

PORTUGUESE LITERATURE

Paper 8672/04

Texts

General comments

Most candidates coped well with the questions and there were some good answers. Some candidates were able to look beyond the immediate material and show some understanding of the author's intentions, focusing on some passages, demonstrating coherence, choosing a detailed approach and using good illustrations.

However candidates should always be reminded to link the story of the book to the question and give examples, with quotes, to justify what they have written. There were candidates who narrated the story of the book and forgot to link it to the question and others who were unable to explain that what they had written was to justify what they had learnt with some statements.

Candidates should be reminded that it is important to specify which questions they are answering. The title of the book isn't enough, what they need to write is the question number and then if they are attempting to answer **Question (a)** or **(b)**. If they choose to answer **Question (a)** they will need to answer both **Questions (i)** and **(ii)** and when doing this, it is not compulsory to separate the last two, but candidates must ensure to include the content for both parts of the question.

For the past few years Examiner have noticed that some candidates do not always pay much attention to the instructions and unfortunately this has resulted in candidates answering too few questions. Last year the layout of the exam was slightly changed to help candidates to answer the correct number of questions, but once again there were still 2 or 3 candidates who failed to provide an answer to three questions. Centres are reminded to stress the importance of these instructions to the candidates and also remind them to have a good read of the questions and teach them how to make a pre-plan of the answer to avoid repetition.

When candidates quote something from the text they should also know that they do not need to make reference to page numbers. This is where Centres could once again stress this problem to the candidates so the same mistake is not repeated every year. The page number is not relevant because there are various editions of the same book. In the future Centres could ask candidates to refer to chapters instead.

As in the previous year, the most popular questions were **Question 1**, **Question 2** and **Question 5** although the others were also answered by a small number of candidates.

Candidates did not have great difficulty with regard to vocabulary and grammar but what was more noticeable was that many cannot distinguish between, for example, *ficasse* and *fica-se* which shows that candidates need to work on their Imperfect Subjunctive. Relative pronouns and the spelling of irregular verbs might also need some extra work.

It was good to see that this year candidates made an effort to write legibly, and the vast majority of candidates' handwriting was pretty clear, with the exception of 1 or 2 candidates. Well done!

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

The story of this book was very appealing. Therefore, just like last year the majority of candidates did not have many problems with **Question 1(a)** which was very straight forward. Only a very small number of candidates were not able to explain in full the meaning of the circle of gnomes made of stone. Nevertheless, candidates showed good insight when discussing the characters, had a sound knowledge of the text and were able to illustrate and develop points. With **Question 1(b)** there were some very good answers.

Candidates understood Virginia's role in this novel, they were able to distinguish the kind of person she was before and after her mother had died.

Question 2(a) (i) Many candidates who answered this question thought 2 or 3 lines were enough and focused their attention mainly on **(ii)** mentioning the role women had in this novel. **Question 2(b)** was very well answered by most candidates. There was detail but again some candidates still tend to narrate the whole story instead of focusing on what is asked.

In general **Question 3(a)** was reasonably well answered but it's a shame that most candidates did not make reference to the passage, as this would have enriched their answers. The small number of candidates who answered **Question 3(b)** took a rather superficial approach to the topic of religion.

Section 2

Surprisingly, *O Vendedor de Passados* from **Question 4** was not very popular this year and it seems that candidates who attempted to answer these questions did not know much about the book. Therefore, their answers were limited and rather superficial.

Just like last year, in this section the majority of candidates answered **Question 5** and some produced very good answers. They knew the characters and what they represented. Some candidates were able to look beyond the immediate material and show an understanding of the author's intentions, focusing on some passages, demonstrating coherence, adopting a detailed approach and using good illustrations. With **Question 5(b)** some candidates had difficulties in focusing on just one topic. Oppression was picked by the majority of candidates, as the most important topic in *Felizmente Há Luar!*, but candidates easily diverged to some of the other topics too, being too tempted to show that they knew a lot more about the book.

In general **Question 6** was well answered; candidates were familiar with the characters and the role of Alberto Soares.