

PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE

Paper 8684/01
Speaking

General comments

In general, Centres complied with the specified administrative procedures. Many examinations were submitted to CIE on time, although there were a number which arrived rather late: in future please ensure that the recordings and necessary paperwork are despatched to CIE as soon as possible after the examination has taken place; do not wait until the end of the assessment period before despatching them.

Most Examiners conducted the examination well and in accordance with the instructions given in the syllabus, although some Examiners did not seem to follow the mark scheme correctly. Centres can help Examiners by reading the syllabus (and, in particular, the mark scheme) with them and/or by having a training session to explain the details of the examination. The three sections of the examination must be attempted and Examiners should adhere to the instructions and the timings given in the syllabus.

Timings

In general, Examiners adhered to the timings specified in the syllabus. However, in a few cases the timings were disregarded. In the interest of fairness to all candidates, please adhere to the specified timings. **Section 1** should last no more than 3½ minutes; **Section 2** should last 7–8 minutes; **Section 3** should last 8–9 minutes. It is the Examiner's responsibility to ensure that the candidate completes the different sections of the examination within the times specified in the syllabus.

Marks

Most Centres transferred the marks correctly from the Working Mark Sheet to MS1 and it was pleasing to note that there were very few arithmetical errors.

When Examiners complete the Working Mark Sheet, they should show the breakdown of marks within each Section rather than showing an overall total for each Section and then adding those totals together. In **Section 1**, candidates are marked according to three categories; in **Sections 2** and **3** they are marked according to five categories: a mark should be shown for each category before adding up the overall mark for the candidate's examination.

Recordings

The majority of recordings were clear, although in a few cases there was a lot of background noise: please try to ensure reasonably quiet conditions for recording. In some instances, it was difficult to hear the candidate: the microphone should be positioned so that both the Examiner and candidate are clearly audible – it is worth trying out the recording equipment in situ before beginning any examinations.

Occasionally, the CD/cassette did not have sufficient space to allow a candidate's recording to finish, which meant that the end of the Speaking test could not be heard by the Moderator. Please ensure that there is sufficient space left on a CD/cassette before beginning an examination.

Most CDs/cassettes were labelled very clearly.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

A good variety of topics was offered by candidates for their presentation. It was encouraging to note that many candidates presented a topic in such a way that it reflected a knowledge of the contemporary society

or cultural heritage of a country where Portuguese is spoken. It should be noted that candidates who made no reference to the contemporary society or cultural heritage of a country where Portuguese is spoken will have their mark for Content/Presentation halved (please see the mark scheme in the syllabus for details).

The best candidates gave a good account of their chosen topic; presentations were often lively with interesting ideas and opinions, and candidates gave examples from their countries. Good topics included: 'Portuguese cuisine', 'tourism in Rio de Janeiro', 'education in public Schools in Brazil', 'the environment in Portugal' and so on.

For the candidate to achieve a high mark, Centres should help by advising candidates to avoid general topics such as: 'pollution', 'rural and urban life', 'sports', 'travelling' and so on. These topics should be tackled only if candidates connect them to a culture or society where Portuguese is spoken.

Candidates should not read out their presentations, but they may prepare a cue card to remind them of the main points that they wish to cover during the examination. This cue card may be taken into the examination room to act as prompt.

Section 2

Most Examiners conducted this Section well and followed up candidates' presentations with pertinent questions. Examiners are reminded that they should help candidates to develop their topics, and Examiners should not test candidates on general knowledge in **Section 2**.

Overall, candidates did quite well in this Section, but some did not ask the Examiner any questions. According to the mark scheme, if a candidate does not ask any questions at all, then he/she cannot receive any marks for Seeking Information and Opinions. In a case where a candidate does not ask any questions by the end of this Section, the Examiner must prompt him/her by asking *Do you have any questions to ask of me?* in the appropriate language. Candidates will not be penalised for being prompted in this way. In order to have access to the highest marks for Seeking Information and Opinions, candidates must ask more than one question. Please refer to the mark scheme provided in the syllabus for details.

Where candidates did ask questions, there were some instances where the Examiner answered at length. This should be avoided: Examiners' answers should be interesting but brief, thus allowing candidates to use their time in the examination to the full.

Section 3

Most Examiners seemed very well prepared for this Section and asked candidates questions on a variety of topics such as free time, School, music, travelling, young people, work, holidays, the media, friends, the generation gap and so on. It is important that the Examiner asks questions on several topics in order to give the candidate the opportunity to demonstrate a range of language and ideas: in this Section, 10 marks are available for Comprehension and Responsiveness, 10 marks are available for Accuracy, 10 marks are available for Feel for the Language, and 10 marks are available for Range of Vocabulary and Structures. Of these final 10 marks, up to 5 are available for Providing Information and Opinions, and up to 5 are available for Seeking Information and Opinions.

Candidates generally did well in this Section. However, as in **Section 2**, some did not ask the Examiner any questions. According to the mark scheme, if a candidate does not ask any questions at all, then he/she cannot receive any marks for Seeking Information and Opinions. In a case where a candidate does not ask any questions by the end of this Section, the Examiner must prompt him/her by asking *Do you have any questions to ask of me?* in the appropriate language. Candidates will not be penalised for being prompted in this way. In order to have access to the highest marks for Seeking Information and Opinions, candidates must ask more than one question. Please refer to the mark scheme provided in the syllabus for details.

PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE

Paper 8684/02
Reading and Writing

General comments

On the whole, performance on this paper was good. However, there were some linguistic aspects which affected performance: a number of candidates were unsure in their use of accents, plural nouns, capital letters, punctuation, verb forms and spelling in general, including words borrowed from the texts.

Candidates are reminded of the importance of presenting their work clearly and legibly.

Where candidates answer on loose sheets of writing paper, please ensure that these are fastened securely before submitting to CIE.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

(a)–(e) Overall, candidates tended to perform well in these questions.

Question 2

- (a) Examiners were looking for answers which contained the verb in the Imperfect tense. Common errors included *aguardastes*, *aguardáveis* and *aguardávas*.
- (b) Examiners were looking for answers where the verb was in the Present tense.
- (c) Candidates often forgot to include the reflexive pronoun in their response to this question.
- (d) Many candidates struggled to provide a correct form of the Subjunctive in their answers to this question. Common errors included *passasemos* and *passasse-mos*.
- (e) This question was generally answered well.

Question 3

- (a) This question was generally tackled well.
- (b) Full marks were rarely scored for this question. Many candidates did not mention the *estilo antigo dos vagões*. Candidates often gave *vagões confortáveis e espaçosos* as part of their answer, which did not address the specific question asked.
- (c) This question was generally answered well, although some candidates failed to mention the detail about the mist.
- (d) Generally answered well.
- (e) Many candidates included all of the required details, but a number of candidates were not sure where the last leg of the journey started and consequently their answers were over-long and included unnecessary details.

Section 2

Question 4

- (a) Generally answered well.
- (b) Generally answered well. A few candidates did not base their answers on the text and referred instead to economic issues.
- (c) Generally answered well, with relevant details which demonstrated comprehension.
- (d) Generally answered well.
- (e) Generally answered well.

Question 5

- (a) This question was generally answered well. It was pleasing to note that, on the whole, candidates did not exceed the word limits stipulated in the question paper.

However, a number of candidates lost marks because they simply described the railway lines without summarising the similarities/differences between them: candidates were asked to compare and contrast the two journeys.
- (b) Most candidates answered this part very well indeed, and many succeeded in explaining why they preferred one journey rather than the other.

PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE

Paper 8684/03

Essay

General comments

It was pleasing to note that, this year, the vast majority of candidates addressed the specific question asked. Only a small number of candidates wrote generally about the topic rather than answering the precise question.

The best candidates wrote confidently, using complex sentence patterns and highly relevant material. There were many good essays which were well organised, with an appropriate introduction, clear paragraphing and a logical conclusion.

The weaker candidates tended to use only simple sentence structures, and made frequent errors in punctuation, spelling and accentuation. The content was often vague or not entirely relevant. It is recommended that candidates should study formally the rules of punctuation, accentuation and spelling before taking the examination.

It may be useful to consider some examples of common mistakes that should be avoided:

Punctuation

The subject should not be separated from the verb by a comma:

- ‘...quem mora em cidades, pode optar...’ should be ‘...quem mora em cidades pode optar...’,
- ‘Muitos destes homens e mulheres, são pais e mães...’ should be ‘Muitos destes homens e mulheres são pais e mães...’,
- ‘Maneiras mais complicadas de reduzir emissões de CO₂ e ajudar prevenir o aquecimento, eram investir...’ should be ‘Maneiras mais complicadas de reduzir emissões de CO₂ e ajudar a prevenir o aquecimento eram investir...’, and so on.

Some other common types of error included:

- ‘As pessoas que dizem ser impossível viver no campo depois de viver na cidade. Talvez digam isso porque ...’ instead of ‘As pessoas, que dizem ser impossível viver no campo depois de viverem na cidade, talvez digam isso porque...’ (The verb of the subject should not be part of the second sentence, but should be near the subject.)
- ‘... uma maneira de poupar eletricidade é comprar lâmpada normal, se toda a gente tivesse estas lampadas faria uma grande diferença.’ instead of ‘uma maneira de poupar eletricidade é comprar lâmpada normal. Se toda a gente tivesse estas lâmpadas, faria uma grande diferença.’ (A new sentence is needed after the word ‘normal’.)

Some good examples were:

- ‘No entanto, nem tudo pode ser visto...’,
- ‘A não ser que anseie ser proprietário duma quinta, o local mais indicado ...’,
- ‘Por exemplo, o telemóvel ...’, and so on.

Candidates should also be reminded that it is advisable to organise their essay into appropriate sentences and paragraphs. A small number of scripts contained sentences which were 20 lines long.

Accentuation

There were a number of candidates who wrote their essays using the incorrect accents or without using accents at all. Candidates should be reminded of the importance of accentuating words correctly.

Some common errors included:

- 'sao' instead of 'são',
- 'nao' instead of 'não',
- 'e' instead of 'é',
- 'matérialismo' instead of 'materialismo',
- 'incrivél' instead of 'incrível',
- 'compreênder' instead of 'compreender', and so on.

