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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

PORTUGUESE

GCE Advanced Level and GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level

Papers 8684/01 and 9718/01

Speaking

General comments

Some Centres produced recordings of very poor quality. A number of Centres did not send a copy of their mark sheet or register, making the work of the Moderator time-consuming. Some Examiners attempted to correct the pronunciation and grammar of the candidates, thus interfering with the flow of their conversation with them. On occasions, some Centres attempted to prolong the length of the examinations and, in most cases, this was unnecessary. The quality of the presentations is much more important than their length.

The maximum mark for Syllabus 9718 and 8684 is 100, divided into three sections.

Presentation

Most candidates did well in this section, covering a wide range of issues relevant to young people. They included war and peace, eating disorders, racism, fashions and music. The standard of presentation was generally good, with well-prepared opinions. There were factual points and references from contemporary society and from the cultural heritage of the candidates' countries.

Topic Conversation

The candidates were at ease and articulated their ideas well. The pronunciation was good and the candidates worked hard at engaging and sustaining the interest of the Examiner. Sadly, some candidates failed to develop their ideas more fully. In general, Examiners interacted well with the candidates, encouraging their participation without interfering with the flow of the answers to their questions.

General Conversation

Some candidates found it difficult to sustain the level of content of their discussion. A number of Examiners had to work hard at prompting the candidates. Others failed to indicate to candidates the points at which they were moving from one part of the examination to another.

Papers 8664/02, 8684/02 and 9718/02

Reading and Writing

General comments

Most candidates coped quite well with this year's paper.

Problems occurred in **Section 1, Question 2**, where candidates did not understand the instructions and, in **Question 5**, where candidates answered well in excess of the required number of words.

Many candidates did not ensure their handwriting was immediately legible.

Some candidates' knowledge of Portuguese grammar indicated that they were not quite ready to enter for this examination.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Most candidates answered all parts correctly.

Question 2

Most candidates answered all parts correctly. However, some candidates seemed not to understand the instructions and the example and thought they had to write their own sentences instead of rephrasing those given.

Very few candidates used the Perfect tense for part (e).

Question 3

Most candidates answered all parts well and included all or most required details in their answers.

Question 4

Most candidates answered all parts well and most included the required details in their answers.

For (a), some candidates gave irrelevant details, as in: *Actualmente, as condições económicas portuguesas estão, drasticamente, abaixo da média, relativamente, aos outros países da União Europeia.*

Some candidates seemed not to understand what *sociedade de consumo* means and tended to repeat details mentioned elsewhere.

For (c), some candidates did not attempt to answer this question, while others tried simply to explain child labour, as in: *os pais põem os filhos a trabalhar.*

Question 5

As in previous years, many candidates were unable to answer this question satisfactorily. Many candidates wrote well in excess of the required 140 words for parts (a) and (b). Sometimes the answer for part (b) exceeded the 140-word limit.

Most candidates tended to mention a few details for part (a), while many simply gave their opinion on child labour.

Papers 8684/03 and 9718/03

Essay

General comments

This year the candidates did better, in that they answered the question instead of writing about the topic in general. The essays were also generally better organised. Some scripts, however, were weak in terms of language accuracy. Candidates should try and bridge the gap between fluency and accuracy by a better preparation before the exam and by checking their work for errors before handing it in. In this way, they should avoid making elementary mistakes.

There were otherwise a lot of problems with punctuation, spelling and accentuation in many scripts. Candidates should be aware that, when writing, punctuation is very important for a good understanding of the ideas expressed. Spelling is also important. Some frequently occurring words were very often mis-spelt, and some candidates did not add any accents at all, or placed them incorrectly. Accurate punctuation, spelling and accentuation is, however, very important to achieve a good score.

Moreover, some candidates inappropriately used spoken language in their essay. Such a register is not suitable for this paper. AS or A Level candidates are expected to know the difference between spoken and written language.

There were many mistakes in the spelling of words as candidates wrote the words the way they are pronounced, while others used a very colloquial language. Some examples are: *tão* for *estão*, *reizes* for *raízes*, *ofrecem* for *oferecem*, *vai esta perdido* for *vai estar perdido*, *tambeim* for *também*, *confurtavel* for *confortável*, *melhorasmos* for *melhorássemos*, *steja* for *esteja*, *peessoas seim cultura vao pasiar* for *peessoas sem cultura vão passear* and many others.

Some essays clearly showed that the topic was brainstormed beforehand, while others did not. Candidates should remember that a paragraph needs a topic sentence and then examples that illustrate the topic sentence. Essays should consist of an introduction, paragraphs with at least one topic sentence in each, examples to illustrate these sentences, and a general conclusion.

