

PORTUGUESE

Paper 9718/01

Speaking

GENERAL COMMENTS

Administrative procedures

Centres are reminded that it is very important to send the material to CIE as soon as the examination has been finished.

Most Centres sent very good samples of CDS/cassettes with clear sound. Some Centres sent CDs/cassettes that were not clearly audible due to low volume or background noise. Both voices, the candidate's as well as the Examiner's, have to be clearly audible. Centres are reminded to check the sound-quality of the CD/cassette before sending it.

Please note that careful packing and clear labelling of the CDs is equally important. Some CDs were inaudible this session due to damage during transport. Please ensure that both cassettes/CDs and boxes are labelled with examination details (candidates' names and numbers and the Centre number).

When completing the MS1, please enter the total mark for each candidate.

Examining

It is essential that the examination is conducted in accordance with the syllabus and that all Examiners strictly adhere to every detail outlined in the syllabus.

Examiners are reminded to be consistent about the timing specified in the Mark Scheme for Sections 1, 2 and 3 of the examination. Please remember that Examiners must follow the timing specified in the Mark Scheme in the interest of fairness to candidates. Examiners are advised to use a timer in the examination room.

Please also note that Examiners must avoid speaking at length because it is the candidates who are being examined and who therefore require all the speaking time available in order to score the best possible marks. Candidates should not be interrupted during their 3 ½ min presentation.

Centres are reminded that they should check additions carefully in order to avoid arithmetical errors before final submission. This should be done by a third person.

Please ensure that a clear distinction is indicated between the different sections of the examinations.

COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC SECTIONS

Section 1

Most candidates chose a topic that reflects the culture or heritage of a Portuguese-speaking country and the presentation was done in no longer than three-and-a-half minutes as specified in the Mark Scheme. Very able candidates spoke about employment and unemployment in Portugal, preservation of heritage buildings in Mozambique etc. A majority of candidates presented their topic clearly and in a well organised way. Both ideas and opinions were expressed effectively.

Some candidates this session presented a topic that did not reflect the culture of a Portuguese-speaking world such as: rural and urban life, anorexia, and the environment. Candidates should avoid these topics and Centres should help them by advising them to choose a topic related to a Portuguese-speaking country.

Please note that the presentation must not be read out. Candidates may prepare and bring into the examination room a cue card (about postcard size) in the language to remind them of the main points they wish to make.

Section 2

This section of the examination was mostly well conducted by Examiners, who asked both open and closed questions about the candidates' topic presentations. Please remember that the stipulated examination time for the topic conversation is 7-8 minutes, and avoid inconsistent timings in future sessions so as not to disadvantage any candidates.

Please note that in section 2 candidates are required to seek information from and the opinions of the Examiner, and must be given every opportunity to do so. This means that, if candidates do not ask the Examiner questions in this section, they cannot score any marks. Examiners must invite candidates to ask questions. In order to receive a full mark for this part, candidates need to ask the Examiner more than one question and the questions need to be asked using a range of question forms and they need to be accurate. Questions such as 'Do you agree?' do not score full marks. In addition, Examiners should avoid asking several questions at the same time.

Section 3

This section begins with fairly straightforward questions about the candidates' background and interests, and moves quickly on to a more mature conversation, discussing more abstract and/or current issues within the general topic areas.

Most Examiners asked candidates questions about a range of topics such as: future life, hobbies, School, family, etc. After these topics, Examiners asked candidates questions about more abstract and/or current issues within the general topic areas, such as health, the media or economy. The General Conversation section might cover 2/3 topic areas, but might touch on more if the Examiner has difficulty finding something the candidate is interested in or can talk about. Candidates should be given every opportunity to achieve a high mark.

Please note that Examiners should not ask questions about only abstract topics in this section.

As in Section 2, candidates must ask Examiners questions to score full marks. These questions should consist of a variety of question forms and if candidates ask twice 'Do you agree?', they should not receive full marks because questions need to arise during the conversation and be more complex.

Please note that the topics in Section 3 should be different from the topic that the candidate presented in Section 1.

PORTUGUESE

Paper 9718/02
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.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

(a)–(e) Overall, candidates tended to perform well in these questions.
In **Question (b)**, many candidates wrote as their answer *primeiro*.

Question 2

In this exercise, candidates had to start the new sentences with the words given in brackets.

