

FOREIGN LANGUAGE PORTUGUESE

Paper 0540/02
Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

The paper did not present many difficulties to candidates. In general the exam was well received, and the majority should score good results.

It was clear that many teachers have been able to bring out the best in their candidates. In continuing this process, teachers are advised to give particular attention to the following:

- exposing exam candidates to a wide variety of reading and written material;
- instilling an attentive approach to reading;
- increasing awareness of structural features of the target language that will enable candidates to improve their ability as recipients of a written message and
- encouraging a wide use of tenses.

Candidates need to be aware of the gradient of difficulty within the paper, and to avoid losing marks through overconfidence or carelessness. The more difficult questions in **Section 3** are constructed to differentiate between the candidates, and inference and interpretation play an important part in this section. Candidates should be prepared for this, and teachers can help them by giving experience of similar activities.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercício 1 - Perguntas 1-5

This exercise was answered correctly by the majority of candidates.

Exercício 2 - Perguntas 6-10

The majority of the candidates performed very well. Few had problems with **Question 6** using B(brown) as colour for ripe strawberries, instead of E (red).

Exercício 3 - Perguntas 11-15

Some candidates did not read the text carefully and got **Question 11** and **Question 15** wrong. **Question 11** may have caused problems because some candidates did not understand the text and assumed that the work was done by the husbands when it was, in fact, a company. In **Question 15** some candidates may have had difficulty in understanding the question.

Exercício 4 - Pergunta 16

Candidates should be prepared to relate to the pictures in this type of exercise and write about them. Many candidates gave a different day of the week or just used the word *fim-de—semana*, copying the rubric, and did not mention what they were celebrating. Also, others did not say why they chose that disco place.

Section 2

Exercício 1 - Perguntas 17- 23

Most candidates gained full marks on this exercise.

Exercício 2 - Pergunta 24

This writing exercise was generally correct and pleasing to read. Very few candidates wrote more than the specified length (80 –100 words), which is an improvement on previous sessions. Some, however, did not describe the type of concert they attended, nor gave details of the area where the concert took place.

Section 3

Exercício 1 - Perguntas 25 – 34

This section tested even some of the better candidates, and differentiated well in general. Although some candidates did the whole exercise correctly, others seem to have only briefly read the text, paying little attention to detail. Just because the matter of the text was familiar, some might have answered based on their experience, therefore choosing the wrong option. **Questions 27, 30, 32 and 33** caused most difficulty.

Exercício 2 - Perguntas 35– 41

This was possibly the most difficult text in the exam. Many candidates gave wrong answers, through either a lack of understanding or a less careful reading of the text. **Questions 35, 38, 39 and 43** were the ones that caused most problems. Nevertheless, the best candidates were able to pick the right answers.

The majority of the candidates responded well to the examination and did not seem to encounter problems in finishing the test. All candidates attempted the extended part of the examination.

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Paper 0540/03

Speaking

General comments

Most candidates were well prepared for this year's Speaking Test. Nevertheless, it is advisable to give them the chance to practise similar situations in advance: Centres should make sure candidates have access to previous papers so that they are familiar with the structure of the test. Centres should also remind candidates that they must use the material on the cards (Role-plays): in this first part of the test we do not want them to give their personal opinion or share their experience, and by doing that they will not gain more marks. It is also the Examiners' role, when conducting the test, to help the candidates by giving simple questions or answers as indicated for each role play in the Teacher's Notes. It is very important that Examiners read all the instructions in advance and have some time to read and prepare their parts in the roleplays, so that they know what they are doing and do not cause the candidates to be nervous and confused. Some Examiners became slightly carried away, asking questions which did not figure on the cards; others were not sufficiently well prepared, and simply read aloud what was written on the card, instead of acting out the Role-plays.

It is important to remind the Examiners that, as laid down in the Teacher's Notes, once the test has begun the recording must run without any interruption. It would also be helpful to the task of moderation if the marks on the summary mark sheet had the same sequence as the MS1 form.

The interference from other languages, mainly Spanish and English, was clear in some candidates' performances.

Comments on specific questions

Test 1 – Role plays

Role play A and B

Most candidates did well, but there were some who answered the questions using wrong verb tenses, and therefore failed to gain some marks. As mentioned before, some candidates elaborated answers when this was not required.

Test 2 – Topic Conversation

The majority had prepared their topic and were not interrupted while presenting it, but Examiners should not forget that according to the Teachers' Notes booklet "The candidate must show quality of preparation, but must not be allowed to deliver a prepared monologue or a series of obviously prepared replies."

Test 3 – General Conversation

The majority of candidates performed well in this section. There was a degree of hesitation from some, but in general they were quite confident, because it was clear that they were familiar with the questions and had a personal opinion to give.

Every Examiner should have a clock in the room because some tests lasted well beyond the five minutes stipulated for this task. Examiners should make an effort to avoid giving the answers when asking a question, or asking closed questions, because the candidate will then just say "yes" or "no".

Examiners should make sure they introduce the candidates at the beginning of the test, and they should also signal clearly the end of each test.

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Paper 0540/04
Continuous Writing

General comments

Most candidates coped well with both questions. However, a few wrote more than was required; therefore it is recommended that centres keep reminding with candidates about the importance of reading and following rubrics.

This year candidates were fairly careful with their handwriting, and fewer marks were lost through incomprehensible answers.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The majority of candidates chose **(b)**. Answers were generally good in content. As in previous years some candidates were unsure of the form of address to be used in their letters or invitations and used both *tu* and *ocê*, and there was no agreement in gender or number. A lot of candidates struggled with verb tenses and verb endings.

Centres should make sure candidates know how to open and close a formal and informal letter or invitation.

- (a)** A small minority of candidates ignored the question and wrote about the animals they already had at home. Some candidates were not sure of when to use the verbs *brincar* and *jogar*.
- (b)** Most candidates chose to throw a surprise birthday party but for some reason used the preposition *de* where they should not: *feira de surpresa*. It was noticeable, and regrettable, that a number of candidates:
- tended not to use accents: *e/é; nos/nós, etc.*;
 - wrote *o* instead of *ou*;
 - struggled with the difference between *tudo* and *todo*;
 - were unsure of how to conjugate irregular verbs: *espero que podam vir*.

Question 2

Unfortunately most answers were not very creative: candidates mentioned that they travelled to a Portuguese-speaking country, but did not really say which one and were very vague about the places they visited.

The structure of the answer was not always that of a report but candidates were not penalized for that.

Again, the suggestions in general were not very imaginative, they recommended "students should be friendly" or in some cases that "they should bring warm clothes" instead of suggesting activities.

Many candidates demonstrated a poor knowledge of grammar and spelling. Particular areas that in the future should receive attention are:

- prepositions
- direct and indirect object pronouns
- the subjunctive.