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FOREIGN LANGUAGE PORTUGUESE

Paper 0540/02

Reading and Direct Writing

General comments

Most candidates performed generally well on this paper. The candidates were obviously well prepared by their teachers.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

Candidates performed well on these questions.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

The majority of candidates answered correctly.

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

In **Questions 11** and **14**, some candidates did not understand that *bonito* referred back to *embelezam* in the text, and *quentes* to *calor*, and hence gave wrong answers.

Exercise 4 Question 16

Some candidates lost points on mistakes made on simple words such as the day of the week or swimming costume.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 17-25

Most candidates performed well here.

Exercise 2 Question 26

Most candidates wrote within the word limit and, as it was a familiar topic for them, their ideas were good. Only a few talked about family holidays instead.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 27-36

Questions 29 and **34** were the most difficult ones. While the good candidates got these questions right, a large number of weaker candidates got them wrong.

Exercise 2 Questions 37-46

As the difficulty increased, more candidates found it harder to answer all the questions well. The weaker candidates found **Questions 40, 42** and **45** more challenging. Those candidates either did not read carefully the questions or did not understand the text sufficiently well to answer correctly to the questions.

Inference plays an important part in **Section 3** and candidates should be prepared for it.

Conclusion

Examiners would like to congratulate the teachers on their efforts in this examination and wish to encourage them to continue their excellent work to:

- Expose candidates to a wide variety of reading and written material.
- Instil an attentive approach to reading.
- Increase the candidates' awareness of the grammar and syntax of the target language.
- Encourage a wide use of tenses.

<p>Paper 0540/03 Speaking</p>

General comments

It is pleasing to report that this year's speaking tests appeared to run smoothly in the vast majority of cases. Centres are thanked for their careful and efficient administration of the tests, and for their clear and accurate completion of all paperwork required for moderation.

As usual, most candidates had benefited from excellent preparation, and were able to approach the speaking test with confidence. In only a small number of cases was it clear that candidates were unfamiliar with the format of the test and were thus unable to give their best performance. All Centres are strongly encouraged to ensure all candidates have had sufficient practice beforehand and have, in particular, had the opportunity to work through some past-paper role plays.

Comments on specific questions

Test 1 – Role Plays

Section A Role plays

These three role plays are designed to be straightforward and presented no difficulties for most candidates. Where problems arose, it was almost invariably because the Examiner altered the role play, either by adding additional questions and comments or by omitting one or more of the utterances printed in the Teachers' Notes. It is important to note that the role play section is intended to test candidates' ability to produce language in a clearly defined and controlled situation: there is therefore nothing at all to be gained from obliging candidates to answer questions they have not had the opportunity to prepare for, as no marks can be attached to their replies. Indeed, such alterations to the role plays can confuse candidates and adversely affect their performance. Similarly, where an Examiner's utterance is omitted (or replaced by a question not in the Teachers' Booklet), the candidate is prevented from giving the required response and so loses marks.

Section B Role plays

Most candidates coped very well with these role plays, with no significant difficulties arising. In a few cases, the problems referred to above, regarding alterations and omissions, caused some candidates to under-perform. All Centres are urged to adhere closely to the format as printed in the Teachers' Booklet.

Test 2 – Topic Conversation

As in previous years, almost all candidates were very well prepared, and spoke confidently on a wide range of appropriate topics. Occasionally, some candidates were allowed too long an introduction before Examiners intervened with questions; in a few cases, no questions were asked at all.

Test 3 – General Conversation

Again, this section was usually very well conducted, and candidates were given the opportunity to show their Portuguese by responding to stimulating and thoughtfully-constructed questions which ranged across a variety of topics and tenses.

On occasion, it was difficult to ascertain where the **Topic Conversation** ended and the **General Conversation** began. It would be helpful if, in the future, Examiners were to indicate this on the tape.

Paper 0540/04

Continuous Writing

General comments

Overall, candidates appeared to be reasonably well prepared for this examination and performed well in both questions, with a few candidates demonstrating very good writing skills and knowledge of different lexical areas. However, many candidates showed a deficiency in the use of punctuation, committed consistent inaccuracies in the use of accents (e.g. *esta/está; e/é*) and struggled with basic grammar points (e.g. *ser* instead of *estar*; *tem* instead of *têm*) and spelling (e.g. *tava* instead of *estava*; *pra* instead of *para*; *agente* instead of *a gente*, being the most common mistakes). These spelling mistakes may be explained by candidates simply reproducing what they hear, showing their listening skills are developed, rather than their writing skills.

Many candidates wrote more than the required number of words.

Comments on specific questions**Question 1**

Although most candidates chose **(a)** rather than **(b)**, those that opted for **(b)** were generally better and wrote more interesting and complex answers.

- (a)** Some candidates were unsure how to address the person/people the invitation was for, so they used both *tu* and *você* at the same time and subsequently the possessive and personal pronouns *meu* and *seu*, *me* and *se*.

When writing about the time of the party, many candidates mixed up *há* – the simple present form of the verb *haver* – and *à* – the contraction of the preposition *a* with the definite article *a*.

When describing what they would like the guests to bring to the party, most candidates used verbs such as *espero que* and *gostaria que* without the subjunctive.

- (b)** Most answers were original and complete, but some candidates missed the first required point.

Some candidates showed a good knowledge of the imperative, modal verbs and if-clauses when encouraging Gil to re-sit the exam and advising on how best to achieve a better mark next time.

Question 2

Many candidates showed their defective knowledge of grammar and vocabulary when answering this question. Many candidates did not know when to use the simple past or the imperfect and a few used the simple present instead of the simple past. Moreover, when using verbs in the third person plural in the simple past – verbs ending in *-am* – many candidates spelled them as *-ão*, the future form.

Many candidates associated a holiday in the mountains with snow, but a few did not have the adequate vocabulary, therefore they employed a number of foreign words.

Three very common mistakes worth mentioning were: the third person singular of the verb *ir* – *foi* – used instead of the first person singular – *foi*; not knowing when to use the indefinite pronouns *tudo* (invariable) and *todo* (variable) and the adverb *mais* used instead of the conjunction *mas*.