

FIRST LANGUAGE PORTUGUESE

Paper 0504/01

Reading

Key Messages

To do well in this paper, candidates are expected to answer **Question 1** in a concise manner always relating to the information in the text. To score high marks for Quality of Language, candidates should display a good command of the language by spelling words correctly, varying the way they start the sentences and showing a good grasp of grammar structures.

In **Question 2** candidates are expected to use their own language and write their own text on the basis of the two texts they read. They are rewarded for their capacity to summarise the main ideas on both texts and to produce their own well-structured piece of writing. Candidates who do very well in this question always organise ideas into different paragraphs, use correct punctuation and accents, link ideas by means of a variety of connectives and use a broad range of vocabulary.

General Comments

In **Question 1** some of the responses were excellent and many candidates made an effort to use their own words as much as possible when answering the questions. They spelt words correctly not forgetting accents, used verb tenses appropriately and tried to vary their answers by starting the sentences in different ways. The best answers were succinct and expressed in a way that showed a sound understanding of the text.

In **Question 2** many excellent responses contained a whole range of ideas relating to the causes, opportunities and difficulties of immigration. There were responses that showed consistent analysis and a clear style. Many candidates demonstrated a solid capacity to detach themselves from the two texts and to produce their own piece of writing with a good degree of independence. Candidates who did not achieve good results tended to repeat chunks of information and lifted sentences from the two texts, in most cases adding minor details irrelevant to the question. To improve the quality of responses in future years, please remind candidates that it is absolutely essential to have a plan before starting writing. Candidates should be able to demonstrate ability to select only the relevant information and to collate it all in a coherent piece of writing.

Comments on Specific Questions

In **Question 1 (a)** many candidates lost their mark because they omitted “more than” in their answers. Instead of answering “more than 30 years”, many wrote only “30 years”. It is very important that candidates at this level read the text carefully and pay attention to detail.

In answering **Question 1 (c)** many candidates failed to understand the word “decurso” as in “no decurso de um telefonema” and many wrote “discurso” or other variations instead of “decurso”. Candidates need to be aware that unfamiliar words will always appear and they should not attempt to guess synonyms but should focus on conveying the general idea.

Most of the candidates answered **Question 1 (g)** correctly.

In **Question 1 (i)** some candidates were not aware that they should refer to 3 aspects as the Question is worth 3 marks.

FIRST LANGUAGE PORTUGUESE

Paper 0504/02

Writing

Key Message

In order to achieve high marks on paper 2, candidates should ensure that their work has a clear structure and fluency. A good introduction and an effective conclusion at the end are equally important. Candidates should be able to demonstrate adequate control of grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Centres are reminded that, whilst preparing for the exam, candidates should attempt a variety of different kinds of composition: argumentative, discursive, descriptive and narrative.

General comments

Candidates are expected to write two compositions, one from **Section 1** – Discussion and Argument, and one from **Section 2** – Description and Narration. There are four questions in each section. Both compositions carry equal marks out of 25 – a maximum mark of 12 for style and accuracy and 13 for content and structure. It is important that candidates allocate their time equally between their two compositions. Unfortunately there were instances of candidates who appeared to have been rushed towards the end of their work and of others who did not manage to finish their second composition. Candidates who are tempted to go beyond the stipulated word limit should note that this does not necessarily improve the quality of the work presented.

The majority of this year's candidates wrote in fluent Portuguese, in correctly constructed sentences with effective and varied vocabulary. Concepts and opinions were clearly communicated, conveying thoughts and arguments coherently.

The most able candidates, those who scored between 11 and 12 marks for style and accuracy, wrote lively and interesting compositions, which were a pleasure to mark. The overall impression is that the questions were very accessible and relevant to the candidates' lives. Some candidates, on the other hand, were inconsistent in their work, with a limited ability to express and justify their points of view.

