

PORTUGUESE (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0540/02
Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

The paper did not present much difficulty for the candidates. In general, the majority scored good marks.

Although there were more difficult questions, especially in **Sections 2** and **3**, these were there to differentiate between the candidates. Inference and interpretation play an important part in **Section 3** and future candidates should be prepared for these skills to be tested, as, from this year onwards, candidates are required to attempt all questions.

Those teachers who have been able to bring out the best in their candidates are to be commended for their hard work.

Particular attention will still need 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 completed correctly by the majority of candidates.

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

Some candidates did not read the text carefully and got **Question 11** and **Question 15** wrong - in the case of **Question 11** because candidates did not always connect 22 September with being at the end of the month.

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 form of transport, place and activity from the ones specified in the pictures, while others completely made up their own story.

Section 2

Exercício 1 - Perguntas 17-23

Most candidates gained full marks in this exercise.

Exercício 2 - Pergunta 24

This writing exercise was generally pleasing to read and correctly formulated. Few candidates wrote more than the word limit of 80 –100 words. Others did not mention the required details and wrote general accounts of the party based on their own input, 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 25-34

Many students appeared to have read the text only briefly. Perhaps due to the fact that the title is *Férias on line*, many candidates who had not read the first question thoroughly answered it incorrectly. In **Question 29**, many chose B when it says clearly in the text that the characters in the text want to go on holidays in Europe (C).

Exercício 2 - Perguntas 35-41

As this is the final exercise, 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. **Questions 37, 39 and 41** caused the most problems. Nevertheless, the best candidates were able to come up with 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 **Section 3**.

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Paper 0540/03

Speaking

General comments

It is pleasing to be able to report that the 2007 speaking tests maintained the high standards of professionalism established by Centres over the years. Centres are thanked for their care and attention in preparing for and administering the tests. In particular, the paperwork accompanying the taped samples was completed clearly and accurately, enabling moderation to be carried out effectively.

Once again, most candidates appeared to have been well prepared for this component and performed confidently. However, there were a few cases where it was obvious candidates were unfamiliar with the format of the test, and this did lead to some underperformance. This was usually most marked in the Role plays, and Centres are again advised to ensure all candidates have had the opportunity to work through past-papers in the period leading up to the tests.

Assessment by Centres was generally accurate, making the process of moderation a largely straightforward exercise.

Comments on specific questions

Test 1: Role-plays

Section A Role-plays

The **Section A** Role-plays are designed to be a straightforward and confidence-boosting introduction to the Speaking Test, and as such, presented no difficulties to the majority of candidates. Indeed, where problems arose it was because the Teacher/Examiner altered the Role-play in such a way as to cause the candidates to leave out one or more of the required mark-bearing utterances printed on their card and in the Teachers' Notes. This issue has been referred to in previous reports but, unfortunately, continues to arise. Occasionally, in an effort to create an air of authenticity, the Teacher/Examiner changes the Role play and adds extra questions, but then omits some of the utterances set out in the Teachers' Notes. It is therefore worth repeating and re-emphasising that this strategy of expanding and altering the Role-play is quite unnecessary: maximum marks are available to the candidate who correctly makes just the five utterances printed on his/her Role-play card. There is nothing to be gained from expanding upon or deviating from the Role-plays as printed.

Section B Role-plays

The **Section B** Role-plays are intended to be more demanding in terms of language and structures, but most candidates encountered few difficulties. However, the comments made above for the **Section A** Role-plays apply equally to **Section B**, and Centres are very strongly urged to adhere to the utterances required rather than make unnecessary changes. By way of illustration, in the second Role-play, candidates were asked what film they had seen rather than where they had seen it.

Test 2: Topic Conversation

It was a pleasure to hear so many candidates speak with such obvious confidence and enthusiasm on their chosen topics. Centres are reminded, however, that candidates should not be allowed to speak for too long before intervening with appropriate questions. In a few cases, no questions were asked, making moderation quite difficult.

Test 3: General Conversation

There were few problems here, with most candidates being given ample opportunity to speak on a range of topics with commendable eloquence and spontaneity.

Centres are asked to indicate clearly on the tape the end of Test 2 and the start of Test 3.



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Paper 0540/04
Continuous Writing

General comments

Most candidates coped well with both questions. However, some candidates still struggle with vocabulary and grammar.

It cannot be stressed enough that candidates should always make sure their handwriting is clear and legible.

This year, only a few candidates wrote in excess of the required number of words. Nevertheless candidates should always be reminded not to write more than 140 words as any words over the limit will be disregarded in the marking.

Candidates should read each question carefully. Although expression was usually very clear some failed to observe the finer points of the task, such writing the answer to **Question 2** in the form of a letter.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

In general, most candidates included all the required details, but the influence of Spanish on vocabulary was still noticeable in some answers. Candidates should ensure they know the difference between *mais* and *mas*, *tudo* and *todo* and be aware of reflexive verbs and pronouns. A large number of candidates did not use accents at all or put them in the wrong place.

- (a) A number of letters were very good but quite a few candidates were unsure of how to start and finish a letter addressed to a person they did not know and forgot that their letter had be formal. Some inappropriately addressed the addressee as if they were writing to a relative. Some also used both *tu* and *você* forms in the same letter. Candidates should also pay more attention to accuracy of gender and number in the same sentence. Some candidates should also work on the use of *há*, *à* and *a*, as well as *lá*, *aí* and *ali*, the future subjunctive (e.g. “*Enquanto estiver aí*”) and the difference between direct and indirect object pronouns.
- (b) Some candidates did not realise that *desporto/esporte* was given in the rubric in order to make the question accessible to learners of European Portuguese and Brazilian Portuguese, and kept writing both. A fair number of candidates did not know how to spell sports such as: *futebol*, *basquetebol*, *andebol*, *tenis*, etc. Quite a few misspelled the days of the week and/or times.

Question 2

Most candidates followed the instructions very well and wrote interesting compositions, but a few forgot to mention they found a job during their last holidays and started the answer with “*O trabalho consistia em...*” Candidates are to be reminded that they are always required to write their **Question 2** composition in the past tense. They should also be reminded to read the instructions very carefully before they start, as, for example, a few candidates wrote letters, which was not required.

Problems with regard to grammar included the following:

- Incorrect verb endings;
- Confusion between direct and indirect object pronouns;
- Lack of accuracy in gender and number;
- Inability to differentiate between: *mais* and *mas*, *tudo* and *todo*.

Some candidates were prone to repetition, as they ran out of ideas. A larger vocabulary would have gone a long way to counter this problem.