

OCR Report to Centres

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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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F887 Listening, Reading and Writing (1)

Generally, most candidates were able to cope with the paper. However, as in previous years, some candidates could not express themselves clearly in English and/or Portuguese.

Attention to spelling, endings, verb forms, gender of common nouns, adjectival and other agreements, and punctuation is an essential part of the preparation needed before taking this examination. Also important is legible handwriting as candidates are expected to write clearly.

Candidates should utilise the space provided for the answers in the question booklet, and ensure they write on the correct pages.

Section A: Listening and Writing

Task 1

This multiple choice exercise in Portuguese was generally well answered by the majority of candidates. There was no pattern to wrong answers.

Task 2

Most candidates coped well with this gap-filling exercise. There was no pattern to wrong answers. Candidates did not always ensure their answers made sense in the context of the written text as well as the text they had heard. This task points to candidate's command of the language. It is important here to copy words correctly.

Task 3

This listening comprehension exercise in English was generally well answered. Some candidates did not always ensure their answers were clearly expressed in English.

Task 4: Writing

Many candidates conveyed most or all the information successfully. A few candidates wrote more than was required. Quality of Language was generally inconsistent; there were errors of an elementary kind (punctuation, spelling, endings, verb forms, gender of common nouns, agreements, and vocabulary and structures strongly influenced by English and other languages, usually Spanish). Future candidates are advised to concentrate on improving their quality of language.

Task 5: Reading

Most candidates did this multiple choice exercise in Portuguese well. There was no pattern to wrong answers. Candidates tended to tick only between 6 and 8 boxes.

Task 6: Reading

Candidates did with this gap-filling exercise well. There was no pattern to wrong answers. As in Exercise 2, wrong answers pointed to candidates' understanding of the language.

Exercise 7: Reading

Many candidates made a successful attempt at answering most of the questions. Some, however, simply lifted material from the text and made little or no attempt to use their own words. The rubric advised the candidate to use their own words. In this exercise, candidates have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of the language. Future candidates should practise conveying the meaning of the text without using words and expressions from the text itself. Quality of Language was usually inconsistent.

Task 8a: Reading and Writing

This exercise required the candidate to demonstrate an understanding of the text based on the contents of the text, and provided an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate how well they could convey the meaning of the text in their own words.

Some candidates disregarded the instruction “*deve basear-se no texto*” and the word limit, writing well in excess of 100 words on matters extraneous to the text, such as how young people spend their time, the importance of culture and modern technology. Consequently, they only gained a few marks for their answers.

Task 8b

In this exercise, candidates were asked to write about how young people’s interest in culture could be encouraged. Many candidates focussed on what was of interest to young people or why culture was of no interest. Some candidates repeated what they had written in answer to 8(a) and only by chance did they make relevant points.

Successful candidates made an effective and confident use of a wide range of vocabulary and idiom with a variety of complex sentence structures and also were able to produce accurate spellings, including the use of capital letters, correct accents, punctuation, endings, verb forms, gender of common nouns, adjectival and other agreements.

Some candidates wrote in excess of the recommended number of words.

In both Questions 8(a) and 8(b), the quality of language was not good: with a restricted range of vocabulary and structures, and sometimes influenced by Spanish or other languages. These are aspects which teachers and future candidates are advised to give special attention to.

F888 Listening, Reading and Writing (2)

General Comments

Most candidates performed well in one or more parts of the exam, demonstrating their skills in the three areas of listening, reading and writing. Topics ranged from how expensive it is to live in Brazil, to a rapper artist; drug cartels in Mexico, Colombia and Brazil; solar energy in Angola; and lastly a choice of 8 essay topics. Candidates most often selected to write about discrimination of the elderly, Section 3 (11), followed closely by an essay about the environment (13). The essays exemplified fluency, and in some cases, a real in-depth knowledge of the topic. This knowledge was rewarded with higher marks for Relevance and Points of View. Some candidates received lower marks for Relevance and Points of View if they did not refer to a Portuguese-speaking country/community.

