

PORTUGUESE

<p>Paper 0540/02 Reading</p>
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Key messages

On the whole, performance in this paper was very satisfactory. The vast majority of candidates answered most questions correctly and demonstrated that they are able to understand and respond to written language to the standard required.

General comments

Most candidates showed very good understanding when responding to the exam questions and finished the exam within the allocated time.

As a preparation for the exam, it would be good practice for candidates to read a wide variety of both fiction and non-fiction texts (short stories, leaflets, brochures, diaries, etc.), as well as regularly complete a wide variety of vocabulary learning exercises. When answering the comprehension questions, it is important to read carefully to ensure that only the required information is extracted.

Inference and interpretation are complex reading skills, and candidates should be taught these, explicitly.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1: Questions 1, 3 and 5

The pictures were clear and the questions straightforward. The great majority of candidates answered these questions correctly.

Question 2

This question had a few variants as it showed a knee and a foot and some candidates chose the knee, for 'pé'.

Question 4

This question also had wrong answers as clearly those candidates didn't know the words for tie and belt and opted for tie instead of belt.

Exercise 2: Questions 6–10

In this exercise candidates were required to match a series of statements to the pictures given. Knowledge of vocabulary on the Minimum Core Vocabulary list is essential in order to perform well in this exercise. Mostly the candidates answered correctly. A few candidates confused the word 'descansa no seu quarto' – resting in her room with choosing clothes in a shop.

Exercise 3: Questions 11–15

Most candidates were able to answer these multiple choice questions correctly. Success in this task hinged on good knowledge of the vocabulary on the Minimum Core Vocabulary list. Some areas of improvement are identified below:

Question 11 had few answer as C because they read 'chuva' in 'falta de chuva' and didn't pay attention to 'faz tanto calor'.

In **Question 12** a few candidates answered as B or C 'andar de skate' e 'jogar ténis' as they recognise those words in the text.

The same can be seen in **Question 13**, where candidates might have not read the text carefully and therefore opted for A 'foi para casa de taxi' when it should C 'não bebeu água suficiente.'

Questions 14 and 15 were answered correctly.

Section 2

Exercise 1: Questions 16–20

It is important to read both the rubric and the sentences as the gaps can only be completed with one of the words given. A few candidates decided to use their own words, thereby losing marks. In addition to knowledge of the vocabulary given, candidates also had to read carefully as the clue to which word was needed to complete the gap was always given by key words in the text.

Generally this section was well answered.

Question 16 was answered correctly by most candidates. Very few chose 'jovens'.

Question 17 had very few 'segurança' or 'notícias'.

In a few instances, **Questions 18 and 19** were answered the other way round, whereby 'caro' and 'necessário' were interchanged.

Sentence 20 didn't pose any problems. The majority answered correctly.

Exercise 2: Questions 21–30

Most candidates extracted the correct answers from the text. It is important to read accurately to avoid making incorrect or incomplete assumptions.

Question 21 required candidates to find the answer on the first line of the text, which was generally well carried out and correct response given. Likewise, in **Question 22**.

In **Question 23** some candidates were homing on 'convidar muita gente' when they should refer to 'não fazia festa há muito tempo'.

Question 24 caused some confusion to a fair number of candidates. Some used different pronouns : 'sua', 'dela' 'minha' as well as 'mãe do Lucas', 'mãe da Ana' , some 'Daniela e a mãe' or correctly 'a mãe da Daniela' .

Question 25 was generally well answered.

Question 26 and **Question 27** showed that the use of personal pronouns and verb form lacked agreement. Candidates used a variety of verbal tenses.

Again, **Question 29** posed some challenges as candidates wrote 'deixou /esqueceu o presente na loja' but the majority answered correctly.

Question 30 was answered correctly, although some candidates said that the party and not the day, were the best of her life.

Section 3

Exercise 1: Questions 31–35

This exercise was probably the one that proved to be the most challenging for a lot of candidates. Many corrected statements that were, in fact, already correct, and some candidates did not offer any justifications despite identifying correctly which statements were false. Some justified all of them. Also, the rubric clearly states that candidates should not correct false statements by simply using the word 'não', but some candidates still attempted the questions in that way. The best answers used paraphrase or information extracted from the text.

In some instances, candidates identified the part of the text where the answer could be found, but then extracted a lot more information than was required.

Question 34 was the most problematic question generally.

Question 33 had many different answers such as 'era um projeto social', 'era um projeto social nos Estados Unidos', 'um projeto que levava os lápis de cor e dava aos hospitais' – these lost a mark and the same answer was given to **Question 34**.

