo esta carta como respuesta al artículo salido en su periódico el 15 de este mes. Se trató de jóvenes y sus padres. Usted ha escrito que los padres hoy en día ya no pueden entender sus jóvenes.

En primer lugar, los jóvenes en la actualidad ven el mundo y la vida de un modo diferente de sus padres. Tienen opiniones diferentes sobre todo los aspectos de la vida y del mundo en general, por ejemplo, sobre la política y la sociedad. Generalmente, las opiniones de los padres son más tradicionales que las opiniones de sus jóvenes. A menudo, los padres no comprenden estas opiniones.

En segundo lugar, a los padres les gustan cosas diferentes que a sus jóvenes. A los jóvenes les encantan la música, la ropa y sus amigos. Sin embargo, los padres se quejan con frecuencia de estas cosas. Se quejan de que la música que escuchan los jóvenes es terrible, de que la ropa que llevan los jóvenes es horrible y de que los amigos de sus jóvenes no son de confianza. Todo esto crea muchos problemas en el hogar.

En tercer lugar, yo creo que los padres y los profesores por todas partes son demasiado exigentes. Los padres dicen siempre a sus jóvenes que deberían estar en sus dormitorios, estudiando. No comprenden que hay mucha presión sobre los jóvenes. Los profesores tampoco comprenden esto. Dan demasiado deberes a sus estudiantes y les dicen que deberían estudiar al mismo tiempo. ¡Qué locura! Sin duda, los padres y los profesores exigen demasiado de los jóvenes actualmente.

Es más, la prensa, la televisión y la radio siempre nos dan la idea que los jóvenes son terribles. Siempre hay historias y noticias sobre delincuentes y jóvenes con muchos problemas. Esto es la generalización. No es justo. No somos todos como esto. Los medios deberían actuar más justo en relación con los jóvenes. La mayoría de la juventud es buena.

Hay otra cosa. A pesar de todos estos problemas en relación con padres y sus hijos, tenemos que admitir que la situación entre la mayoría de padres y sus jóvenes no es tal mala. En general, todos estos problemas no existen (o no se producen con frecuencia) en la mayoría de hogares familiares.

Para concluir, hace falta que la sociedad vea que las relaciones entre padres y sus hijos no es demasiado terrible. Además, tampoco hay demasiados problemas con la juventud actual.

Le saluda atentamente.

Marks: 30/30

Comment: This is an excellent example of a letter which addresses each of the turns. The points are well made and a wide range of vocabulary and tenses are used. Textual coherence is evident and there is clear argument with no irrelevant material. Equally important is the fact that the candidate gave his/ her opinions on the topic. However, it should be noted that a letter does not have to be this long to get full marks.

2. Answer either (a) DIARY ENTRY or (b) NOTE.

Question 2(a): Diary Entry (20 marks)

(a) You are back from a one-month stay in Ávila, not far from Madrid. Write a DIARY ENTRY in Spanish, mentioning the following points:

- Your feelings about your stay in Spain – what made it so pleasant.
- What you thought about the people you were staying with.
- How you coped with something you did not like.
- Why you would love to go back to Spain next summer.

Querido diario,

Acabo de volver de Ávila después de un mes. Lo pasé muy bien en España. La gente fue muy amistosa y ahora tengo muchos amigos españoles. También el tiempo fue increíble me encanta el clima ahí.

La familia que estaba quedando con fue simpático. Me hablaron a menudo y por eso aprendí mucho. La niña que tiene cuatro años -¡Que mono!

*No me gusta mucho la comida española. Creo que hay demasiado aceite, especialmente con el pescado. A mi no me gusta el pescado pero no comimos mucho porque Ávila no está cerca del mar. Cuando lo comimos, ¡bebí mucho agua y entonces me sentí mejor!
Espero que vuelva a España el verano que viene para reunirme con mis amigos ¡y para practicar mi español por supuesto!*

*Sin nada más por ahora,
¡Hasta mañana!*

Marks: 18/20

Comment: Candidate dealt with each of the turns. Communicative intention is very clear. It is spontaneous and there is no irrelevance. Candidate dealt with the third item very well and managed a touch of humour and still understood ‘*mucho agua*’ and ‘*comimos*’. There is a good range of vocabulary used, good expression and competent grammar skills exhibited, for example, ‘*lo pasé muy bien*’, ‘*amistosa*’, ‘*reunirme*’, ‘*Me hablaron a menudo*’ to mention a few.

Question 2(b): Note (20 marks)

(b) You are in Cádiz and want to go out with some Spanish friends tonight. Leave the following NOTE in Spanish for your host family to read on their return.

- Tell them you are going out and when you hope to be back.
- Explain that you have been invited to celebrate a special occasion with friends.
- The plan is to eat first and then go to a disco
- Say you will be home late but you will be attending your Spanish classes as usual.

Voy a salir esta noche y espero volver a las dos de la madrugada.

He invitado celebrar el cumpleaños de mi amiga Elena con muchas amigas.

Primero proyectamos, comer y entonces ir a la discoteca.

*Regresaré tarde a casa pero por normalmente asistiré mis clases de español mañana.
Hasta pronto.*

Marks: 16/20

Comment: Although this note is very short, it deals effectively with each piece of stimulus material. Particularly impressive were ‘*madrugada*’, ‘*regresaré*’ and ‘*asistiré*’.

Querida Maria,

Son las seis por la tarde, y voy a ir a al centro de la ciudad con mis amigas, me gustaría venire a las once por la noche.

Mi amiga le gusta yo voy contigo, por que, voy a celebrar mi cumpleaños.

Marks: 6/20

Comment: Difficulties with basic vocabulary and grammar are obvious here. The last two turns were not attempted at all.