Some candidates did not always adhere to the rubric.

- (a)** Examiners were looking for answers which referred to the future. A common error was *recebera*.
- (b)** Examiners were looking for answers in the Present Subjunctive. Common errors were *somos* and *sejemos*.
- (c)** Some candidates wrote *acabão* where it should have been *acabam*.
- (d)** Some candidates misread *sermos* and wrote *seremos*. Many candidates struggled to provide a correct form of the Reflexive in their answers to this question. Common errors included *esforçamos-nos*, *esforça-mo-nos*, The cedilha was often omitted.
- (e)** Examiners were looking for answers with the correct reflexive pronoun and the pronoun with *com*. Common errors included *juntão-se*, *juntam-se a mi* and *conmigo*. 'às vezes' was often omitted from the answers.

Question 3

- (a)** This question was generally tackled well. Sometimes candidates did not ensure their answers were clear, as in '*consideram uma disciplina mais difícil que a outra*', without mentioning the subjects.
- (b)** This question was also generally tackled well. Some candidates wrote that people '*gostavam da língua portuguesa*', which is not the same as '*tinham bons conhecimentos da língua portuguesa*'. As in **Question (a)** above, some candidates wrote that people '*tinham bons conhecimentos de ambas as disciplinas*' but failed to mention the subjects.
- (c)** This question was generally answered well.

(d) Generally answered well.

(e) Generally answered well.

Section 2

Question 4

(a) Generally answered well.

(b) Generally answered well.

(c) Generally answered well.

In **Question (ii)**, some candidates failed to mention what the '*carrinho*' was used for.

(d) Generally answered well.

(e) Generally answered well.

Question 5

(a) This question was generally answered well. There were a few candidates who wrote well in excess of the recommended number of words but, on the whole, candidates did not exceed the word limits.

(b) Most candidates answered this part very well indeed, and the quality of language tended to be good.

PORTUGUESE

Paper 9718/03

Essay

General comments

This year there were some excellent essays with accurate punctuation and grammar, and demonstrating a wide range of vocabulary. The answers showed a confident use of complex sentence-patterns. As regards content, the essays were clearly relevant and well-illustrated, and the ideas were well structured and argued in clear paragraphs.

In some of the essays the language was simple and laboured, with a lower degree of accuracy. There were consistently simple or pedestrian sentence patterns with persistent errors. As far as the content is concerned, some candidates did not address the question and wrote about the topic in general and, as a consequence, some essays tended not to be relevant to the questions posed or were sketchy or unspecific. Centres are reminded to make candidates aware that they need to understand the question and answer accurately to achieve a higher mark.

In preparation for the examination, candidates are advised to study and revise the rules of punctuation and grammar. In addition, they need to use a varied vocabulary and join sentences using appropriate conjunctions.

Here are some examples of common mistakes from candidates' essays.

Accentuation

This is an area that needs to be improved as there were many accents missing or, when they were used, they were not placed correctly on the word. Some examples were: 'tambem' should be 'também', 'pais' should be 'país' (=country) in order to differentiate it from 'pais' (=parents), 'as vezes' (=the times) should be 'às vezes', which means 'sometimes', and so on. Some accents were placed wrongly and they were: 'orgulho ão país' should be 'orgulho ao país', 'tráz' should be 'traz', 'utéis' should be 'úteis' etc.

Candidates are advised to practise using accents correctly before taking the exam. However, some candidates wrote excellent essays with correct accentuation.

Verb tenses

There were some excellent essays, using a variety of tenses both in the indicative and subjunctive. Some examples were: 'Há quem tenha muitos problemas ...', 'Se analisarmos agora ...', 'Ao colocarem seus filhos ...' or '... por mais que não queiramos admitir...'. The subjunctive and personal infinitive were used correctly in these sentences.

However, some essays showed an insufficient grasp of tenses. For example, 'apesar de lutávamos' should be 'apesar de lutarmos' (Personal Infinitive and not the Imperfect tense of the Indicative), 'As turistas podem fazer muita bagunça.' should be 'Os turistas podem fazer muita bagunça' (The Infinitive should be used after 'podem'), 'No passado quando telemóveis não existissem ...' should be '... não existiam ...' (Imperfect Indicative, not the Imperfect Subjunctive).