Exercise 2: Questions 36–42

Candidates' answers to these questions indicate they found this text not too easy to understand and process. There were very some instances where candidates lost marks.

Question 36 was generally well answered.

Question 37 didn't get the expected result. Candidates did not focus on 'Odete's age' and read the previous sentences that mentioned that she participated on competitions such as running, swimming and riding a bicycle.

Question 38 had three different answers all related to not being able to drive a car, lack of patience to walk and that was faster to ride a bike if she waited at the main road. The latter was incorrect.

Question 39 was generally well answered even though the position of the lake was sometimes near her house and other times near the school.

Question 40

Many candidates thought that the first big challenge for Odete was to become a teacher and not having to face her father and tell him that she wanted to study to become a teacher.

Question 41

The candidates that didn't read the text and the question carefully said either 40 or 45 years old. The first number referred to the number of years she had been teaching and the second, the age of her colleague that suggested she should train to compete in the triathlon. Her age at the time was 61.

Question 42 just needed one word 'satisfação'. Unfortunately, many candidates opted for the last sentence of the text as the correct answer and therefore lost a mark.

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<p>Paper 0540/03 Speaking</p>

Key messages

Most speaking examinations were conducted in accordance with the syllabus requirements and therefore gave candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their ability and score well on the mark scheme. Most Examiners are outstanding and their candidates' recordings are a pleasure to listen to. However, a few Examiners repeat the same mistakes year after year with very little improvement.

It is important to bear in mind that the Examiner's performance has a direct impact on the candidates' performance. Individual reports are sent to the Centres with detailed feedback and suggestions for improvement after each year's examination. Individual reports are sent to Centres with detailed feedback and suggestions for improvement after each year's examination. It is the responsibility of the Centre to make sure that their Teacher/Examiner receives the Moderator's Report. It is the duty of the Teacher/Examiner to follow the recommendations in the report to ensure that mistakes are not repeated from year to year.

General comments

There was an increase of 2% in the number of Centres taking IGCSE Portuguese this year, but an actual increase of 14% in the number of candidates.

Most candidates seemed well prepared for this year's Speaking test. They seemed familiar with the 3 different sections of the exam and most of them performed confidently and competently in each section. There was an improvement in the performance in the role play section.

In terms of Examiners' performance, a few Centres responded to our recommendations in last year's individual reports and showed substantial improvement, especially in the execution of role plays. However, we are still seeing the same mistakes being repeated year after year by some of the Examiners. Please check your individual reports to see if this applies to you. It is the Centres' responsibility to share the Moderator's report with their Examiners and it is expected that Examiners will act on the feedback given. It is crucial that Examiners read the previous year's report before the examination as this has detailed feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Furthermore, Teachers/Examiners should familiarise themselves with the structure of the paper to ensure candidates complete all tasks as indicated in the syllabus and teachers' notes, so as not to hinder candidates' performance.

Recordings

Recordings this year were mostly of excellent quality. This year a couple of CDs arrived broken and one was blank. Please ensure that all recordings needed are on the CD and that this is well packaged to avoid damage.

The main aspect in need of improvement is the identification of individual recordings. Centres should ensure that each candidate's interview is recorded onto a separate track and is properly identified according to the instructions provided in the Teacher's Notes booklet. Many Centres are failing to identify each recording. It is worth reminding Teacher/Examiners that once the examination has begun, the recording should not be stopped or paused between elements of the examination, but should run continuously until the end of that candidate's examination.

Sample

Samples were very well selected this year. Thank you for following the instructions in the Teacher's Notes.

Centres are reminded that the cover sheet for moderation sample must be completed and enclosed with the sample.

Mark Sheets

Documentation was generally satisfactory. Fewer Centres made addition and/or mark transfer mistakes. However, many Centres are still failing to write the final mark in figures in the MS1. Please note that the final mark in figures must also be entered as well as shading the lozenges.

All Centres sent in their working mark sheet and the MS1/CAMEO, which is an improvement from last year. This is much appreciated as it makes the Moderator's job possible and efficient.

Comments on specific questions

Role Plays

I am pleased to say that most Examiners seem to have dedicated time and due diligence in the preparation of the role plays. In general, this reflected positively in the marks for this section.

Examiners are reminded that they should keep to the 5 prompts given in Role Play A and in Role Play B and that they should not create any additional questions or miss out any of the tasks in order not to confuse or disadvantage any candidate. Some candidates, even very competent ones, lost marks due to missed out tasks. Marks cannot be awarded for omitted tasks, even if another task was created and completed.

When candidates omit a task, Examiners should prompt them to attempt it, to give them the opportunity to work for marks.

