

FOREIGN LANGUAGE PORTUGUESE

Paper 0540/02

Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

In general, candidates coped extremely well this year. The majority scored good marks.

Sections 2 and **3** usually differentiate between the weak and strong candidates. Inference and interpretation play an important part in **Section 3** and future candidates should be prepared to be tested on these skills, as all candidates are required to attempt all questions.

Teachers are to be commended for their hard work in bringing out the best in their candidates

Particular attention should continue to be given to the following:

- exposing candidates to a wide variety of reading matter;
- instilling an attentive approach to the reading not just of texts, but also of questions;
- increasing awareness of Portuguese grammar and idiom;
- encouraging the wide use of tenses.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercício 1 - Perguntas 1-5

This exercise was answered correctly by the majority of candidates. Few candidates did not recognise the word for bread 'pão'.

Exercício 2 - Perguntas 6-10

No problems were found in this exercise. The majority of the candidates performed very well.

Exercício 3 - Perguntas 11-15

Here many candidates did not read the text carefully and got **Question 14** wrong.

Exercício 4 - Pergunta 16

Candidates should be prepared to construe the meaning of pictures in this type of exercise and reproduce their observations correctly in their writing. Many candidates gave a different month and date, wrong reason for celebration and did not pay attention to the music detail while others completely made up their own story.

Section 2

Exercício 1 - Perguntas 17-22

Most candidates gained full marks in this exercise.

Exercício 2 - Pergunta 23

This writing exercise was generally pleasing to read and correctly formulated. Generally the candidates wrote within the word limit of 80 – 100 words. Some did not mention when they practised the sport activity, leaving it to be in their free time. Others did not justify their preference, which meant that they lost out on marks.

Section 3

This section is intended to differentiate between the good and the best candidates.

Exercício 1 - Perguntas 24-33

Many candidates appeared to have read the text superficially and therefore answered the questions incorrectly. It was apparent that they did not read the text carefully and therefore did not extract the right information. Few candidates gained full marks in this exercise.

Exercício 2 - Perguntas 35-41

This is the final exercise and it contained the most challenging text in the exam. Some candidates showed a lack of understanding of the text or appeared to have read it carelessly and copied chunks of text that did not correspond to the correct answer. **Question 37** caused the most problems. A few repeated the same answer several times. Nevertheless, the best candidates were able to produce the right answers.

On the whole, the majority of the candidates tackled the exam very well and did not seem to have had any problems finishing the test on time. It was pleasing to see that virtually all candidates attempted all sections and a large percentage obtained grade C or above.

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Paper 0540/03
Speaking

General comments

In general candidates coped well with this year's Speaking Test. The majority were well prepared, but the questions candidates had to ask in the Role-plays presented difficulties for some.

Once again Centres are urged to ensure that Examiners have enough time to read the instructions in advance otherwise they will potentially make the candidates confused and nervous. It should also be noted that adding to or deviating from the instructions set out in the Role-plays will most likely disadvantage candidates.

Another problem of not reading the instructions occurred with **Task 15**, which should have been marked up to a maximum of ten points, but was given marks of 13 or 14 by some. Examiners are reminded to take care in awarding the marks for each section.

Examiners are reminded to check if the recording is audible. Many candidates were very difficult to hear not only because of the microphones, or lack of them, but also because of the noise in the background.

Examiners are reminded not to give the answers to the candidates when testing them.

Comments on specific questions

Test 1

Role-play A

Cards one, two and three:

Some candidates decided to answer the first three questions after only the first question had been asked. Others probably did not read the cards and instead of saying "I usually go to the city" said something completely different.

Cards four, five and six:

Candidates had more difficulties in finding the right adjectives to describe the person and some did not know how to ask the last question.

Cards seven, eight and nine:

This was done well by most candidates.

Role-play B

Cards one, four and seven:

This was done well by most candidates.

Cards two, five and eight:

Here some candidates said they did not see the burglar therefore they could not describe the person and the Examiners could not award them the full mark.

Cards three, six and nine:

This was carried out satisfactorily by most candidates.

