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FIRST LANGUAGE PORTUGUESE

Paper 0504/02

Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

Most candidates showed a good knowledge of the Portuguese language. The vast majority of the candidates performed in the A-C category.

On the whole presentation was good. Indeed good presentation generally betokened a good performance. Some candidates did, however, write exceedingly sloppily, which seemed to prejudice the coherence of their texts. For instance, some candidates left unfinished sentences, one-line paragraphs and other syntactical inconsistencies.

The vocabulary and verbal constructions of the vast majority of the candidates was more than adequate for the task at hand. In the first question the argument structure adopted was often excessively dependent on the original texts. Conclusions were also often lacking. The second question, in which the candidates' own cultural knowledge and creativity was drawn on was perhaps the best answered.

Grammar was generally sound. At times there was a little excessive colloquialism. Confusion between *há* and *à* was widespread.

Vocabulary was seldom a problem for most candidates. Some candidates omitted accents; some overcompensated, especially with the *c* cedilla. Some candidates confused *ão* with *am*. Often candidates spelt Portuguese words with English spellings, often by including double letters, such as *ll*, *ff* or *cc*.

Candidates should be reminded to read the instructions, and to stick to the word limit. Some candidates performed less well than the general level of their Portuguese would lead to expect by failing to abide by the rubrics.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a) Most candidates covered this question well, though few candidates succeeded in drawing extended and thoughtful comparisons and contrasts. The weaker candidates' efforts tended to be quite repetitive, whilst the more able candidates extrapolated the scope of the interviews to produce insightful juxtapositions of the two artists' statements.

(b)(i) While the weaker candidates departed little from the content of the original texts, some of the more able candidates wrote extremely interesting and imaginative articles.

A minority of candidates summarised the text (or began with long and contrived introductions) and did not really write from the imagined position of two years' hindsight demanded in the rubric.

(ii) Most candidates performed as well as could be expected with this question. The sparseness of the question was generally interpreted literally by the vast majority of the candidates resulting, in the main, in answers summarising the information given in the question, often with little or no development and occasionally in list form.

Paper 0504/03
Continuous Writing

General comments

Some candidates had great difficulty in articulating complex ideas and experiences. Some also found it difficult to present facts and opinions in a mature fashion. Some transcripts were not consistent with the chosen topic. For example in **Question 2**, which asked for a description of someone the candidates would like to meet, many tried to describe the sort of person they would like to meet, and not an actual person as such.

There was an improvement in the use of paragraphs and in grammatical structure. However, some scripts lacked order with a clear beginning, middle and end to the answer.

Candidates need to exercise more care in spelling and punctuation. There were examples of whole paragraphs not split into sentences, nor containing commas where these would have been appropriate. There were also lapses in the use of accents in words such as *incrível*; *país*; *último*. There was also confusion between: *por quê*, *porque*, and *por que*; *a*, *há*, and *à*; and between *mas* and *mais*.

There was a common mistake in the use of the cedilla (ç), in words such as *células*, *abraçei* and *conhecer*. A lot of candidates attempted to use Portuguese words as if they were the same as similar-sounding words or terms in English. In some case this actually confused the meaning because the equivalent term in Portuguese means something else. For example the word *suporte* seems correct, but the word *apoio* would have been more accurate. Other examples of incorrectly used words were: *realisar* and *atendente*.

Candidates had difficulty in the use of pronouns. Some began sentences and paragraphs with a pronoun.

The standard of presentation and handwriting was generally very poor, with many examples of work which began neatly but in which the quality of presentation declined as it progressed.

This year candidates were more successful in keeping their work to the required length. It was good to see examples of candidates attempting to create an atmosphere in their text and demonstrating a sensitivity to the needs of the reader in doing so.