

FOREIGN LANGUAGE PORTUGUESE

Paper 0540/02
Speaking

General comments

In general the exam was well received by all candidates. The majority of the candidates showed good understanding when responding to the exam questions and finished the exam within the time.

As future preparation for the exam it would be good practice for candidates to read a variety of texts and to study texts accompanied by comprehension questions. When answering the questions, candidates need to read them carefully and only extract the relevant information.

Inference and interpretation of the information given in the text play an important part in Section 3 of the exam and candidates should be prepared for that.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercício 1: Perguntas 1–5

Almost all the candidates responded to these questions correctly.

P2 – Very few candidates did not correctly establish the difference between ‘the sea’ in picture D and ‘a lake’ in picture A.

Exercício 2: Perguntas 6–10

Well answered with few exceptions that might not have known the work ‘oficina’ as a service station in A and opted for D, ‘tabacaria’, losing a mark.

Exercício 3: Perguntas 11–15

Unfortunately, this exercise caused problems to a number of candidates in Ps 12 and 13. For 12 they misinterpreted the text ‘limpa o café todos os dias exceto às segundas’ and answered A ‘todos os dias’ instead C ‘de terça a domingo’. For P 13 again, some candidates didn’t pay close attention to detail reading the text and although it says ‘à tarde, quando a escola termina’, answered A ‘só de manhã’ because the first sentence says that Rui starts school at 7 in the morning.

Exercício 4: Perguntas 16

The responses to this writing exercise had a lot of Spanish interference especially in c). Words like ‘botella’, ‘calzado’, ‘zapatos’ and other different spellings frequently appeared that did not score and showed Spanish influences that rendered the answers incorrect.

Section 2

Exercício 1: Perguntas 17–24

Generally well answered. Very few candidates had some problems with Ps 18 and 21 which seemed to come from insufficient comprehension of the text.

Exercício 2: Pergunta 25

This writing exercise was generally correct and did not present any difficulties to candidates. A couple of candidates did not write more than a few lines but generally most scored full marks for Communication and also for Accuracy although Spanish elements were frequently found.

Section 3

Exercício 1: Perguntas 26–31

This was a more demanding exercise as candidates had to decide if the statements were True or False and then correct the false statements. Candidates who had not read the rubric even justified the statements they had identified as correct, thus losing marks.

Few candidates confused P 26 with 29. Ps 28, 29 and 30 were more challenging and many candidates got them wrong. In P28 the word 'teto' was misconstrued as 'rio' and a number of candidates marked P30 as True, thus losing the mark.

Exercício 2: Perguntas 32–39

Many candidates responded quite well to this last exercise but many others found it difficult; some didn't attempt it. This exercise differentiated successfully between stronger and weaker candidates.

P34 had mixed answers. Some wrote 'what' Ana taught, instead of 'where' she did it and even 'why' she did it.

P36 also had confusing replies. Equally P37 had a variety of answers.

For P38 many answered 'contou com a ajuda do marido' when the expected was 'pensar melhor nas despesas familiares'.

P39 received a mixture of answers (some of which did not make sense) taken from parts of sentences of the last paragraph.

SFOREIGN LANGUAGE PORTUGUESE

Paper 0540/03
Speaking

General comments

Most candidates seemed well prepared for this year's Speaking test. They seemed familiar with the 3 different sections of the exam and most of them performed confidently and competently in each section. There was general improvement in performance in the role play section. Examiners should continue to allow candidates to have access to past papers to practice the foreign language and to familiarise themselves with the structure of the test.

Unfortunately Examiners did not always follow the instructions about the conduct of the examination this year, thus disadvantaging the candidates. Examiners are reminded to prepare in advance for the examination, referring to the Teachers' Notes booklet for details. It is crucial that they read the previous year's report before the examination. This has detailed feedback and suggestions for improvement. Many Centres make the same mistakes from year to year, which indicates that they may not be acting on these reports. Please keep in mind that the Examiner's performance impacts directly on the candidate's performance.

Recording

Recordings this year were mostly of excellent quality and there was an improvement from last year. Please note that recordings on cassettes tend to be of lower quality. Therefore, whenever possible please try to use CDs instead of cassettes. Please package CDs well so that they won't break in the course of transit.

Centres are advised to check that all recording equipment is working properly before the start of the examination and then, before submitting CDs/cassettes, that all recordings are clearly audible.

Centres that record onto CDs should ensure that each candidate's Speaking test is recorded onto a separate track and is properly identified according to instructions in the Teacher's Notes booklet. Most Centres fail to clearly identify each recording. Please refer to the instructions in the Teacher's Notes about details of identifying and labelling the recordings. It is worth reminding Examiners that once the examination has begun, the recording must not be stopped or paused between the different sections of the examination, but should run continuously until the end of that candidate's examination. A couple of Centres did not follow this instruction.

