

PORTUGUESE (Foreign Language)

Paper 0540/02
Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

Most candidates performed generally well on this paper. We would like to congratulate the teachers on their efforts in this examination and wish to encourage them to continue their excellent work to:

- Expose exam candidates to a wide variety of reading and written material;
- Instil an attentive approach to reading;
- Increase the candidates' awareness of the grammar and syntax of the target language;
- Encourage a wide use of tenses.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 – Questions 1–5

Surprisingly many candidates had problems with **Question 4**. They did not recognize the word *oficina* or the word *avariado* and said that they would go to a castle to repair their car. Otherwise, the majority of the candidates answered correctly to the other questions.

Exercise 2 – Questions 6–10

The majority of the candidates performed very well on these questions.

Exercise 3 – Questions 11–15

Some candidates did not read the text carefully and got **Question 12** and **Question 15** wrong. Angola was both in the title of the text and in **Question 12**, and for **Question 15** it says in the text that the minimum height has to be 1.65 m.

Exercise 4 – Question 16

In this type of exercise candidates should be able to relate their answers to the pictures. Some candidates gave in their answers a different time, a different day of the week, as well as a different location to meet up. Hence, they lost points unnecessarily. Others gave simply the title of the film and did not specify what kind of film it was.

Section 2

Exercise 1 – Questions 17 – 23

Most candidates gained full marks on this exercise. **Question 17** and **Question 19** had sometimes the same answer. The latter one required the *aumento* (increase) of the electronic waste.

Exercise 2 – Question 24

This writing exercise was generally pleasing to read and correct.

Section 3

Exercise 1 – Questions 25 – 34

As the difficulty increased, more candidates found it harder to answer all the questions well. These candidates either did not read carefully the questions or did not understand the text sufficiently well to answer correctly to the questions. In **Question 27**, for example, some candidates related *tarefas* with *deveres* and therefore chose a wrong option. **Questions 30 –32** also required a more attentive read to pick the right answer.

Exercise 2 – Questions 35 – 41

The answers for **Question 35** and **Question 36** sometimes overlapped. In **Question 39**, some candidates did not differentiate between who answered the phone, sometimes calling him her brother instead of her son, forgetting that the author of the text was also another son. This shows a lack of attention when reading the text.

Inference plays an important part in **Section 3** and candidates should be prepared for it.

Conclusion:

The majority of the candidates performed well in the examination and did not seem to have had problems in finishing the test. Almost all the candidates attempted the extended part of the exam.

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Paper 0540/03

Speaking

General comments

Once again it is pleasing to report that the Speaking tests ran smoothly for the most part, and Centres are thanked for their careful attention to detail in planning and administration. In almost all cases, the time-consuming but necessary paperwork was efficiently completed, with marks accurately totalled and entered on the mark sheets.

It is understood that the nature of this component might make some candidates a little apprehensive, but most candidates had clearly been well prepared for the test and were able to give of their best with confidence. Unfortunately, in a few instances there were candidates who appeared unfamiliar with the format of the test. As in previous reports, Centres are urged to provide candidates with sufficient opportunity for practice, including going through past-paper Role plays.

Comments on specific questions

Role plays A

These presented no difficulties for most candidates. Regrettably, as in previous years, some otherwise excellent candidates were denied access to the highest marks because the teacher/Examiner altered the Role play in such a way as to cause the candidates to omit one or more of the required tasks as printed on their Role play card. Usually, this happened because the teacher/Examiner expanded the Role play by adding extra questions and then forgot to return to the tasks set out in the Teachers' Notes. While this may lend an air of spontaneity to the exercise, it is a strategy to be discouraged. No marks can be awarded for the completion of tasks beyond those printed on the candidate's card. On the other hand, maximum marks are available to the candidate who correctly completes just the five tasks required. Centres are advised that there is simply no need to risk confusing and penalising candidates by expanding upon or deviating from the Role plays as printed.

Role plays B

Again, most candidates encountered little difficulty with these Role plays. The issues referred to above, regarding alterations and omissions, affected the performance of some candidates; in a few cases, the Role plays were changed so as to oblige the candidates to respond in the present tense rather than the past or future as indicated.

Topic (prepared) Conversation

Most candidates were very well prepared, and spoke confidently and knowledgeably on their chosen topics. In a few cases, the teacher/Examiner allowed too long an introduction before intervening with questions.

General (unprepared) Conversation

In this section, most candidates were given ample opportunity to speak on a wide range of appropriate topics, prompted by carefully-chosen questions from the teacher/Examiners.

It would be much appreciated if teacher/Examiners could indicate on the tape the end of Topic conversation and the start of the General conversation – in a few cases, this was not always entirely clear.

PORTUGUESE (Foreign Language)

Paper 0540/04
Continuous Writing

General comments

Most candidates coped well with both questions. However, some candidates had serious difficulties with regards to vocabulary and grammar.

Candidates should always make an effort to write legibly and make sure their handwriting is clear, which is not always the case.

Some candidates also wrote in excess of the required number of words and were therefore penalised, as they were indeed unable to answer every point required in the allowed word limit.

There was at times some influence of Spanish, Italian and English in some of the answers (spelling/vocabulary).

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Slightly more candidates chose **Question (b)** rather than **Question (a)**. In general, candidates included all the necessary details mentioned in the question and some of the responses for **Question (b)** were quite good.

- (a) Some candidates were unsure of how to start a letter addressed to the Secretary of Tourism; others simply forgot it should be formal. They used both *tu* and *você*. Candidates should also pay more attention to accuracy as regards gender and number in the same sentence. Some candidates should also work on the use of *tanto*, *tão* and *muito*.
- (b) It was interesting to read about the various activities to do in the countryside of different countries. Some candidates used conjunctions and subjunctive very well, while others need to study further the following points:
- When to use accents (including the difference between *nós* and *nos*);
 - The use of reflexive pronouns;
 - The use of *por*, *pela*, *pelo* and *para*;
 - The difference between *têm* and *tem*;
 - The different meanings of “play” in Portuguese;
 - How to spell numbers.

Question 2

Most candidates followed the instructions very well and wrote interesting answers, but others forgot to mention the reason why the party ended.

Once again, as per last year, a few candidates wrote letters, which was not a requirement. The candidates should be reminded to read the instructions and questions carefully before they start writing.

There were the following general problems with regards to vocabulary and grammar:

- Verbs in the infinitive when these should be conjugated;
- Verbs such as *fue* (*foi*), *foi* (*fui*), *encendeu* (*acendeu*), *explotou* (*explodiu*), *bebimos* (*bebemos*), etc;

- “b” instead of “v” or vice-versa: *disfrutaba, estabam, acabando, trabalhavam*, etc;
- Misunderstanding between *ser* and *estar*, *bem* and *bom*, *mais* and *mas* and *tudo* and *todo*;
- Lack of accuracy in gender and number in the same sentence;
- Omission of prepositions: “O (no) ano passado...”;
- Lack of ability to differentiate the:
 - 1) Present tense from Preterite – *convidamos / convidámos* and
 - 2) Preterite from Imperfect – *A música foi (estava) alta*.
- Interference of another language: “costumes” (*trajes/roupas*), *e tive um bom tempo (diverti-me)* – “I had a good time”;
- Words such as: *hasta, cuando, volviu, mirar as estrelas, pero, empezou, comensou, invitados*, etc.