

# PORTUGUESE FIRST LANGUAGE

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Paper 0504/01  
Reading

## Key messages

In order to do well in this paper, candidates need to:

- use their own words as much as possible and not copy full sentences from the text;
- write an initial plan, mainly for **Question 2**, to avoid repetition of ideas;
- use synonyms in order to once again avoid repetition of ideas;
- write a good structured piece of work, divided into paragraphs with an introduction, development and conclusion;
- think carefully about what the question is asking them before they start to write;
- write as clearly as possible and make sure their handwriting is legible;
- read the texts carefully;
- avoid bullet points in their answers;
- find the relevant information in the text, in **Question 1**, but try to use their own words as much as possible;
- plan their answers, re-read at the end to avoid repetition and mistakes with agreement of gender and number;
- in **Question 2** finish with a concluding paragraph without repeating everything that has been said previously;
- look for information in both texts for **Question 2**. Candidates should not write their own opinion in answer to this question.

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, but preferably without using bullet points. 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 grammatical structures. Use of full sentences leads to higher marks.

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, not their own opinion. They are rewarded for their capacity 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.

## General comments

This year's topic was very accessible; nearly everybody has been to a wedding or at least has seen one on television. In general, candidates understood the questions and were able to give accurate answers to most questions.

The title of the first text proved to be challenging for a number of candidates who could not find the correct words to explain its meaning. Portuguese sayings are an important part of the language and cultural aspects of a country, and it would be good for candidates to be familiar with these kinds of expressions and idioms.

Candidates can improve their performance by practicing their reading and writing skills on a variety of topics.

### Quality of Language

The quality of language varied from excellent to poor. The best candidates were able to express their answers with clarity and with few errors. The weakest candidates found it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form. The notion of agreement of verb with subject seemed to be a foreign concept to the weakest candidates. Some weaker candidates also ignored agreements of adjectives. It was good to see that fewer candidates used bullet points in their answers this year.

### Comments on specific questions

#### Section A

#### Question 1

- (a) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly. Some candidates only mentioned 'weddings' without mentioning 'estrangeiros' and for that reason didn't get any points.
- (b) Nearly all candidates answered this question correctly. A small number of candidates scored two points here instead of three because the answer 'um lugar perto dos nossos corações' wasn't accepted.
- (c) Most candidates answered this question correctly.
- (d) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.
- (e) Some candidates tried to copy the sentence from the text and wrote '...com a organização do seu casamento' – it was not clear whose wedding the answer referred to. Candidates should write the answer in their own words as far as possible, rather than copying phrases directly from the text.
- (f) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.
- (g) In order to answer this question, candidates had to mention three things: between 15 thousand and 100 thousand Euros and that it would depend on the bride and groom. All aspects were required. Many candidates did not give all the required details and for that reason did not score any points here.
- (h) Many candidates only got two points out of three here because they didn't mention the fact that the bride and groom could make the most of their special day by having a Wedding Planner.
- (i) Most candidates got this answer right but there were still a few who only mentioned decorations and food. They had to mention the weddings during the week or weekend to score full marks.
- (j) Some candidates failed to answer this question correctly; they tried to guess the answer without looking for the relevant points in the text.
- (k) There were some interesting answers given here, but many were not correct. Many candidates understood only half of this Portuguese saying.

#### Question 2

In general, it was clear that candidates had an opinion about the topic and many were able to point out the importance of the weather, costs, food, Wedding Planners, easy access for families, innovations such as flash mobs, and traditions, which contribute to a happy wedding.

Some candidates could have achieved higher marks if they had not wasted up to 30 words introducing the topic for no reward. It is recommended that candidates count carefully the number of words that they have used and record them at the end of their answer. The most successful candidates often showed clear evidence of planning, drafting and editing their material with the word limit in mind.

Some candidates also wrote about their own experience of the topic, or repeated the same few points several times over. This question is not assessing candidates' own opinions on the given topic. Candidates should be reminded that they have to refer to both texts for the information they need in order to score the 15 marks available for content. A few candidates did not read the instructions properly and wrote plenty but did not address the question. Others had difficulty writing in Portuguese. The best candidates used satisfactory expressions and answered in their own words, referring to relevant points from the two texts.

# FIRST LANGUAGE PORTUGUESE

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Paper 0504/02  
Writing

## Key messages

This paper consists of two parts (**Section 1** and **Section 2**). Candidates will choose one discursive or argumentative title out of a choice of four in **Section 1 Argumentative and Discursive**, as well as one title out of four from **Section 2 Descriptive and Narrative**. To do well in this paper, candidates need to fully understand the question topic and present their ideas in a structured and concise manner, always relating to the chosen questions.

Successful candidates gained high marks for **Style and Accuracy** by displaying a good command of the language and spelling words correctly, varying the way they started their sentences, showing a good grasp of grammar and a varied range of vocabulary. As for **Content and Structure**, high marks were awarded to candidates who understood the different genres and choose those which suited their writing abilities. Successful candidates developed their ideas consistently into paragraphs, displaying interesting openings to compositions in order to engage the reader from the start and following with a well-structured text.

To improve their writing, candidates should practise the use of linking words and paragraph sequencing.

## General comments

This year, the questions in **Section 1** presented topics that seemed to be quite current and often addressed by the media, which allowed candidates to perform well and produce a large range of interesting responses. Most essays were well formed and accurately joined, and supported by examples or evidence. In **Section 2**, the majority of candidates this year demonstrated that they were able to write a coherently structured and well-executed essay. There were many imaginative stories, full of original ideas and good use of a relevant range of vocabulary. Some candidates' lose marks because it is very difficult to understand their handwriting.