Spelling

Spelling mistakes were frequent. Common examples this year included:

'avres' instead of 'árvores',
'trêz' instead of 'três',
'presistir' instead of 'persistir',
'encontrão' instead of 'encontram',
'condução' instead of 'conduzam', and so on.

Some candidates wrote in the way that they speak. Errors included:

'Pra lem das ...' instead of 'Para além das ...',
'... ao tar a trabalhar...' instead of '... ao estar a trabalhar...',
'dependents' instead of 'dependentes',
'iguista' instead of 'egoísta', and so on.

Verb Tenses

Verb tenses posed a problem for some candidates. Examples included:

- '... uma pessoa sentirá falta se tivesse que...' instead of '...uma pessoa sentiria falta se tivesse que...',
- 'Creio que se deva, sobretudo, pela elevada...' instead of 'Creio que se deve, sobretudo, pela elevada...',
- 'Há muitas coisas que se possam fazer...' instead of 'Há muitas coisas que se podem fazer...', and so on.

Common misspellings of verbs included:

- 'se houve-se' instead of 'se houvesse',
- 'tere-mos' instead of 'teremos',
- 'Ao observer-mos' instead of 'Ao observarmos', and so on.

Candidates also encountered particular difficulty when attempting to use the Subjunctive.

Singular and Plural

Some examples included:

- 'O ruído das cidades, os carros passando pelas ruas e as pessoas conversando, pode fazer muita falta.' instead of '...podem fazer muita falta...',
- 'Nestes momentos existe...' instead of 'Nestes momentos existem...',
- '...as emissões de dióxido de carbono está muito elevada.' instead of '...as emissões de dióxido de carbono estão muito elevadas.' and so on.

Masculine and Feminine

Mistakes regarding gender were common. These included:

- 'o geração' instead of 'a geração',
- 'sua país' instead of 'seu país',
- 'muitas hospitais' instead of 'muitos hospitais',
- 'muito tecnologia' instead of 'muita tecnologia', and so on.

Lowercase and uppercase letters

This year there was a higher incidence of mistakes in this area than last year. Some candidates used lowercase letters unnecessarily in the middle of a sentence, or mixed lowercase and uppercase letters.

Some examples were:

- 'Em primeiro lugar, Penso...' instead of 'Em primeiro lugar, penso...'
- '... uma maneira de PouPar eletricidade...' instead of '...uma maneira de poupar eletricidade...'
- 'Em Suma, Não é só ...' instead of 'Em suma, não é só...', and so on.

Pronouns

The position of the pronoun presented a problem for some candidates.

Examples included:

- '...não pô-los...' instead of '...não os pôr...'
- '...e não matá-las...' instead of '...e não as matar...'
- '...outra problema que torna-se muito grave...' instead of '...outro problema que se torna muito grave...', and so on.

Candidates should be aware that when there are negative words or relative pronouns, the pronoun should be placed before the verb.

Centres should advise candidates of the importance of using correct punctuation, spelling, grammar and accentuation. It is recommended that candidates study and practise these areas of Portuguese before taking the examination. Reading widely about different topics can also be a beneficial activity in preparation for the examination, as it can help to improve fluency, accuracy and overall confidence, and can assist in the consolidation of the grammar structures and vocabulary that have been studied during the course.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

There were many good attempts at this question. The best answers included a detailed, relevant and well-illustrated argument, with paragraphs that were dedicated clearly to individual points or ideas to explain and illustrate the question. The most commonly-mentioned causes for a lack of communication included:

- computers;
- consumerism;
- competition among couples.

Weaker candidates tended to not answer the question directly, to use poor vocabulary and to write long sentences which were lacking in correct punctuation.

Question 2

This was the most popular question, although many candidates wrote about the general topic of *Vida Urbana e Rural* but did not answer the precise question asked.

There was only a small number of candidates who answered this question well, using relevant examples and ideas.

Many candidates mentioned the advantages or disadvantages of living in the city or in the countryside but these were not supported with examples or explanations.

Question 3

There was a mixed response to this question. The main ideas that candidates gave included:

- practising sports;
- avoiding alcohol;
- eating healthy meals.

The stronger candidates generally succeeded in developing their ideas well, providing relevant examples that supported their opinions. The weaker candidates often wrote about health in general, but did not answer the specific question.

Question 4

In general, candidates answered this question well. Most commonly, candidates said that if they were president of their country, they would take action to:

- eradicate any discrimination against women at work;
- remove any discrimination against different nationalities at work;
- provide health insurance for everybody;
- fund scholarships to enable women to have access to education.

Question 5

This was also a popular question.

Good candidates gave very clear examples about how to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. The most common ideas which candidates developed included:

- increasing the development and use of hybrid cars;
- recycling;
- switching off lights;
- using public transport.

Weaker candidates tended to write a short passage about the ozone layer in general and only at the end of their composition did they mention what should be done to reduce the emissions. Other candidates simply made a list of ideas about what should be done, but did not explain or elaborate on these ideas.