Sample

Samples were very well selected this year. Centres are reminded that the cover sheet for moderation sample must be completed and enclosed with the sample. This year over half of the Centres did not include the cover sheet.

Mark Sheets

Centres are reminded that they should check additions carefully in order to avoid errors. More addition mistakes were made this year than in previous years. It is also important to check that the transfer of marks from the working mark sheet to the MS1/CAMEO is correct. In addition, when completing the MS1, the final mark in figures must also be entered as well as shading the lozenges.

Please make sure you send both the working mark sheet and the MS1/CAMEO.

A couple of Centres sent incomplete mark sheets this session.

Comments on specific questions

Role Plays

I am pleased to say that Examiners seem to have taken time and care to prepare for the role plays. This reflected positively in the marks for this section. Occasionally a few Examiners created new tasks or missed out tasks. Examiners are reminded that they should keep to the 5 prompts given in Role Play A and in Role Play B and that they should not create any additional questions or miss out any of the tasks in order not to confuse or disadvantage any candidate.

Examiners are reminded of the need for careful preparation of Role Plays in order to ensure that candidates are given the correct cues which allow them to attempt the required tasks. Please remember, when candidates omit a task, Examiners should prompt them to attempt it, to give them the opportunity to work for marks. Where a response is ambiguous, the Examiner should prompt the candidate to allow him/her to clarify and possibly score a higher mark.

Where part of the task is for the candidate to greet or thank their interlocutor or to 'Manifestar surpresa', and these are omitted, the maximum mark for the task is 1. Some candidates struggled to express surprise this session.

In terms of assessment, sometimes marks were awarded even though tasks were not attempted or only partially complete. This was more noticeable when candidates were supposed to thank or express an emotion. On the other hand, sometimes marks were not awarded for correct short answers. Please note that 3 marks can be awarded for a one-word / brief answer where that is correct and appropriate to the task – candidates are not required to use full sentences. Comprehensive answers with minor mistakes can get 3 points, while comprehensive answers with the wrongly conjugated verbs should not get 3. No marks can be given if the Examiner offers options when it is not an options task.

Topic Presentation and Conversation

The majority of candidates had prepared their topic well, but in a few cases they sounded rather over-rehearsed / pre-learnt and lacking in spontaneity.

Candidates should prepare a 1-2-minute presentation on a topic of their own choice and deliver it without interruptions by the Examiner. They may use illustrative material, e.g. photographs, if this seems appropriate to their topic, but are not allowed to use written notes of any kind. This presentation should be spontaneous and should then be followed by questions on that topic for 2-3 minutes. Some of this year's presentations were sometimes too long whereas others were too short. The presentation and conversation together should not take over 5 minutes. Examiners are reminded to keep to the timings in the interest of fairness to all candidates. Candidates should be interrupted if they go over 2 minutes.

In general there was a good variety of themes, but in a few Centres all candidates talked about the same topics: My Life, My School or Myself. These topics should be avoided as they severely restrict the possibility for general conversation.

It is important that the Examiner asks questions which will allow the candidates to show that they can use past and future tenses accurately. This is a reoccurring problem in this section with many Examiners clearly disadvantaging some candidates who were very good, but were only asked questions about the present, not having the opportunity to show what they knew. Examiners need to ask questions about past and future in both sections to elicit past and future tenses. Most Examiners forget to ask questions eliciting the future in this section.

General Conversation

Examiners are reminded to indicate the transition from topic to general conversation very clearly, with a phrase such as "Agora vamos passar para a terceira fase do exame, a fase de conversação geral".

The great majority of Examiners created a good atmosphere during the exam where the candidates felt relaxed and seemed happy to contribute with their views. A few worked very hard to get the best out of weaker candidates and sometimes exceeded the time limit of 5 minutes. Please try to keep within the time limit even with weaker candidates.

The main points for improvement in this section are the following:

- Examiners should try to avoid asking closed questions which candidates can answer by saying “yes”, “no” or single word replies.
- Allow the conversation to flow. The aim is to explore two or three topics in more depth. Fewer well explored topics can be more productive than a series of unconnected questions.
- It is important to provide candidates with opportunities to express themselves, using a wide range of vocabulary and tenses and more complex language and structures.
- It is important to pitch questions at the right level for a true reflection of the candidate’s ability. At times, very able candidates were not given the opportunity to use vocabulary and complex structures that could have given them a higher mark.
- Candidates must be given the opportunity to use past and future tenses accurately. Sometimes it is necessary to phrase the question in such a way as to specifically elicit that. When asking about the future, try to use the future tense in the questions i.e. “fará”. Questions such as “O que quer fazer quando terminar o estudo secundário?” will only elicit answers using the present tense, i.e. “Quero ir para a universidade”.