This year many candidates scored high or very high marks, showing that they had an excellent command of the language and understanding of the discussion topic.

Curiously, some candidates performed very well in **Section 1** (writing their discursive and argumentative compositions) but were less successful when developing imaginative texts in **Section 2**.

The most common errors encountered in this year's exam were:

- language interference, in particular the influence of Spanish and English in the candidate's Portuguese – e.g. single words such as 'poluição'; 'tecnologia'; or misuse of a preposition at the end of a phrase, e.g. 'Parece que eu tinha pisado dentro de um outro mundo. Um mundo que eu não conseguia me adaptar dentro de';
- wrong usage of verb and subject agreement, which is paramount in the Portuguese language, e.g. 'Nós fomos', instead of 'fui';
- misuse or absence of accents;
- lack of the subjunctive, especially in the argumentative essays when presenting or justifying their points of view;
- wrong use of verb tenses (e.g. mixing present and past tenses in a narrative writing and poor use of conjunctions to make more complex sentences);
- wrong use of capital letters or absence of capital letters.

There were various instances when less proficient candidates struggled with sentence structuring, linking paragraphs, as well as punctuation. Weaker essays often presented a more informal style of writing, less appropriate to the required assignment.

## Comments on specific questions

### Section 1

#### Discursive and Argumentative compositions

- (a) **Considerando a evolução da nossa sociedade, acha que o conceito de família também mudou? Desenvolva.**

This question was the second most popular in **Section 1**. The majority of the candidates opting for this topic delivered successful texts with strong and well-argued ideas. It was an obvious familiar topic for their age group (as it is often discussed within the traditional media and social media). Often their answers showed the candidates' interest for such topics as well as their engagement with and understanding of social, economic and cultural issues. Less able candidates struggled to discuss different viewpoints and often simply presented how the concept of family has been affected due to technology (lacking an argumentative development).

- (b) **O sucesso profissional vem da escola ou do esforço individual? Dê sua opinião.**

In **Section 1**, this question was the most popular amongst this year's candidates. Many candidates seemed well able to discuss this topic, which is understandable because it relates to them, their choices and future career paths. The great majority of candidates successfully developed their ideas against and for the given statement, but generally, they all seemed to conclude that there is no *sucesso* without *esforço individual*. They also presented examples and discussed ideas related to success stories of individuals such as Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo, Bill Gates and Steve Jobs. Other candidates went further in their answers by presenting evidence from media sources and/or studies, such as facts and statistics to support their arguments. Overall, we saw some very good responses to this question.

- (c) **Hoje em dia deveria ser proibido fazer greve. Concorda?**

Fewer candidates chose this topic. Similarly to **Question (d)**, the topic seemed to pose difficulty to those who chose this theme as their writing lacked strong knowledge and consequently they found it difficult to present organised paragraphs or to develop more than one point. It is always advisable that candidates practice at length the appropriate use of 'for' and 'against' arguments in an argumentative essay, to avoid presenting only one viewpoint. Candidates were unclear in the use of arguments to justify ideas, leading to rather confusing pieces of writing. Nevertheless, some candidates presented a good variety of arguments with well-structured paragraphs, as well as good punctuation.

- (d) **Quais são os benefícios do trabalho voluntário? Desenvolva.**

Similar to (c) fewer candidates chose this question, and those who did often found it hard to express their ideas on the given question, which sometimes made the meaning of their essays rather unclear. Candidates missed the opportunity to develop ideas about the 'benefícios do trabalho voluntário' and often only explained the meaning of charity work. The lack of arguments associated with the topic seemed to lead to confusing ideas and unclear messages in many responses.

## Section 2

### Descriptive and Narrative compositions

- (a) **Quando a fada me disse que teria apenas um único desejo, soube instantaneamente o que pediria. Termine a narrativa.**

This question was a popular choice amongst the candidates. Those who were able to reach the top band of marks successfully elaborated their sentences, narrating their stories in a very imaginative and well-organised way. Their ideas were accurately joined together, building the whole story to a climax. Some candidates ignored the instruction to finish the story, and wrote unclear answers.

- (b) **Descreva uma pintura que lhe tenha chamado à atenção.**

Very few candidates chose this question. Amongst those who answered this question, successful candidates mastered the descriptive style and were able to develop an interesting and attractive text allowing the reader to picture the painting. They successfully used illustrative sentences to describe their ideas. Weaker candidates found it difficult to follow the descriptive style and they did not present sufficient and varied elaboration of details to communicate a sense of the subject being described.

- (c) **Escreva uma narrativa que termine com a seguinte frase “Aquele ato de coragem e bravura mudou muitas vidas.”**

This question was the most popular in **Section 2**. It was a pleasure to read the imaginative stories and well developed ideas presented by this year candidates. The strongest candidates developed their characters very well, setting a plot and building up the whole text to a climax. Some candidates even added dialogues. Overall, it seems that this year candidates have better understood the different styles of writing and were not scared to take risks and use their imagination to create attractive pieces of writing. Nevertheless, a few candidates were less successful in their answers, particularly because they rushed to an end or found it difficult to narrate a convincing story. Grammar, spelling issues and sentence construction also caused some candidates to present a confusing plot.

- (d) **Inesperadamente você teve que se mudar para uma nova cidade. Descreva o local, as pessoas e como se sentiu neste novo lugar.**

This question was equally very popular amongst this year candidates and a good number obtained good or very good results. We found excellent examples of clear descriptions of the people, the place and how the person felt; but also description of objects and/or events using appropriate details. Successful essays included many vivid details appealing to the reader's senses, using a very good range of vocabulary. Weaker candidates found it difficult to present a clear description and often presented confusing or disorganised ideas.