

PORTUGUESE (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0540/02
Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

The paper did not present many difficulties to candidates. In general the exam was well received. The majority should score good results.

The more difficult questions were aiming to discriminate between candidates. Inference and interpretation play an important part in **Section 3** and candidates should be prepared for that.

Praise goes to teachers who have been able to bring out the best in the candidates. Teachers are advised to continue their excellent work giving particular attention to the following:

- expose exam candidates to a wide variety of reading and written material;
- instil an attentive approach to reading;
- prepare candidates to extract only the required information to answer the questions;
- prepare candidates to pay particular attention to what is asked in the icons of Ex 4, in **Section 1**
- increase awareness of structural features of the target language that will enable candidates to acquire an increased discerning ability as recipients of a written message and
- encourage a wide use of tenses and subordinate clauses in the writing exercise.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercício 1 - Perguntas 1-5

This exercise was answered correctly by the majority of candidates.

P1 Some candidates chose answer C that had two boys. The statement said that he had a brother. It should have been B, just one boy.

P2 The word *louça* was confused with *roupa* and again some candidates opted for B which was a boy putting clothes in a washing machine instead of C that showed a boy doing the washing up, the correct choice.

P3 Candidates recognized the word *Informática* and answered correctly.

P4 What should you ask for if you want to pay the bill? The candidates that did not understand the question chose Menu or Coffee.

P5 *Vou à escola de bicicleta* was answered correctly by most of the candidates.

Exercício 2 - Perguntas 6-10

The majority of the candidates performed very well. Very few had problems but there was no pattern. They simply did not know the places.

Exercício 3 - Perguntas 11-15

Generally the questions were well answered but there were some problems. This true and false exercise had **Questions 11** and **15** causing some difficulties.

Question 11 The text said that he woke up at 6 am, not that he had his breakfast then.

Question 15 In the text it was said that he played basket ball after doing his home work, not immediately after school.

Exercício 4 - Pergunta 16

Candidates should be prepared to relate to the pictures in this type of exercise and write about them. Quite a few candidates gave a different day of the week or just used only one of the activities shown.

Section 2

Exercício 1 - Perguntas 17- 25

Most candidates gained full marks on this exercise.

There were very few candidates who, in **Question 19, 20 (i) and (ii)**, related these to the weddings and legends about the saint. This suggests that they did not read the text correctly and jumped to a wrong conclusion.

Exercício 2 - Pergunta 26

This writing exercise was generally tackled well and pleasing to read. The candidates wrote the correct 80 – 100 words, which has been an improvement. A considerable number did not describe the place they would have liked to go to and instead wrote about a holiday they had. Many did not justify their choices.

Few candidates did not write about anything that was asked but something totally outside the topic. Centres are advised to stress that this is a Portuguese exam and therefore should not have Spanish or Italian interferences.

Section 3

This section discriminates between candidates.

Exercício 1 - Perguntas 27 – 36

Many candidates answered the whole exercise correctly; others just briefly read the text and did not pay much attention to the options.

Surprisingly, many candidates answered **Question 30** incorrectly, choosing either option A or B when the correct one was C.

Exercício 2 - Perguntas 37– 44

This was possibly the most difficult text in the exam. Many of the answers were incorrect and showed a lack of understanding or a less careful reading of the text.

Questions 37 and 38 generally gained full marks.

Question 39 attracted wrong answers. It stated that the answer should reflect what was said in paragraph 2 and presumably many candidates did not read that and mentioned activities described in paragraph 3.

Question 40 (i) and (ii) were often answered as if there were only one part. It was asked how children with handicap were helped. Two correct examples would have been: **(i)** to allow them to participate in all activities **and (ii)** they had specialised helpers.

Question 41 gained full marks.

Question 42 The most frequent answer was that they did traditional games in teams but did not mention that they participated in games, according to their abilities.

Question 43 Most candidates did not read the text but gave answers according to what they thought.

Question 44, the last question, did not cause any problems to candidates.

The majority of the candidates answered the exam questions well and did not seem to have had problems finishing the test. All candidates attempted the whole exam.