Comments on the sections

Section A: Listening and Writing

In Task 1, candidates had to produce accurate English responses. Q1(a) seemed to be a challenge with not all candidates able to produce 'overtake'. A range of alternatives were used; e.g. overcome, surpass, pass by. 'Overcome' was not acceptable. Similarly Q1(d) did not always produce the correct answer 'taxes', and 'imposts' was given for '*impostos*'. A good command of English is needed for this task.

Candidates used their knowledge and skills appropriately to respond to Task 2. This was a listening task about a social scientist turned rapper/poet - a topic that many candidates will have enjoyed. The majority of questions were in part/fully answered, though 2(e) and 2(j) did not elicit confident responses.

Section B: Reading and Writing

Task 3: most candidates dealt appropriately and efficiently with this task, matching the beginning and end of phrases.

Task 4: candidates did not seem to have the skills required to respond to 4(c) and 4(g). It was answered correctly by a small number.

Task 5: candidates dealt with this exercise in a very positive manner, introducing a variety of synonyms, most of which were acceptable. Most candidates responded well to the challenge and scored high marks.

Task 6: some candidates encountered problems, and copied the text in places. This practice was penalised in Quality of Language marks for Section B. Others manipulated the text well. 6(a) proved to be difficult for some candidates, and in order to receive full marks for Quality of Language, the response needed, in part, to be in the past tense, with 6(b)(i) achieving good results. 6(b)(ii) and 6(c) were answered well by all candidates.

Task 7: transfer of meaning. This proved to be challenging and discriminated well between candidates. Difficulties in particular were in transferring the meaning of "*get . . . supplied*" as in "*is to get electricity supplied across the whole country*", and in giving "*o petróleo*" correctly in English: '*oil*' or '*petroleum*' but not '*petrol*'.

Task 8: required candidates to explain the meaning of expressions selected from the text about solar energy in Angola. Candidates generally performed well in 8(a), 8(d) and 8(e). Words sometimes failed them in 8(b/c/f), or a succinctness in Portuguese was not evident. In 8(c), candidates had to choose another, suitable rendering, a preposition or at least a relative pronoun '*que*' was expected.

Task 9: a 'gap-filling' exercise based on part of paragraph 3 regarding solar energy in Angola. A variety of reasonable synonyms were offered by candidates and these were mostly acceptable. Both 9(a) and 9(b) yielded 6 marks, and more astute candidates kept going, and were focussed. Others did not offer grammatically correct, or syntactically accurate, language.

Task 10 (a similar exercise to Task 6), tested candidates' comprehension of the solar energy text. In 10(a), most candidates managed to get at least 1 mark. 10(b) elicited 2/3 marks normally. In 10(c) most candidates omitted one of the answers, not recognising the extra information concerning '*technical study/instruction*', required for the 2nd mark. 10(d) required the candidate to understand present and past time clauses.

Section C: Writing

Essay 11 (Discrimination of elderly people) was the most popular choice. There were some interesting and relevant essays on the topic.

If candidates did not include information relevant to a Portuguese-speaking community, their 'Relevance and Points of View' mark was capped at 4/10, though minimum reference to a Portuguese-speaking situation allowed for a mark of 5/10.

For Essay 13, candidates produced good vocabulary and range of idiom, with very relevant points of view, and this topic allowed for reflective, problem-solving essays, exemplifying good critical thinking. A small cohort had obviously practised and studied this topic in detail.

One or two candidates responded to essay 14, about nuclear energy and referred to newsworthy activities relating to nuclear issues in Brazil.

Whilst preparing essay topics during the A2 academic year, candidates should be reminded to focus on studying topics into which they can introduce an aspect of the subject-matter for a Portuguese-speaking community. This is a requirement for the relevance of the essay and its content at A2 level.

Comments about spelling and handwriting

Spelling, accentuation, verb endings and legible handwriting are important areas for candidates to focus on. It was noteworthy that 'o Brasil' was often spelt with a 'z'.

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