Punctuation

A good number of essays were correctly punctuated and the candidates knew the rules of punctuation very well. Some good examples were: 'Em suma, penso que para muitas pessoas a família é, de facto, um porto seguro, sendo ...', 'Ao contrário da família, os amigos vão e vêm ...', etc.

Other essays were incorrectly punctuated and, as a result, sentences were long and difficult to read, such as 'Todos nós sabemos mentir e fazer o errado e nao precisamos aprender isso nos aprendemos com os nosso pais e ...' which should be ' Todos nós sabemos mentir e fazer o errado. Não precisamos aprender isso porque aprendemos com os nossos pais.', 'Apesar de lutavamos frequentemente quando eramos

crianças eu adoro as ...' should be 'Apesar de lutarmos frequentemente quando éramos crianças ...'.

Commas should not be used between subject and verb. Some examples were: 'O dever do país, será ...' which should be 'O dever do país será tentar ...', 'O dinheiro, não é uma limitação ...' which should be 'dinheiro não é uma limitação ...', etc.

Pronouns

Some good examples were: 'Ajudam-nas na educação', '... estas sentirão falta de estabilidade e tornar-se-ão ...', '... dever-se-ia ter uma mistura ...'.

Common mistakes were: 'todas noites' instead of 'todas as noites', '...visto que trata-se ...' instead of '... visto que se trata...' (The pronoun 'que' attracts the pronoun 'se'), '... o apego familiar nunca ofuscou-se ...' instead of '... o apego familiar nunca se ofuscou ...' (Negative words attract the pronoun.), etc.

Singular and Plural

Candidates should use the correct form when writing long subjects. For example, 'O apoio, a segurança e a educação dos nossos pais e familiares não pode ser ...' should be '... não podem ser ...', 'A falta de trabalho e a dispersão pode levar ...' should be '... podem levar ...', etc.

Some other examples were: 'As tecnologias de hoje são muito importante.' instead of '... importantes' (Adjectives in Portuguese can be used in the plural form.), 'Os carros são ótimo ...' instead of 'ótimos', etc.

Masculine and Feminine

Some examples were: 'um grande razão' instead of 'uma grande razão', 'a planeta' instead of 'o planeta', 'da sua dia' instead of 'do seu dia', etc.

In addition, candidates for whom Portuguese is not their first language need to be careful about gender.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was a popular question. Most candidates answered the question properly and explained why family is a 'safe harbour'. The essays were clearly illustrated with examples related to the question. The paragraphs were very well organised and candidates showed that they had brainstormed the topic before writing about it.

A minority of essays were vague and some candidates wrote about family in general, but forgot to answer the question and mention that family is a 'safe harbour'. At times the language was flowery with long paragraphs.

Question 2

There were some essays with good examples of why people steal and what the government should do to address the problem. Some candidates argued that not only do people steal out of necessity, but that there are also kleptomaniacs, politicians and rich people who steal because they are envious or greedy.

Some other candidates wrote vague essays and did not answer the question directly. Candidates are advised to give examples to explain their ideas more clearly.

Question 3

Effective essays dealt with the fact that the Olympic games attract tourists and that more money is spent in the country where they are being held. Also, there are more jobs available for the local population. The negative aspects mentioned were that tourists can cause mess, disrupt the life of a city and that the building of hotels and stadia can damage the environment.

Less effective essays did not tackle the question and were about sports or about the history of the Olympic games and therefore the question was not addressed.

Centres are reminded to prepare candidates to answer the question that is being asked.

Question 4

This question was also a popular one. Some candidates answered the question very well because they wrote about the reasons of youth unemployment and suggested solutions. Some of the reasons for unemployment mentioned were the economic crisis and lack of education and jobs. The solutions offered were to invest in education, to offer benefits to companies, and to make universities stop teaching courses which will make it difficult for young people to find a job. There were some excellent essays with clear paragraphs and excellent punctuation.

Other candidates wrote their essays in one complete paragraph with incorrect punctuation and grammar.

Question 5

Excellent essays addressed the question and pointed out in detail which technological inventions should be kept and which should be eliminated. These essays contained clear paragraphs with evidence that the ideas were brainstormed before writing. The grammar and punctuation were generally accurate and the vocabulary was varied as well as extensive. Some of the inventions that should be kept were computers, video games for leisure and whiteboard for learning. The ones that should be eliminated were arms, cars and vacuum cleaners.

