

# FIRST LANGUAGE PORTUGUESE

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Paper 0504/01

Reading

## Key Messages

To do well in this paper, candidates are expected to answer **Question 1** in a concise manner always relating to the information in the text. To score high marks for Quality of Language, candidates should display a good command of the language by spelling words correctly, varying the way they start their sentences and showing a good grasp of a variety of grammatical structures. Full sentences instead of bullet points also score a higher mark.

In **Question 2** candidates are expected to use their own language and write their own text on the basis of the two texts they read. They are rewarded for their ability to summarise the main ideas in both texts and to produce their own well-structured piece of writing. Candidates who do very well in this question always organise ideas into different paragraphs, use correct punctuation and accents, link ideas by means of a variety of connectives and use a broad range of vocabulary and grammatical structures.

## General Comments

This year's topic was relatively easy for candidates to discuss because the 2014 World Cup in Brazil was still very much on everybody's mind. The texts were well understood and candidates were able to answer the questions to the standard expected. Many were still too attached to the original text and struggled to find their own words to answer some of the questions. The best candidates were able to answer in a very concise manner but still include all the relevant details.

The strongest responses to **Question 2** were by candidates who had clearly spent time planning their writing and so were able to structure their texts into paragraphs with a clear introduction, coherent development of ideas and conclusion. In the best responses, there was no repetition of ideas. These candidates used a wide range of grammatical structures and vocabulary accurately and appropriately. All candidates should remember to proofread and edit their work to avoid unnecessary spelling mistakes.

Some areas where candidates would benefit from further work include verb endings, conjugation of irregular verbs, plural formation, direct object pronouns (–o, –a) and indirect object pronouns (–lhe), the subjunctive (*falasse* is different from *fala-se*) and accents.

Interference from other languages can be avoided if candidates practice reading and writing a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction texts.

## Comments on Specific Questions

### **Section A**

#### **Question 1**

- (a) Surprisingly many candidates said that France, Germany or Brazil were the countries that usually win the World Cup. This indicates that either these candidates did not read the text and answered the question based on their knowledge or did not understand the first paragraph.
- (b) Most candidates answered this question correctly but some copied from the text and did not say that it could not be measured because it is a feeling.
- (c) Nearly all candidates got this answer right.

- (d) The ones who did not get this question right based their answer on their knowledge of the topic and did not refer to the text.
- (e) Many candidates did not get three points here mainly because they used nouns such as: *insatisfação, temores e gastos excessivos* instead of 'sentiam-se insatisfeitos, etc.' (please refer to the Mark Scheme).
- (f) Nearly all candidates got this answer right.
- (g) Not many candidates understood the meaning of this expression. Quite a few mentioned the economic problems of Brazil or said that the stadia were very big.
- (h) Nearly all candidates referred to the text and were able to point out at least three areas of concern.
- (i) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly. Only a few misunderstood the text and swapped the roles.

## Question 2

In **Question 2**, the best responses were by candidates who had read both texts carefully and were able to use their own words. These candidates were able to summarise the main ideas of both texts to produce their own well-structured piece of writing. Although most candidates managed to pinpoint some of the positive and negative aspects of organising large scale events like the Euro 2004 in Portugal and the World Cup in 2014 in Brazil, a significant number of answers were repetitive and very simplistic. The vocabulary used was in many cases copied from what was written in both texts.

There were cases where candidates described their own experiences of the World Cup in Brazil but got too excited and/ or wrote too much irrelevant material, or were sometimes frustrated with one problem and forgot to mention other important aspects.

# FIRST LANGUAGE PORTUGUESE

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Paper 0504/02

Writing

## Key Messages

This component of the exam consists of two parts (**Section A** and **Section B**). Candidates will choose one discursive or argumentative title in **Section A**, and one descriptive or narrative title from **Section 2**. To do well in this paper, candidates are expected to write texts that are clear, well-structured and easy to follow. To score high marks for **Style and Accuracy**, candidates should be able to use a wide range of grammatical structures and vocabulary accurately and appropriately. As for **Content and Structure**, it is essential that candidates' answers to display the features of the type of text type they have chosen. The more successful candidates this year were able to demonstrate that they could develop their ideas coherently and organise them into paragraphs. They also used interesting openings to compositions in order to engage the reader from the start.