PORTUGUESE (Foreign Language)

Paper 0540/03

Speaking

General Comments

Most candidates seemed well prepared for this year's Speaking test. They seemed well familiar with the 3 different sections of the exam and most of them performed confidently and competently in each section. Examiners should continue to allow candidates to have access to past papers to practice the foreign language and to familiarise themselves with the structure of the test. Likewise, Examiners are reminded to prepare in advance for the examination, referring to the Teachers' Notes booklet for details.

Recording

Many recordings on CDs and tapes were of excellent quality. However, some were unclear or were too low and both candidates and Examiners were not always clearly audible. Centres are advised to check that all recording equipment is working properly before beginning any examination and then, before submitting CDs/cassettes, that all recordings are clearly audible.

Mark Sheets

Centres are reminded that they should check additions carefully in order to avoid errors in the transfer of marks from the working mark sheet to the MS1/CAMEO. Also, when completing the MS1, the final mark in figures must also be entered as well as shading the lozenges.

Comments on specific questions

Role Plays

The role plays were generally very well conducted. In this section, Examiners are reminded that they should keep to the 5 prompts given in Role Play A and in Role Play B and that they:

1. should not create any additional questions or
2. miss out any of the tasks in order not to confuse or disadvantage any candidate.

Where part of the task is for the candidate to greet their interlocutor or to 'Manifestar preocupação', and these are omitted, the maximum mark for the task is 1.

Examiners need to be well-prepared for this section in order to ensure that candidates are given the correct cues which allow them to attempt the required tasks. They need to act out the role plays and not simply read aloud what is written on the role play cards. If an answer is fed to a candidate, no marks can be awarded for that element of the task.

Topic Presentation and Conversation

Candidates were generally well prepared for this part of the exam and a good variety of topics and themes was presented. In this section, candidates prepare a 1-2-minute presentation on a topic of their own choice and deliver it without interruptions by the Examiner. This presentation should be spontaneous and should then be followed by questions on that topic for 2-3 minutes. Some of this year's presentations were sometimes too long whereas others were too short. Examiners are reminded to keep to the timings in the interest of fairness to all candidates.

It is important that the Examiner asks questions which will allow the candidates to show that they can use past and future tenses accurately.

Examiners are reminded to indicate the transition from topic to general conversation very clearly using a phrase such as “Agora nós vamos passar para a terceira fase do exame, a fase de conversação geral”.

General Conversation

Most candidates performed well and with confidence and spontaneity in this section. In this part of the exam, Examiners' questions need to:

1. cover at least two/three different topic areas from that chosen by the candidate for the topic conversation
2. be open-ended so that candidates have the opportunity to:
 - a. show they can justify opinions
 - b. use more complex structures
 - c. use past and future tenses accurately
3. allow the conversation to flow (and not be a series of unconnected questions).

Closed questions, which candidates can answer by saying 'Yes' or 'No', should be avoided. It is important to provide candidates with opportunities to express themselves, using a wide range of vocabulary and tenses and more complex language and structures.

The interaction in this section should last for about 5 minutes.

PORTUGUESE (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0540/04
Continuous Writing

Key messages

Teachers and candidates are to be congratulated on their good preparation for this year's examination. The majority of candidates understood what was required of them, and very few misunderstood the instructions for specific questions. Most candidates wrote the required amount for each question, with only a small handful being under or, significantly over, the word limit of approximately 140 words, which was very encouraging. In order to achieve well on this Paper, it is necessary to make sure all the required points of each question are answered, and that the language produced is accurate, using as wide a range of grammatical structures and vocabulary as possible. Additional marks are available as 'General Impression' marks for interesting scenarios, opinions and justifications, and more ambitious structures, such as the use of the subjunctive, personal infinitive or complex tenses.

All variations of Portuguese have been accepted – whether Brazilian, European or African, and all pre- and post-Acordo agreement spellings. In addition, the differences between European and Brazilian Portuguese in terms of grammatical structures and lexis have been taken into account, with no bias towards any one variation.