In general, scripts were written within the word limit of 250 to 400 words.

Here are some of the mistakes which should be avoided.

Accents

The accent on words ending in *mente* disappeared years ago, and yet words like *últimamente* and *incontestavelmente* were nonetheless accentuated. Candidates should be aware of these changes in the grammar.

There were many words with missing accents such as: *tinhamos* for *tínhamos*, *tambem* for *também*, *ja* for *já*, *area* for *área*, etc. Words ending in *veis* were not accentuated, for example: *possiveis* for *possíveis*, *automoveis* for *automóveis* and *inflexiveis* for *inflexíveis*. There were also cedillas missing in *cresca* for *creança*, *comecar* for *começar*, etc. However, some words were unnecessarily accentuated as in *lêr*, *vêr*. Infinitives are not accentuated. *Inglêsa* and *portuguêsa* were also unnecessarily accentuated. The feminine ending *esa* is not accentuated, but the masculine ending *ês* is.

Accents are very important because the accentuation or lack of accentuation on a word changes its meaning. For example, the word *pais* when not accentuated means “parents”, when the candidate actually meant to say “country”. The correct word should therefore have been *país*.

Masculine and feminine

There were not many mistakes in this area but a few examples are worth mentioning: *numa problema*, (the words ending in *ema* are masculine.) for *num problema*, *do religião* for *da religião*, *um cor* for *uma cor*, *a ambiente* for *o ambiente*, *os leis* for *as leis*, etc.

Pronouns

In Portuguese *quem* is not used as a relative pronoun, unless a preposition precedes it. Therefore, *só os mais corajosos quem estão* should be *só os mais corajosos que estão* and *peessoas quem falam* should be *peessoas que falam*.

The verb should have an accent when followed by *lo*, *la*, *los*, *las*, which are direct objects. Here are some examples: *respeita-las* for *respeitá-las*, *perdoa-lo* for *perdoá-lo*, *ajuda-lo* for *ajudá-lo*, etc.

The pronoun *que* attracts either the object or reflexive pronoun, so the object or reflexive pronoun should come before the verb. For example: *que envolve-se* for *que se envolve*, *que habitem-no* for *que no habitem*, etc.

Spelling

Most mistakes in this area occurred because candidates wrote the words in the way they are pronounced. Here are some examples: *todos pensao* for *todos pensam*, *dificio* for *difícil*, *fizesi* for *fizessi*, *concerteza* for *com certeza*, *deichou* for *deixou*, *porqui* for *porque*, *qui* for *que*, *acreditavão* for *acreditavam* and many others. *Imprecionar* should have been written *impressionar*.

There were several examples of misspellings of the verb *haver*. Candidates wrote *a muito tempo* instead of *há muito tempo*, *não a diálogo* instead of *não há diálogo*, *a a Guerra* instead of *há a guerra*, etc. These are serious mistakes which should not occur at this level.

Punctuation

Many candidates made mistakes in punctuation this year. One mistake that is not acceptable is to separate the subject from the verb with a comma. Here are a few examples: *As pessoas inconscientes ou não, reagem...* for *As pessoas inconscientes ou não reagem...*, *O inglês como língua universal, não deverá ser...* for *O inglês como língua universal não deverá ser...* and many others.

Commas should be used when there are lists as in "*pátria firme solida potente...*"; this should have been "*pátria firme, sólida e potente...*".

Some candidates omitted punctuation altogether in whole paragraphs.

Candidates should pay more attention to punctuation and learn the basic rules before taking a written exam.

Prepositions

Prepositions were wrongly used and some candidates did not use them at all. A few examples: *depend nos turistas* for *depende dos turistas*, *Tenta gostar todas as pessoas* for *Tenta gostar de todas as pessoas*, *habitua-se de comunicar* for *habitua-se a comunicar*, *precisam a nossa ajuda* for *precisam da nossa ajuda*, etc.

Singular and plural

If the subject is plural, the verb should also be in the plural. Here are some examples; *o mundo e as pessoas nos traz* instead of *o mundo e as pessoas nos trazem*, *pessoas que tinha a aparência* instead of *pessoas que tinham a aparência*, etc. Adjectives in Portuguese take the plural form, so *uma mente e alma mais tranquila e aberto* should be *uma mente e alma mais tranquilas e abertas*, *podemos ser branco* instead of *podemos ser brancos*, etc.

Deve existir formas should be *devem existir formas* and *É necessário que se faça medidas* should be *É necessário que se façam medidas*.