Test 2 – Topic Conversation

Most candidates had prepared a topic of their choice. Many decided to talk about Global Warming, but there were a great variety of topics such as: Art, Chess, Cancer, Holidays, Family, Drugs, Languages, Food, Countries, etc. The only problem with the selection of these topics was that some were repeated during the “General Conversation”.

The Teachers Notes booklet makes clear that these topics should not be read by the candidates during the examination, but it was clear that many Centres did not follow these instructions. Nevertheless some Examiners did not let the candidates speak freely and kept asking question after question, many of them closed ones where the fluency was difficult to assess.

Test 3 – General Conversation

This part of the examination is again intended to check the candidates’ fluency, range of vocabulary, etc. The majority of candidates performed well in this section because they expressed their opinions well.

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Paper 0540/04
Continuous Writing

General comments

Most candidates coped well with the questions although some found it challenging to produce a range of ideas. Perhaps these candidates did not understand what was asked or they may have lacked the vocabulary. Furthermore, a number of candidates showed poor knowledge of grammar and spelling.

There were also several examples of popular abbreviations and slang, which are inappropriate in this kind of written material: 'ta bem (for *está bem*), 'tavam (for *estavam*), eke (for *é que*), etc.

It cannot be stressed enough that candidates should make an effort to write legibly, and always make sure their handwriting is clear.

As in previous years some candidates wrote in excess of the required number of words, so it would be a good idea to remind the candidates, in advance of the exam, not to do it because if they go above the limit of 140 words they will be penalised. Excessive length will not be marked and as a result some candidates will probably be unable to answer every point required to receive the full mark, as happened in some cases this year.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

In general, candidates included all the necessary details mentioned in the question, but did not use accents at all.

There was still a Spanish and English influence in some answers: "Eu atendo a escola..." (attend – for "Eu ando na escola..." or "Eu frequento..."). Candidates use "c" instead of "qu": *cuantidade* (*quantidade*) or *cual* (*qual*), or write *començar* for *começar*, etc.

Other grammar aspects that should be revised are:

- 1) The difference between *mais* and *mas*, *não* and *nem*, *tudo* and *todo* and candidates should also be aware of reflexive verbs and pronouns and direct and indirect object pronouns;
- 2) Use of prepositions with or without the article;
- 3) Use of Subjunctive after certain prepositions, conjunctions, etc;
- 4) Conjunctions;
- 5) Use of *ali* and *aí* or *isto* and *esta*, *vir* and *ir*;
- 6) Verb *gostar* needs a preposition – *de*;
- 7) Relative pronouns;
- 8) The difference between Preterite and Future: *eles pagaram* - *eles pagarão*.

(a) This question was answered by many candidates and it was good to read some interesting and well-written letters/notes. But unfortunately a few candidates did not know what recycling meant and wrote about cycling or something else. Some did not really suggest anything to promote recycling, just said they wanted to do it. They also did not know the word for "bin" so they kept using "rubbish".

(b) This question was quite popular and although some letters were quite good, many candidates were unsure of how to start and finish a letter addressed to a person they do not know and completely forgot it should be formal. Some even addressed it as if they were writing to a relative using "Querido Gerente" and finished it with "Sinceramente". They also used both the *tu* and *você* forms

of the English *you*. Candidates should also pay more attention to accuracy in gender and number of nouns used in the same sentence.

It was interesting to see that some candidates knew when the summer in Mozambique is.

Some candidates did not pay too much attention to the instructions and wrote the letter as if they were the teacher, or in the end, when they were supposed to ask two questions about the animal, they asked about the safari's director. Many candidates also wrote about what they knew about the animal and did not ask a further question. Going through the responses it was also surprising to realise that some candidates appeared not to know what kind of animals are in a safari, some said they wanted to see animals such as: rabbits, dolphins, chickens, etc.

Question 2

Most candidates followed the instructions and wrote some good answers, but there was also a lack of ideas from some. A few candidates appeared not to know what kind of event they were talking about. They talked in circles repeating the same things, using the same words and as a result their answers lacked substance.

Some candidates only mentioned what went well and also forgot to suggest what to do to improve the event.