

Portuguese

Advanced GCE A2 H596

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS H196

Report on the Units

June 2010

HX96/R/10

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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Any enquiries about publications should be addressed to:

OCR Publications
PO Box 5050
Annesley
NOTTINGHAM
NG15 0DL

Telephone: 0870 770 6622
Facsimile: 01223 552610
E-mail: publications@ocr.org.uk

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F887: Listening, Reading and Writing (1)

Examiners noted that most candidates performed well in the majority of the questions, particularly in the written exercise of Questions 8 (a) and 8 (b).

Many candidates seemed to have been well prepared for the examination in that they had clearly made an effort to demonstrate that they had learned the language; they produced writing that was clear and interesting, used their own words where required, were able to use a variety of verb forms, and adhered to the recommended number of words.

As in last year's paper, the quality of language, both for Portuguese and English, was not always consistent. Some candidates were unsure of grammar, spelling and punctuation and sometimes there was interference of other languages.

The highest achieving candidates showed good knowledge of the grammar. They knew the correct forms of the verbs '*ter*' and '*ir*', were sure about '*-am*' and '*-ão*' verb endings and the plural of words ending in '*-ão*' and in '*-m*', they used the verb '*estar*' correctly (some candidates used '*tar*', which is not appropriate in formal writing) and used accents correctly. In addition they gave more than single-word answers where required, wrote legibly and, importantly, limited their answers to the spaces provided. Candidates in general could improve their performance by giving their attention to these areas in preparation for the exam.

SECTION A: Listening and writing

Most candidates coped very well with the listening tasks.

Task 1

This task was generally well answered.

Task 2

This task was generally well answered.

Task 3

This task was generally well answered although a few candidates wrote one or more answers in Portuguese.

Task 4: Writing

This was generally well answered in terms of Communication but Quality of Language was inconsistent. Some candidates could not convey the sense of '*apply*', and '*aplicar*' and '*aplicação*' were not always spelt correctly.

Good candidates included all the necessary points in their letters, were able to translate '*let people know*' and '*let me know*' by using, for example, the verb '*informar*' correctly. They were also aware of the different formal forms of address and their respective verb forms.

SECTION B: Reading and Writing

Task 5: Reading

This task was generally well answered and many candidates gained full marks.

Task 6: Reading

This task was also generally well answered.

Task 7: Reading

This task discriminated effectively across candidates. Good candidates understood the text and were able to answer questions in their own words in accurate Portuguese. Some candidates did not understand parts of the text and instead of answering the questions in their own words, lifted material from the text, and some candidates did not attempt to answer all of the questions.

Task 8: Reading and Writing

Well-prepared candidates were able to demonstrate a wide range of vocabulary, avoid repetition and express their own ideas in response to the text on a topic which was intended to be familiar. Perhaps because the task required extended writing, the quality of language was not always as consistent as it had been in the earlier sections of the paper. Some candidates wrote more than the recommended 300 words and this can have an adverse effect on quality of language. Responses are best when they are succinct and accurate.

F888: Listening, Reading and Writing (2)

It is pleasing to report that the new A2 paper was done well by many candidates who had clearly been well prepared for the examination by their teachers.

This was the first time in nearly a decade that a Listening Test formed part of the examination, and it is gratifying to note how well most candidates responded to the two listening exercises in Section A.

In general, candidates did well when they:

- answered questions as instructed by the rubric
- checked and corrected their responses
- answered succinctly and within the recommended space or word limit
- wrote in accurate Portuguese, in particular verb endings
- wrote in an appropriate register, ie avoided informal speech and colloquialisms.

SECTION A: Listening and Writing

Task 1: Listening

Most candidates did very well with the four questions here. Only a handful ignored the rubric and answered in Portuguese instead of English.

Tarefa 2: Compreensão auditiva

Again, this listening task presented few difficulties in terms of comprehension, although it did provide early indications of the limitations of spelling and lexis demonstrated by some candidates.

SECTION B: Reading and Writing

Tarefa 3

Most candidates got high marks for this task. Those who performed less well tended to supply words which made sense but which did not reflect the sense of the text.

Tarefa 4

This task was an effective discriminator. Many candidates clearly understood the text, but some were unable to answer in their own words.

Tarefa 5

Almost all candidates performed very well on this task. A small number lost marks by failing to copy words correctly from the text.

Tarefa 6

Performance here varied a good deal. Good candidates recognised that questions (a) and (b) were asking for two different things and were based on different sentences in paragraph 6 of the text. Some candidates combined or offered in reverse order the points required to get the marks.

More practice in this kind of task, which tests both understanding and the ability to paraphrase or manipulate the language of the stimulus text, could improve the performance of some candidates.

Tarefa 7

This task seemed, surprisingly, to be difficult and candidates were not always able to transfer the meaning of the Portuguese into correct English. Some items of lexis that caused problems were *acostamento*, *visa*, *desenvolvimento* and *consciente*.

Tarefa 8

This task was generally well done by most candidates. There was an opportunity for candidates to use the subjunctive after *para que* in question (a).

Tarefa 9

There was a variety of performance on this task and again more practice, could improve the performance of some candidates.

SECTION C: Writing

Many candidates had clear ideas about their chosen topic and wrote with conviction. There were a good many well-structured and well-argued responses, which drew upon specific knowledge and examples or experiences. The best candidates wrote with flair and intelligence, demonstrating an appropriate breadth of vocabulary and accurate and persuasive language.

When candidates did not get high marks for this section, it was often because essays lacked structure and analysis, and only made superficial reference to a Portuguese-speaking country or community.

Pleasingly, the great majority of candidates wrote within the word limits recommended in the rubric.

Questions 10, 12 and 14 were the most popular, with 14, on the effect of new technology on family life, by far the most widely chosen. The best candidates explored the issues raised in appropriate detail and included specific data or examples.

Questions 11 and 13 were less popular, but were done well by the majority of those who opted for them.

Questions 15, 16 and 17 were answered by only a few candidates.

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR Customer Contact Centre

14 – 19 Qualifications (General)

Telephone: 01223 553998

Facsimile: 01223 552627

Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

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Head office
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Facsimile: 01223 552553

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