There were a number of recurrent mistakes:

- As in previous years, frequent and repeated mistakes in the positioning of pronouns, including a tendency to commence sentences and paragraphs with pronouns and using them after a comma (pause) – *me deparei; abraçar-lo; ajudar ela; peguei ele.*
- Please note that in the new *Acordo Ortográfico* (1990) the hyphen was abolished in *fim de semana, sala de jantar* and *día a dia*.
- There was a heavy reliance on the word *coisa*, which often indicated a certain limitation in vocabulary. In addition, the word *você* was frequently used which tended to convey a familiar tone.
- Candidates also demonstrated confusion in their use of words such as *mau* and *mal; bem* and *bom; a, à* and *há; mas* and *mais; atrás* (adverb) and *traz* (verb) and *trás* (adverb); *tudo* and *toda; viagem* and *viajar*.
- Inaccurate use of *ç* in *começei; faleceu; abraçei.*
- Spelling mistakes: *preciza; pesquisa; involver; derepente; competitividade; lissões; illegal; conceguir.*
- Subject in the plural and complement in the singular or vice versa – *ss olimpíadas acontece; os esportes é; muita gente tinham; as pessoas nunca estão feliz; haviam muitas organizações.*

- Errors in the use of subjunctives – *é normal que eles sonham; se ele gastava menos dinheiro; para que podemos usar a Internet.*
- Plural of verbs ending in *m* – *estavão; gastão tenham; podião.*
- Colloquialisms – *prá; tava; tá; tás*

Comments on Specific Questions

Section 1 Discussion and Argument

- (a) Few candidates chose this question. It required to argue the positive and negative aspects of being competitive. Some argued that being competitive reveals animal instincts and selfishness. It was disappointing that a small number of candidates did not address the second part of the question, which explores the way in which competitiveness has the capacity to drive people apart.

It is important that candidates read the questions carefully. Some misspelled the word *competitividade*.

- (b) This was the most popular question this session. Those who planned the work carefully succeeded in focusing on the main issue. But those who did not plan well tended to wander off into peripheral aspects of the subject. Only a few wrote about the global aspects of the Internet, preferring to concentrate more on the personal experience of using it than on the world-wide nature of the web.
- (c) Some candidates took a very philosophical approach to money, arguing that it does not automatically bring happiness, but that having enough of it is a human right. Everybody deserves to live a full life, but without excess. So these candidates argued persuasively that it is no good having plenty of money if there is no one to share it with. Some candidates wrote about being rich in a positive way, where money is used for philanthropic purposes, such as in the case of Bill Gates, who has made a fortune and uses it to fund research and aid programmes to provide vaccines against major diseases in poorer countries. This was seen to be in marked contrast to those people who see the pursuit of wealth as the means to acquiring possessions such as imported cars and spend it on foreign travel and a luxurious life style.
- (d) This question attracted a large number of candidates because it proved to be relevant to their life style and age. It is good to see that candidates got straight into the issue and were keen to express their own opinions, sometimes very strongly. They were not afraid to disagree with the opinion that the Olympics are the biggest sporting event in the world, arguing that there are sports which attract more people and money. Moreover, the Olympic Games, they argued, tend to be dominated by the richest nations who are able to fund the huge cost of hosting and participating in them. But there were other candidates who believe that the Olympics are a way of promoting peace and understanding amongst young people and that the Paralympic Games promote unity in the midst of diversity.

Section 2 Description and Narration

- (a) There were candidates who managed to develop a story full of creativity and originality, drawing on their own experience in life. Some managed to create appropriate and interesting essays. There were contemporary issues used in the stories, such as bullying, racism, personal appearance, and social integration. Most stories were well balanced and the climax to them carefully managed. Some candidates found it difficult to keep their composition short.
- (b) This was a very successful question that served its purpose. Most candidates used appropriate adjectives and phrases to describe a house, its decoration, its colours, its smells and its atmosphere. There was very good use of adjectives and expressive phrases: *majestosa; paraíso tropical; a brisa que entra pelas cortinas esvoaçadas; suave deslizar das areais; cores vivas, exuberantes; o cheiro do mar, das especiarias da Índia.* The phrases were well constructed and included a wide range of appropriate vocabulary.

- (c) Candidates who chose this question produced a wide range of compositions. A few were very successful in employing a wider and varied range of styles to interest the reader. Many spent too much time setting the scene instead of developing a straightforward story with a real climax. It is important to focus on the heart of the narrative and to not spend too much time going into irrelevant details.
- (d) All the responses to this question were appropriate. Candidates were able to describe in a very effective way what they felt and imagined as they arrived at an airport where family and friends were waiting for them. Some compositions had a happy and exciting ending and the language being used was appropriate.

Candidates should be made aware of the need for paragraphing and accuracy in their writing.

It was evident that those candidates who spent time planning their compositions were the ones who achieved the high marks.

In general the standard of this year's essays was very good. The majority of Centres prepared their candidates well, evidently taking into account the report on the previous year's paper.