

FIRST LANGUAGE PORTUGUESE

Paper 0504/02
Reading and Directed Writing

General comments:

Most candidates showed a good knowledge of the Portuguese language in this year's exam and the vast majority of candidates performed in the A-C category.

Most candidates wrote legibly and presented their work clearly. Contrary to previous years most candidates' responses came in around the required word count. The weakest candidates wrote considerably less than what was asked of them. A few candidates mixed drafts and final answers in such a way as to render reading quite difficult.

All candidates understood what was required of them. The weaker candidates, however, seemed to have difficulty in structuring their answers. A few candidates, on the other hand, wrote truly outstanding answers showing a thorough understanding of the texts and an ability to write concisely, accurately and imaginatively.

There were recurrent grammatical problems such as the misuse of *a*, *à* and *há* and several recurrent spelling mistakes such as the liberal use of the cedilla or the reflexive of the present indicative being mistaken for the imperfect subjunctive. Some candidates confused *ão* and *am*, an error somewhere between a grammatical failing and a spelling mistake.

A distinct interference of English was discernible in some candidate's Portuguese. A prominent example can be found in the use of double consonants.

Comments on specific questions

Part 1

Question 1

Most candidates received good marks for this question. A good percentage of candidates had problems with structuring their response, such that the overall effect was shapeless and untargeted, though most of the points were successfully covered.

Question 2

Most candidates chose to write about Adriano. The idea of a former *favelado* turned star footballer returning to his roots to address his former school fired some candidates' imaginations and resulted in excellent answers, both linguistically and creatively. The weaker candidates, on the other hand, struggled with such an abstract concept as "how to fulfil one's dreams" and were unable to move beyond re-narrating the facts previously presented in the texts or repeating a single idea.

Part 2

Question 3

Most candidates performed well on this question. The more creative candidates produced excellent answers providing details relating to Joana and her father, without repeating word for word the data provided. These were the best responses and resulted in some extremely imaginative answers. The weaker candidates, however, failed to move beyond detailing the qualities of the properties as listed on the question paper.

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General Comments

Many candidates showed a good knowledge of the Portuguese language and the vast majority performed in the A-C category.

It was good to see that some of the candidates had a marked sense of audience and made a real effort to elicit the reader's interest in what they were writing.

Some candidates, however, had difficulty in articulating complex ideas and experiences. Although there was no lack of fluency, the weaker candidates seemed to have difficulty in using complex sentences. There were also some examples of inappropriate language: *távamos; tava; coisa; com a gente*.

There were recurrent grammatical problems such as the misuse of *a, há* and *à; mal* and *mau; porque, por que* and *porquê*. Some candidates seemed to have difficulty in handling subjunctive and conditional verbs correctly: *se todo mundo fazer; se alguém ver; se ela ficar*.

This year again candidates had difficulty in the use of pronouns: *chamar ele; levar ela; me acordou; peguei ela*. Pronouns were either placed incorrectly in the sentence, or the hyphens were not used when required.

There were also repeated spelling errors, sometimes very simple ones: *atravez; atraz; exeção; ancioso; sussesso*. In addition, there were several examples of the incorrect use of cedillas: *começei; início; acontecer*.

A number of candidates found it difficult to link their ideas in clear and coherent paragraphs. Some scripts indeed lacked order with a clear beginning, middle and end to the answer.

Some candidates forgot to write down the number of the question they had chosen to answer.

As in previous years, some candidates did not exercise sufficient care in punctuation. There were indeed cases of long paragraphs with neither punctuation nor accents.

A few candidates this year failed to keep their answer to the required maximum length of 500 words.