

FOREIGN LANGUAGE PORTUGUESE

Paper 0540/02
Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

The paper seemed to be well received by all candidates. The exam did not seem to present any great problems to the majority of candidates and both Teachers and candidates should be congratulated on the high standard of performance.

As preparation for this exam it would be good practice for the candidates to read texts and questions carefully and only extract the required information.

Inference and interpretation play an important part in this exam and candidates should be prepared for this.

The correct use of Present, Past and Future tenses should be shown and Teachers can help the candidates to gain this knowledge.

The requirement to stick to the word count in the writing exercises should be re-enforced and Teachers MUST show their candidates how to adequately keep a check on this, as marks for accuracy are only awarded on the number of words asked for.

The Writing section was marked positively, rewarding what the candidates had achieved.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1

Questions 1 - 6

Almost 100% of candidates achieved full marks in this exercise.

Exercise 2

Questions 7 - 13

Most candidates found this exercise easy but some got confused between a *Telenovela* and a film.

Exercise 3

Questions 14 - 20

No problems here.

Exercise 4

Question 21

The majority of candidates responded well to this writing exercise and only few wrote about their own holidays, without referring to the icons.

Section 2

Exercise 1

Questions 22 - 31

There were a few different answers for **Question 27**. Some candidates said they were in the countryside and on the beach, others said all over the country, but most had the correct answer. Several candidates copied the whole chunk of the last paragraph of the text to answer **Question 31**.

Exercise 2

Question 32

Only a few candidates paid attention to the last rubric given in this writing question. They had good suggestions for different activities but generally these were ignored. The word count was a problem for some candidates. They wrote more than the number of words required.

Section 3

Exercise 1

Questions 33 - 38

There were a few wrong answers in **Question 36**. They opted for **C** when the correct answer was **B**. Careful reading would have provided these candidates with the correct answer.

Exercise 2

Questions 39 - 44

Mostly the candidates answered this exercise well. They needed to infer from the text and some candidates found this a bit difficult. When asked to give two examples many just gave one. Once again this exercise asked for careful reading.

Exercise 3

Questions 45 - 64

Most candidates filled in the right word in the spaces. This kind of exercise does not feature in the coming exams.

Paper 0540/03

Speaking

General comments

This was the first year for the new structure of the Speaking Test, and it is pleasing to report a smooth and largely trouble-free transition for the great majority of Centres. Examiners had clearly taken time to familiarise themselves and their candidates with the new format, and there was no discernible change in standard or performance on previous years.

The published mark scheme tables were, for the most part, judiciously applied by Examiners, which greatly facilitated moderation.

Attention is drawn, however, to the requirement that on no account should the tape be stopped once a test has begun.

The opportunity is taken to thank Centres for the care and effort invested by them in the conduct of the Speaking Test.

Comments on specific questions

Test 1

Role Plays

Most candidates coped very well indeed with the demands of this part of the exam. In a small number of cases, however, difficulties arose when the Examiner altered the suggested responses to such an extent that the candidate was unable to complete the task set. Sometimes additional questions were asked of the candidate, which led to confusion and the unfortunate omission of utterances carrying marks. It is strongly advised that Examiners adhere closely to the responses to be found in the Teachers' Notes.

Test 2

Topic Conversation

Again, most candidates performed well in this section, although a significant number of Centres treated it as if it were no different to the old 'Presentation and Discussion' part of the former test. It should be noted that there is no requirement for a prepared speech from the candidate; indeed, the Teachers' Notes say that the candidate 'must not be allowed to deliver a prepared monologue'.

It is also advisable to avoid 'Myself' as the prepared topic, as this can overlap with the General Conversation.

Test 3

General Conversation

This part of the exam is unchanged and, as expected, presented no major difficulties. Most candidates were encouraged to speak on topics they were comfortable and familiar with, as suggested in the Teachers' Notes.

In a few cases, candidates were disadvantaged by being asked questions on topics outside their experiences: some Examiners gave their candidates much less than the five minutes required; and a minority of candidates were denied the opportunity to show that they were able to convey past and future meaning, which prevented them from scoring in the Satisfactory band and above (see Table B of the mark scheme in the Teachers' Notes). Fortunately, these problems affected only a small number of candidates.

<p>Paper 0540/04 Continuous Writing</p>

General comments

Most candidates coped well with this paper.

Presentation

Some candidates did not ensure their handwriting was immediately legible. Candidates should only write on the lines provided for their answers.

Length of answers

The instructions were to write between 110 and 140 words. Some candidates wrote in excess of 140 words, for which they did not gain any marks. It is important that candidates adhere to the required length of answers. Candidates who wrote excessively long answers might have fared better had they concentrated on the quality of their answers.

Language

Although most candidates answered well, many were very unsure of many aspects of grammar, including punctuation, the use of capital letters, the use of accents and of the hyphen, verb forms, forms of address, etc.

Some candidates were unable to spell correctly words that they borrowed from the question paper.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Most candidates chose option **(a)**.

Most candidates wrote interesting e-mails or application letters, although sometimes candidates who chose **Question 1 (b)** simply copied the descriptions given in the advertisement. Some candidates used *Olá* as an opening to the formal letter.

Question 2

There were many interesting answers to this question. Sometimes candidates gave long lists of food and drinks and made no attempt to add interest to their descriptions by using adjectives, adverbs, etc. Sometimes there was no variety of verbs.

A few candidates used the present tense throughout and did not demonstrate their knowledge of past tenses. In answer to this question candidates were expected to use the past and other tenses.