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FIRST LANGUAGE PORTUGUESE

Paper 0504/02

Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

This year's Paper was of the same level of difficulty as in previous years and many candidates coped well with it. However, in **Questions 2 and 3** many candidates did not follow all the instructions and their answers were incomplete.

Presentation of work

The instructions printed on the first page of the booklet and headed 'Read these Instructions First' were ignored by many candidates, who not only used staples but they did not staple their sheets carefully. Some candidates used highlighters.

Many candidates did not ensure their handwriting was immediately legible and the general presentation did not make reading their answers an easy task. Candidates are expected to make an effort to present readable scripts in an examination and they should remember that the Examiner needs some space to write the marks.

Number of words

Although the instruction for each question was: 'Não escreva mais de 250 palavras', once again many candidates wrote well in excess of this number. Some candidates appeared to have counted the words they wrote but were not accurate in their additions. Many candidates might have done better had they paid more attention to accuracy and to answering the questions than to the amount they wrote.

Quality of language

As in previous years, many candidates seemed unsure of many aspects of Grammar – punctuation, spelling, the use of accents and of the hyphen, verbs and tenses, agreement, gender of nouns, object and reflexive pronouns, etc. The verb 'tar' appeared frequently.

Very often candidates were unable to write correctly words that they borrowed from the Question Paper. Some candidates used text message abbreviations. They were not asked to write text messages and such abbreviations are not accepted out of context.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Most candidates answered this question quite well and included most if not all details. Many candidates did not compare the two criminals, but simply described the crimes each committed and did not try to point out any similarities or differences between the two.

Many candidates, especially those who wrote excessively long answers, included irrelevant material, commenting, for example, on crime in general, as in:

O crime é algo que afecta todos os habitantes deste nosso planeta. Quer seja um pequeno furto, quer seja um assalto à mão armada, todos nós já fomos vítimas do crime ou conhecemos histórias de pessoas que foram.

Com este artigo, pretendo mostrar que dois criminosos com personalidades e atitudes muito diferentes, podem ter um passado muito igual.

Sometimes candidates did not express themselves clearly, as in: *Os dois criminosos roubam os mesmos tipos de vítimas apesar de que o tipo de vítimas que eles roubam são diferentes*; but there were interesting observations, as in: *Leonardo ficou infamoso pelo seu crime.*

Question 2

In this question candidates were asked to write an interview in which the criminal of their choice explains how he will be a reformed character when he leaves prison.

Most candidates chose Leonardo and most wrote interesting interviews. However, some candidates did not answer the question. They wrote long irrelevant introductions, with details of where the interview took place and who else was present or the criminal's attitude which was irrelevant.

Sometimes introductory remarks were shorter, as in:

*Magina seu ***, será uma honra ajudar você no seu trampo! Nós, aqui de dentro nunca recebemos visitas, e quando vem um repórter assim como o senhor agente gosta.*

However, after the introduction, candidates invariably focused on one or more of the following: life in prison, the rebellion, Leonardo's book, the criminal's background, the remorse he feels; and only at the very end did they remember to ask the criminal how he is going to be a better citizen, and managed to get him to say:

Quando estiver solto, dedicarei-me a projectos voluntários em benefício de crianças carentes e doentes. Quero sentir-me útil à sociedade.

Or simply: *Quero tirar onda com a mulherada, elas adoram.*

More often than not candidates failed to write about the criminal's future good behaviour.

Some candidates were unsure of the form of address and used both *tu* and *você*.

Question 3

There were three aspects to this question: The importance of the Internet, what the candidate has learnt or can learn from the digital world and why everyone should have access to the Net.

Again, many candidates concentrated on one aspect, namely the importance of the Internet and answers tended to be 'lists' of what the Internet had to offer. Many answers were written only in the present tense. No mention was made to describe what the candidate had actually learnt from the digital world and many candidates simply added *por isso é que acho que todos devem ter acesso à Internet*, making no attempt to develop this part of the answer.

Candidates who made the effort to plan their answers and adhere to the required number of words did succeed in covering all the points in an interesting way, as the following concluding statement illustrates:

Tudo considerado, acho que todos deveriam ter acesso há internet porque é fácil de usar, é barato e divertido. Há muitos jogos para entreter os mais novos na internet. É uma maneira simples de estar em contacto com amigos e é educacional.

<p>Paper 0504/03 Continuous Writing</p>

General comments

It was clear that Centres heeded last year's report which referred to the importance of sticking to the word limit set for each question. This was not a difficulty on this occasion and is an indication that the candidates had been well prepared for the examination. Between them, candidates chose to tackle the whole range of questions available and it was particularly good to see a few of them undertake a question based on poetry. It was also encouraging to have many candidates writing answers reflecting the context from within which they were writing.

Candidates' language performance was of a very good level, with a majority achieving high marks. However, there were some common spelling mistakes: *comessei* (*comecei*); *visinhos* (*vizinhos*); *fassam* (*façam*); *difficil* (*difícil*); *accidentes* (*acidentes*); *dansa* (*dança*).

Frequent anglicisms occurred: *costume* (used in the context of clothing); *donar* (donate in English = *doar* in Portuguese); *suportar* (used where *apoiar* would have been appropriate).

Many candidates were confused in their usage of *porque*; *porquê*; and *por quê*. Similarly there was difficulty with the verb *haver* indicating time with the preposition *a* and *à* (*crase*).

There were several examples of popular abbreviations of spoken Portuguese and slang, which are inappropriate in this kind of written material: *mascras* (for *máscaras*); *prá* (*para*); *tão* (*estão*); and *tarem* (*estarem*).

There was some confusion in the use of the object pronoun with verbs in the plural, with the incorrect insertion of hyphens: *ter-mos* (*termos*); *caí-sem* (*caíssem*); *irí-amos* (*iríamos*); and *achá-mos* (*achámos*).

Unfortunately some candidates had not planned their material carefully. A number of answers lacked structure and tended to wander between points which had insufficient links between them.

Vocabulary was wide and precise. However there were some spelling mistakes. It was good to see a variety of lengths and types of sentences with good structure.

The main areas of weakness were in punctuation and accents. On some occasions accents and punctuation were omitted, on others they were wrongly employed.

The Examiner was sensitive to the differences between European, Brazilian and African Portuguese.