Less effective essays dealt with technological inventions in general and again the question was not addressed. The ideas were vague and the sentence patterns were simple with persistent errors.

Recommendations

Native speakers of Portuguese are advised to work on spelling, accentuation, grammar and punctuation before taking the exam. Being a native speakers of Portuguese doesn't guarantee achieving a high mark. Written Portuguese is different from spoken Portuguese and the points mentioned above should be taken into account.

Non-native speakers of Portuguese should focus on studying the endings of verbs and verb tenses as well as accentuation and punctuation in order to score high marks.

Centres should point out to candidates that an essay should be brainstormed and clearly written in paragraphs with accurate grammar, spelling, punctuation and accentuation. In addition, candidates should be reminded that they must answer the question and not write about the question vaguely.

Candidates should also be told that they should write only one essay and not two. Also, essays should be written within the word and time limit.

Centres are reminded to make sure that the Attendance Register is completed.

PORTUGUESE

Paper 9718/04

Texts

General comments

The paper was tackled well by the greater majority of candidates. There were many good answers and some candidates were able to look beyond the immediate material and show some understanding of the author's intentions, focusing on some passages, demonstrating coherence, choosing a detailed approach and using good illustrations.

Candidates should always be reminded to link the story of the book to the question and give examples, with quotes, to justify what they write. There were some candidates who narrated the story of the book and forgot to link it to the question while others were unable to explain and justify their statements.

Please ensure that in future sessions candidates are reminded that it is important to specify which questions they are answering. Giving the title of the book is not sufficient. Every candidate is required to write down the question number and to indicate whether they are attempting to answer **Question (a)** or **(b)**. When candidates quote from the text, the page number is irrelevant because there are various editions of the same book.

For the past few years we have noticed that some candidates do not always pay much attention to the instructions. Unfortunately this results in candidates answering either too many or too few questions. The current layout of the exam has been amended to make this even clearer to candidates. Yet again there were a few candidates who failed to provide an answer to all three questions. Centres should stress the importance of these instructions to the candidates. Please ensure that the candidates are reminded to have a good read of the questions and are taught how to pre-plan their answer to avoid repetition and/or answering something different from what was asked.

The most popular questions this year were **Question 1**, **Question 2** and **Question 5**, although the other questions were also answered by a number of candidates.

Candidates did not have great difficulty with regard to vocabulary and grammar. There were some interferences from other languages, but it was mostly easy to understand what was meant.

Candidates should always make an effort to write legibly, and make sure their handwriting is clear.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

The majority of candidates did not have any problems with **Question 1(a)**, which was very straightforward. Candidates showed good insight when discussing the characters, had a sound knowledge of the text and were able to illustrate and develop points. In **Question 1(b)**, some candidates were able to give quite a few examples of romanticism and link these to the novel. A minority of candidates did not fully understand the question and only wrote about the romance between Eurico and Hermengarda.

Question 2(a) (i) was not fully taken into account by most candidates who answered Question 2. Candidates focused their attention mainly on **(ii)** describing the different roles women had in this novel.

Question 2(b) was very well tackled by most candidates, but some could have made better use of quotes. Appropriate use of quotes would have justified some of the statements written and therefore would have enriched the answer.

Question 3(a) was often answered in a very simple and sometimes superficial way. Some candidates tended to repeat the same points.

Section 2

Candidates did not seem to have any difficulty answering **Question 4(a)** but some could have explained the importance of the matter more efficiently by reference to passages of the text.

In this section the majority of candidates answered **Question 5** and some produced very good answers. Some candidates were able to look beyond the immediate material and show an understanding of the author's intentions, by focusing on key passages, demonstrating coherence, choosing a detailed approach and using good illustrations. Some candidates approached their answers in a very similar way, which perhaps reflects the way they were prepared for the examination.

In **Question 6(a)** candidates were able to clearly show their knowledge of *plot* and *characters*. All the candidates knew that Alberto Soares was the narrator and made an effort to write about the importance of his role. This was mostly done in one or two paragraphs. Some candidates decided to write more about all the other characters and provided too much irrelevant information. It is very important that candidates fully understand the question before answering.

The vast majority of candidates who chose **Question 6(b)** provided some very good answers. There were one or two who ignored or did not understand the question, which asked them to explain the importance of three symbols of *nature* such as the mountain, the night, the sun, the fire, etc.