There was generally a good range of questions in the general conversation section. However some Centres based most of their questions on family, School, holidays and free time, often repeating the same questions from candidate to candidate and the conversations lacked spontaneity. Please ensure that candidates are given the opportunity to respond to unprepared questions.

The interaction in this section should last for about 5 minutes. The brevity of some of the conversations meant that candidates did not have the opportunity to exhibit the range of vocabulary and structures required to score marks at the top of bands.

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Paper 0540/04
Continuous Writing

Key Messages

- Candidates must make sure that all content is covered within 140 words, as this is the cut-off point. No marks are given for anything written over this 140 word limit.
- The words used in the instructions should be paraphrased or manipulated so that they are not copied directly as no Language marks can be awarded for material lifted from the rubric.
- Care must be taken with interference from other languages. Candidates need to check their work carefully for mistakes such as *estaba* or *cuando*.

General Comments

The high level of preparation of many candidates was apparent, both in the level of language and the way in which answers were constructed. A large number of candidates wrote accurately and ensured they answered the questions fully.

It was evident that many teachers had done well to encourage their candidates to paraphrase the wording of the instructions. These instructions create a realistic situation for the candidates to imagine themselves in. When candidates re-word the instructions and describe the given situation in their own words, this helps them to immerse themselves and to be more creative. This paraphrasing or manipulating of the language used on the question paper also boosts candidates' Language marks as no marks are given for language that is copied directly from the instructions.

Teachers should also take credit for the majority of candidates taking care to write within the 140 word limit. There were, unfortunately, candidates who lost communication marks because part of the required content was only covered after the 140 word limit. It is important that all candidates are very careful to ensure that they have covered everything expected within this limit. This applies especially to the stronger writers who may be inclined to write longer answers.

Organizing ideas into paragraphs helps candidates to ensure they cover all the content required. Paragraphing also leaves some space for any corrections or changes they may wish to make when they go back to edit their work. It is essential in the examination that candidates have not only written as well as they can, but also given themselves time to edit what they have written. This includes: correcting spellings; tidying up handwriting; cutting out irrelevant sections if these push them over the word limit, and making absolutely sure they have included all the information that is asked for. Producing one edited version with crossings out is a better use of time than trying to rush through both a rough and a final copy. Having said that, obviously work needs to be legible and handwriting should be as clear as possible. Candidates can be reminded that they can use the space on page 2 of the answer booklet for writing out a plan or doing rough work, such as checking spellings. Checking carefully for spelling mistakes is especially important for candidates who also speak languages such as Spanish. Some common mis-spellings this year, which should have been avoided, were: *estaba*, *cuando*, *otra*, *casi*, *salir*, *ficaba*, *comenzar*, and *conocer*. Although these spellings can be understood and may successfully communicate the message intended, they do not earn Language marks. Candidates also need to check the correct use of accents, especially on verbs and the correct agreement of verbs and adjectives (masculine/feminine and plural). Among the most common words to focus on are: *esta/está* and *e/é*.

There is no bias towards any variation of Portuguese, so candidates can write in European, Brazilian or African variations, or a mix of these, and both pre-*acordo* and post-*acordo* spellings are accepted. Candidates should choose the appropriate register for their answer, but there is a certain level of formality expected, which means that certain contractions or slang expressions do not earn Language marks.

The most successful candidates found the balance between keeping within the word limits while managing to expand on each and every one of the content points required. Descriptive language with explanations, justifications and points of view gives candidates the opportunity to show off what they know by using a variety of adjectives, adverbs and conjunctions. Lists of nouns such as favourite lessons, sports played, places to visit or foods eaten do not earn marks and actually waste words within the limit. The strongest candidates showed a minimal repetition of vocabulary and also managed to correctly use a range of grammatical structures and include usage of the subjunctive (*subjuntivo/conjuntivo*).

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

- (a) Writing a letter which dealt with moving and adapting to a new home, fitting in and making friendships was a popular option and many candidates seemed to be writing from personal experience. This emotional connection with the topic may have been why a few candidates seemed to plunge into their answer without planning how to organise their ideas or how to deal with all the content required. However, the majority of candidates dealt well with this answer, and there were many lovely, welcoming, friendly letters offering support and guidance to the new-comer.