## General Comments

This year's candidates demonstrated that as a whole they were able to write imaginative texts, full of original ideas, and make good use of a range of structures and vocabulary to get their points across. Candidates who chose to write an argumentative/ discursive text, were able to put forward well-thought through arguments and construct cohesive and coherent texts. However, candidates would benefit from proofreading their writing to correct spelling mistakes and avoid unnecessary repetitions. Handwriting was at times difficult to read, which in turn made the process of reading and marking compositions quiet challenging. Candidates are advised to take this into account.

In general candidates were able to access the full range of marks. There were various instances where less able candidates lost marks as they used a register that was not appropriate to the text type they had chosen (e.g. wrong usage of personal pronouns and verbs; slang, contractions such "pra" instead of "para", etc.). The strongest candidates were able to use tenses accurately and made very few, if any, spelling mistakes.

The following is a list of areas in which candidates would benefit from further practice:

- wrong spelling of the verb 'haver' ('á' instead of 'há')
- wrong spelling of the preposition 'atrás' and the 3rd person singular of the verb "trazer"
- the misuse of the cedilla 'ç' before the vowels 'e' and 'i'
- incorrect usage of the adverb 'mal' and adjective 'mau'
- wrong use of the grave accent in 'à'
- lack of the subjunctive, especially in the argumentative essays when presenting or justifying their point of view
- subject and verb agreement errors
- interference of other languages in the spelling of certain words, e.g. 'tecnologia', 'cientistas'
- incorrect pluralisation of certain nouns e.g. 'cidadões' instead of 'cidadãos'

## Comments on Specific Questions

### **Section 1**

#### **Question 1 Argumentative/Discursive compositions**

- (a) (i) **Na sua opinião, será que o sistema moderno de educação do seu país prepara os jovens adequadamente para a carreira profissional e ajuda ao amadurecimento pessoal?**

A great number of candidates chose this topic and successfully developed their ideas for or against it. The great majority made use of interesting details and expressive words to involve the reader

throughout their writing. A few, however, would have benefitted from editing their work to avoid unnecessary repetitions.

**(ii) A revolução digital tem transformado o mercado de trabalho. O que pensa sobre isto?**

This was a popular choice of topic, and in general candidates' written work was coherently structured and fluent. They used a good range of appropriate vocabulary to display their personal viewpoints, which made for interesting reading. However, a few candidates found it hard to express their ideas for and against the given theme which made the meaning rather unclear. It is, therefore advisable that teachers practice at length the appropriate usage of "for" and "against" arguments in an argumentative essay.

**(c) (iii) O uso de grãos ou plantas para a produção de combustível (biodiesel) tem vindo a aumentar. Quais são as vantagens e desvantagens deste sistema?**

Very few candidates chose this topic, but those that did, successfully presented evidence from the media, facts and statistics to support their assertions. The best pieces were well-structured, made good use of connectives and displayed good knowledge of the topic.

**(d) (iii) Os exageros da vaidade levam as pessoas a cometer atos extremos. Desenvolva.**

This was a very popular topic. Those who chose this title demonstrated that were very confident when presenting their ideas and developed good arguments to justify their viewpoints with interesting examples given from the media to illustrate their arguments for or against it.

**Section 2 Descriptive and Narrative compositions**

**(a) Faça uma narrativa intitulada. "A minha participação numa campanha política no meu país."**

This was not a popular title, but those who chose it and got higher marks, used a range of tenses appropriately and accurately. The more able candidates used a good range of vocabulary relevant to the topic.

**(b) Imagine que está numa feira ou mercado de rua da sua cidade. Descreva o ambiente à sua volta e as suas impressões.**

This was one of the most popular choices. This theme seemed to be part of most learners reality and culture. A great number managed to write a strong descriptive answer. Most of the candidates successfully used the right adjectives and nouns to evoke senses and create the appropriate environment and atmosphere. Most candidates gave plenty of details of the size, shape and colour of the objects around them, making the whole description quite pictorial. The less able ones failed to use interesting vocabulary and did not use a good variety of sentence structures.

**(c) Descreva uma situação de intolerância que você tenha presenciado.**

Very few candidates chose this topic. The successful candidates provided enough detail to make their descriptions interesting. Some, however, moved between present and past in incoherent ways, making the reading patchy and inconsistent.

**(d) Faça uma narrativa terminando com a frase: "Sabíamos que após este acontecimento a nossa vida nunca mais seria a mesma."**

This was one of the most popular choices for a narrative piece of writing. The candidates that were able to reach top marks used a variety of sentence structures accurately, displayed a good range of vocabulary by adding plenty of details to their narrative, and structured their stories in a very imaginative way, including some elements of flashback and dialogue.