Although many examination papers were impressive, future candidates would also benefit from making their handwriting clearer, and thinking more about agreements of subjects and verbs (a common error was to write 'Queridos amigos, como vai?', or 'eu foi'. Candidates also came unstuck by trying to copy language from the rubrics, without changing the verb formats, e.g. 'Nós organizaram'. There were many examples of interference from Spanish in particular, although words common to both languages were, of course, allowed, such as 'bailar'.

General Comments

Better candidates expressed themselves through more ambitious use of structures, interesting vocabulary and by extending their descriptions beyond the basic question requirements. They added opinions, described how they felt more succinctly, and gave more thought to describing the events they were writing about. Whilst it was still possible to gain a good number of marks for accurate language, the extra marks for General Impression came when answers were interesting to read, sometimes funny, or attempting at humour, occasionally emotional or aiming at shock. In addition, the use of higher-level language structures gained additional marks, when used correctly, or were at least attempted. Often, candidates wanted to express a future idea where only a Future Subjunctive would be appropriate: when an attempt was made towards this, this was also rewarded.

Weaker candidates did not go beyond the basics of the question, often repeated themselves, or tried to use the language already present in the rubric, without attempting to manipulate the relevant endings.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 (a) – Organising a reunion of old school-friends

Not everyone understood the concept of 'antigo aluno', and some wrote about a schoolfriend who was leaving to live elsewhere. Others organised trips away, or visits to the beach or cinema. The best versions explained how the meeting was to catch up on old friends after many years out of school, in order to 'matar as saudades' or 'bater papo'. Most included a meal in a restaurant or hotel. The weakest point of this question covered what was or was not included in the price: most wrote about food and drinks (in very few words), some were simply not clear about what was included, but others were more interesting: green fees for a round of golf, T-shirts with group photos provided. The last point (what the friends should bring to the

event and why) was wide-ranging: weaker candidates wrote about bringing money for drinks, food items; more interesting versions included: shoes for climbing the hill to the restaurant, swimming gear, cameras, old chemistry books from school, old uniform and photos, umbrellas, and in order to access facilities at a golf course.

Question 1 (b) – Promoting a health and well-being day at school

This was the more difficult option of the two, and only the better candidates dealt with it with real success. It was answered by approximately a third of the candidates in total; the way it was interpreted depended very much on the geographical situation of the candidates' Centre, with African-based candidates drawing very much on local experience of dealing with health issues. It was tempting to over-write on the first point, on why health was important, and in fact, those candidates who did so then over-ran on their total word-count. As only the first 140 words are counted in the marking, if information had not been included by that point, there was less chance of full marks for content. Candidates should bear this in mind when planning what to write. There were many ideas for the activities of the day, the more imaginative being: health quizzes, sports challenges, fun yoga, theatrical pieces, healthy food competitions and cleaning round the school. The last point to be included proved troublesome to interpret, and any attempt to answer on how other pupils could join in was accepted; weaker answers simply stated pupils could ring up for information; better responses included making posters or encouraging other people to participate.

Question 2 – a masked Carnaval ball

This was most imaginatively answered by many candidates, although the vast majority wasted their word count by repeating most of the rubric in their introduction, and did not even manipulate the language to suit their first-person narrative. Future candidates should be encouraged to aim to paraphrase briefly where possible, as marks cannot be awarded for copied language. The best answers here included extended details of the place of the ball, reactions to events, and justified thoughts on what would happen next year. There were some very nicely-elaborated descriptions of the places, atmosphere and costumes on the night, although most balls took place in a disco, street or beach scene. Candidates were asked to say what happened at mid-night; if mid-night was not mentioned, candidates missed out on the marks for that section of content. The masked-ball scenario gave rise to a host of Shakespearian comedies of errors: people were confused, did not know whom they were dancing with, lost their friends, and there were many 'unveiling' of surprise dancing partners at the strike of midnight. More interesting versions of events included: a pretend vampire attack, a Cinderella and lost Ipod tale, fires, lights popping, and even stabbings and theft. There were some occasional beautiful descriptions of fireworks displays. The final point was less well answered than the rest, with the majority of candidates saying they wished to return to the same ball next year, or wanting to go to Brazil. To gain full marks for content on this point, it was necessary to extend and elaborate with a reason or judgement on the experience.