Some candidates managed to successfully paraphrase the instructions. They avoided copying the phrase *...acabou de se mudar para a casa ao lado* by writing phrases like: *Você é minha nova vizinha*, or *Você mudou recentemente para minha rua*. Stronger candidates were also able to manipulate *não conhece ninguém e está sempre sozinha* by writing things such as: *youê ainda não conheceu o pessoal do bairro* or *youê não fez amizades aqui até agora*. This paraphrasing and manipulation earned language marks. Weaker candidates will not want to take too long on this paraphrasing or manipulation so that they can get stuck in to covering the required content, however, it is a useful way to receive more language marks.

The first bullet point required three pieces of personal information. This was dealt with adequately by almost all candidates, although many could have seized this opportunity to show off their knowledge at the beginning of their letter. Instead of simply giving their name and present tense information such as *eu tenho 16 anos*, or *eu gosto de ... e ...*, some stronger candidates showed a wider range of grammatical structures with past tense information such as *eu nasci em ...*, *quando eu mudei...*, or *Ao chegar aqui, foi...*

The only common problem was with the last bullet point, which asked for a description of what the candidate will do to help their new neighbour settle in. Some candidates mis-interpreted *uma coisa que fará para ajudá-lo/a a integrar-se* as asking what the neighbour himself/herself will do. Examiners were lenient with this mis-interpretation. Another problem, which affected many candidates including some of the strongest writers was more serious: There were many cases of this bullet point being dealt with only after the 140 word cut-off point. This meant that candidates lost 1 of the communication marks and, furthermore, lost the chance to earn credit for their use of future tenses. As stated above in this report, it is essential that all candidates take care to cover all the required content inside the 140 words.

Question 1

- (b) There were fewer answers written in response to this question, although the standard was generally good as it seemed to be a topic that motivated many candidates with an interest in voluntary work or the environment. This led to many passionate and inspired presentations calling on classmates to join in with the vegetable garden.

The comments regarding the importance of covering all the content required within the word limit, and the need to paraphrase or manipulate the words in the instructions are equally valid for this question. The 3rd bullet point, which asked for the time for working in the garden and 3 things to take along, required careful attention from candidates as it was necessary to give all the information required regarding time and equipment. However, Examiners were open-minded as to what could be taken to the garden and a wide range of suggestions was accepted, from the traditional spade and gloves, to food and drink, sun protection, old clothes, a camera to take pictures or books about how to grow vegetables. The best answers had justifications such as *terminamos às dez para evitar o sol quente* or *Traga roupa velha para não sujar a farda da escola*.

Once again, there were candidates whose response to the last bullet point (a description of *o que farão com as hortaliças*) was lost as it was over the word limit. Unfortunately, this meant candidates lost one of the marks for communication and missed the chance to show off their ability to express themselves in the future.

Question 2

This question gave candidates the chance to write about events in the past. While showing off their ability to express themselves in the past, candidates could also be more creative. And some were amazingly imaginative in their choice of pet, with a panther, penguin, and even a dodo! There were also many touching descriptions of the affection felt for pets and entertaining accounts of adventures shared.

Once again, there was the chance to earn language points by paraphrasing or manipulating the words used in the instructions. *No ano passado,...* was changed by some to *Há um ano,...* or *Um ano atrás...*. The number of vowels in *ofereceram* was a challenge to many candidates, although some earned marks by manipulating the phrase, with correct spelling and writing *meus pais ofereceram-me...* or *meus pais me ofereceram...*

The best answers found a balance between the description of the reaction to receiving the pet and the description of *uma experiência que passaram juntos*. Expressing their reaction with a mixture of past tense verbs and adjectives was a good way to earn more language marks. This could be achieved with a sentence like *Ao abrir a caixa, me senti tão feliz que comecei a chorar*. Nevertheless, it was important not to spend too long on describing this reaction in order to leave space and time for the account of something that the candidate had done together with the pet. To earn good marks this description required correct use of a variety of verbs in the past. Whilst mistakes like *estaba, llamei, durmindo* and *jugar con una pelota* could be understood and some could even earn communication marks, these obviously did not earn language marks and should be avoided.

Many candidates wrote stories about an adventure or funny or scary experience, while others wrote about a number of moments that they had shared together with their pet. Although the instructions stated *uma experiência*, all answers written in the past were accepted. Despite being interesting and sometimes moving, any general statements about how wonderful the pets are and how much they are loved did not earn communication marks as this information is not about the past. The instructions, which say *como reagiu* and *pela qual você e o animal passaram*, make it clear that what is expected should be written about the past.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that Examiners only award marks for communicating the required content in good quality correct Portuguese, so candidates do not need to worry about how creative they are being. Candidates' priority in the limited time they have should be to precisely follow the instructions, write as well as possible and then check their work carefully.