Verbs

Some verb forms were wrong as in *Fernando Pessoa tive* instead of *Fernando Pessoa teve*, *o mundo serei* instead of *o mundo seria*, *Eles fazeria a mesma coisa* instead of *Eles fariam a mesma coisa*, *alguém puderam* instead of *alguém pôde*, *eu não sabe* instead of *eu não sei*, etc. The infinitive was misspelt as in: *Eu posso aprende* instead of *eu posso aprender*.

The endings of some verbs were wrongly hyphenated. One example was: *para aprender-mos* instead of *para aprendermos*.

Lower case and capital letters

It was surprising to see that proper names such as *europa* and *portugal*, were written in lower case. In contrast, some adjectives were unnecessarily written with a capital letter. Here are some examples: *as pessoas que não fossem Brancas*, *a juventude Negra*, etc.

Good examples

There were some very good examples of correct grammar. The personal infinitive was used correctly in *para poderem fazer reciclagem*, *por serem menos fortes*, *Ao pensarmos que*, etc.

There were also excellent examples of the subjunctive. Here are a few examples: *para que a sociedade tome consciência*, *mesmo que a situação seja*, etc.

Some candidates used a wide range of linking words in their essays which made them very clear and easy to read. Here are some examples: *consoante a diferente perspectiva*, *quer para desenvolver...*, *quer para facilitar*, *ora por costumes...*, *ora por crenças...*, *portanto*, *apesar de sermos...*, etc.

Essays with a wide variety of good vocabulary and grammatical structures receive the highest marks.

Hyphenation of words

Port-uguês and *nec-essitem* should have been split as follows: *portu-guês* and *neces-sitem* when occurring at the end of a line.

This type of error should be avoided at this level.

Paragraphing

New paragraphs ought to be distinguished either by indentation and/or by leaving a line between them.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Very few candidates attempted this question but those who did wrote essays that were well illustrated and coherently argued. However, one answer for this question dealt with what the Portuguese have achieved instead of answering the specific question asked. Candidates should be aware that there is a question to be answered and not just a topic to be written about in general.

Question 2

This was a very popular question. Quite a few essays, however, contained many grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors. Some answers were too general and some candidates answered the question only in the conclusion. Candidates should exemplify their ideas more systematically. Some of the scripts showed a poor knowledge of the rules of punctuation.

Some good essays mentioned Mandela, anorexia, appearances, social exclusion, opportunities at the workplace, stereotypes, consumption, slavery and education to exemplify their opinions. However, the most used examples were about racism and prejudice. There were also some good examples about what to do to live together in brotherhood.

Question 3

This was another very popular question. While some of the answers were not clear about what to do to attract tourism, others wrote about what Madeira, Portugal and Brazil have to offer instead of answering to the question. Candidates should brainstorm the topic before writing. Punctuation was a problem here too, and one candidate wrote 13 lines without a single full stop.

There were, however, some good examples on how to develop tourism internally and abroad, on promoting sports such as football and golf, on learning English, and on organising events like the Expo 98 or the Euro 04.

Question 4

Few candidates attempted this question and most answers were in favour of learning other languages.

Some scripts were grammatically weak with serious mistakes in punctuation. Candidates should remember that the lack of appropriate commas makes the essay hard to read and therefore hard to understand.

Some arguments were not very clear and had few examples. Some examples were not relevant.

Other scripts were well organised in indented paragraphs and had good examples. Some mentioned that English is not a universal language and they explained this concept well.

Question 5

There were some very good examples about what schools, factories and the government should do. Others suggested WWF to help improve the environment. These essays were well planned (examples as well as solutions were given), accurate and offered a good range of vocabulary.

The weaker essays contained a number of errors of punctuation and a limited vocabulary that impeded understanding. As for content, some candidates did not tackle the topic well enough and were not straight to the point. These essays were vague and candidates showed a limited capacity to structure or develop their arguments.

Question 6

Some essays showed extensive knowledge of the issue raised, giving relevant examples and indicating what might happen in the future. There were some good examples about penicillin, cloning, etc. The introductions were a good lead in to the subsequent paragraphs and the conclusion was connected to what the candidate had written in the previous paragraphs. Candidates should never introduce a new idea in the conclusion: they should only summarise what they have discussed in their essay.

Other essays showed some fluency. This was, however, impeded by a poor grasp of grammar. Candidates should be aware that both accuracy and fluency are very important to achieve high marks.

Recommendations

It may be a good idea for Centres to give this report to candidates before they take the examination so that candidates have a better idea of the kind of errors they should avoid when writing an essay. It is also recommended that teachers should spend some time explaining to candidates how to approach the examinations and how to answer the questions and write their answers. Quite a few scripts showed a poor knowledge of the Portuguese grammatical and punctuation rules. Teachers should also tell the candidates that they have to answer the question that is being asked with as many examples as possible. Candidates should not write vaguely about the topic in general.

All candidates, including native speakers, need to revise the rules of punctuation, work on their spelling, be very careful about verb tenses and vary as much as possible their vocabulary and grammatical structures.

Papers 8664/04, 8672/04 and 9718/04

Texts

General comments

Most of the candidates answered three questions. It was clear they all had read the books but had not always understood the meaning behind the words used by the authors.

Some candidates produced a coherent and fluent answer with a wide variety of vocabulary. However, spelling mistakes, poor grammar and colloquial writing still need attention.

Many candidates did not plan their answers, therefore, they retold the story, summarising the book instead of answering the question. This also suggests that candidates do not pay enough attention to what is being asked. In some scripts candidates spent a lot of time writing about issues that were not relevant. It is fine to give some background information, but it should be done only to exemplify the answer to the question.

Few candidates managed to answer the questions without giving extensive references or writing extracts from the text/book. This obviously affected the final mark given.

The handwriting of some candidates was also a problem. Candidates should know that marks can be adversely affected if their writing is not clear and legible.

Candidates should pay more attention to what they write and should plan their time accordingly in order to have time to answer all the questions and re-read them at the end. This will prevent future mistakes such as calling the author of *O Mandarim* (Eça de Queirós) *Camilo Castelo Branco* or mixing up the characters' names.

Candidates should read the instructions before they attempt to answer the questions. Some candidates mistook **Question 1 (a)(i) and (ii)** as one question and not two.

Some of the most frequent errors were:

- incorrect use of conjunctions
- lack of accuracy: candidates started sentences with one subject and verb tense and then changed them, still in the same sentence
- misunderstanding between *para* and *a* and the use of prepositions in general
- spelling mistakes such as *z* instead of *s*: *Tereza*, *Baltazar*, *concizo*, etc. or *diferença*, *parese*, etc.
- uncertainty in the endings or construction of verbs such as: *encontrão* (for *encontram*), *falão* (for *falam*), *fize-se* (for *fizesse*), etc.
- accents were omitted on many occasions, e.g. *tambem*, *duvidas*, *tao*, *esta*, *so*, *existencia*, etc.
- difference between *ser* and *estar*
- use of relative pronouns
- use of subjunctive
- use of direct or indirect object, e.g. *amar ele* (for *amá-lo*), *manda ela* (for *manda-a*), *ajudou-lhe* (for *ajudou-o*), etc.

These errors appeared in a wide number of scripts; hence further work on these grammatical points is essential. However, overall, the language, structure and style used by many candidates showed that Centres are making a good effort to prepare them for the examination.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

(b) was the favourite question. More than half of the candidates chose *a moral de O Mandarim*. This question allowed most of the candidates to express their own point of view. Although many candidates decided to write the story of the book, some included relevant points in their answers and demonstrated the ability to extend the idea of the book to our contemporary society.

Question 2

(a) was chosen by many candidates and overall was answered well. It was interesting to note that some candidates went beyond the idea of Teresa being brave and kind to her father to say she was also sly when promised *julgar-se morta para todos os homens, menos para o seu pai*.

Question 3

(a)(b) Not many candidates wrote about *O Menino do Engenho* but in general those who did answered the questions correctly. Many examples from the story were given to illustrate answers. Some candidates, however, not only compared the reasons why *Carlinhos* believed in the werewolf or God, but also described Jesus and wrongly compared him with God, which was not really the question asked.

Question 4

(a)(b) This question was even less popular than the previous one, but all the candidates who answered it did not quite understand what they were being asked. Most of the answers were very simplistic and superficial. Candidates showed a lack of ability to develop the ideas in question.

Section 2

Question 5

Many candidates opted for the role of *Vénus* and *Baco* in *Os Lusíadas*. In general the answers were very good; some candidates used perceptive illustrations and showed good insight when discussing these characters. On the other hand, the role of *Vasco da Gama* was poorly developed. Candidates did not seem to know much about him and were going in circles, continuously repeating the same ideas.

Question 6

Most candidates chose *Nós matámos o cão tinhoso* to show their knowledge of the story beyond what was written. Some candidates produced an exceptional answer; they were very sensitive to the language and to the author's intentions. They were able to analyse and compare situations from the story in an impressive manner. However, a small number of candidates misunderstood the real meaning of the story and only described the dog and the way people treated it.

Question 8

The social signs of decadence were very visible in the answers given, but many candidates forgot to refer to the political signs. **(b)** had various interpretations but most of them were very well explained.