Where part of the task is for the candidate to greet or thank their interlocutor or to 'Manifestar prazer', and these are omitted, the maximum mark for the task is 1. Most candidates did well this year, but, frequently, they were awarded marks when this task was not completed.

In terms of assessment, many Teacher/Examiners were quite lenient and awarded marks even though tasks were not attempted or only partially completed. Answers with the wrongly conjugated verbs should not get 3 marks. No marks can be awarded if the Examiner offers options when it is not an options task. In a few cases the marks awarded for the whole Centre did not reflect the performance of the candidates. Please read the Teacher's Notes for detailed instructions on how to assess.

Topic Presentation and Conversation

The majority of candidates had prepared their topic well, but in a few cases and Centres they sounded over-rehearsed/pre-learnt and lacking in spontaneity. Please remember that candidates should not be reading from a mental script.

Teachers/Examiners are reminded to keep to the timings in the interest of fairness to all candidates. Candidates should be interrupted if they go over the 2 minutes stipulated for the presentation. This presentation should be spontaneous, not memorised or read, and should then be followed by questions on that topic for 3 – 4 minutes. Most presentations were within the established parameters, but a few were too long. The presentation and conversation together should not take over 5 minutes.

It is important that candidates make their presentation without interruption (unless it goes over 2 minutes). A few Examiners kept interrupting the candidates' presentations. No marks can be awarded if the candidate is not given the opportunity to make a presentation.

It is important that the Examiner asks questions which will allow the candidates to show that they can use past and future tenses accurately. This is a recurring problem in this section with most Centres. This clearly disadvantaged some candidates who were very good, but were only asked questions about the present, not having the opportunity to show what they knew. Examiners should endeavour to ask questions about past and future in both sections.

General Conversation

Teachers/Examiners are reminded to indicate the transition from topic to general conversation very clearly, with a phrase such as *“Agora vamos passar para a terceira fase do exame, a fase de conversação geral”*.

The great majority of Examiners created a good atmosphere during the exam where the candidates felt relaxed and seemed happy to contribute with their views. However, it is not in the spirit of the examination that the Teacher/Examiner should talk more than the candidate. This happened in a few occasions. The Teacher/Examiner should only say enough to engage the candidate.

The interaction in this section should last about 5 minutes. If conversations are too brief some candidates will not have the opportunity to exhibit the range of vocabulary and structures required to score marks at the top of bands.

Assessment

The Teacher's Notes booklet gives clear instructions on how to assess candidates. Examiners must ensure they are familiar with the guidelines and that these are applied consistently across the Centre's range of marks. Please keep in mind that this is an IGCSE exam in Portuguese as a foreign language and therefore candidates do not need to perform as native speaker to be awarded top marks.

Special attention should be given to assessing role play tasks. Candidates are often awarded marks for tasks that have not been completed or have been omitted. Where the task requires the candidate to ask a question, no mark can be awarded if the candidate does not ask a question.

When assessing quality of language, candidates need to demonstrate that they can use past and future consistently to be awarded marks above 9. Many candidates are being awarded marks above 9 even though they have not used the future tense.

Please note that the maximum impression mark is 10, as some Centres awarded marks out of 15.

Areas for improvement

- Teacher/Examiners should ask open-ended questions so candidates are prompted to answer with more than just single word replies.
- Allow the conversation to flow. The aim is to explore two or three topics in more depth. Fewer well explored topics can be more productive than a series of unconnected questions.
- The majority of Centres based most of their questions on family, school, holidays and free time, often repeating the same questions from candidate to candidate, leading to conversations lacking in spontaneity. Please try to explore different subject areas and ensure that candidates are given the opportunity to respond to unprepared questions.
- It is important to provide candidates with opportunities to express themselves, using a wide range of vocabulary and tenses and more complex language and structures.
- Candidates must be given the opportunity to use past and future tenses accurately. When asking about the future, sometimes it is necessary to phrase the question in such a way as to specifically elicit that. Try to use the future tense in the questions i.e. *“fará”*. Questions such as *“O que quer fazer quando terminar o estudo secundário?”* will only elicit answers using the present, i.e. *“Quero ir para a universidade”*.

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Paper 0540/04
Writing

Key messages

- Candidates must make sure that their responses deal with all parts of the questions and that they have not missed anything out.
- The tasks in the questions and the space available are a guide to how much candidates need to write, so it shouldn't be necessary for them to waste time counting words during the examination.
- All candidates need to spend some time editing their work – correcting mistakes neatly and making improvements. Proofreading is especially important to avoid any interference from other languages.
- Candidates must aim to demonstrate as wide as possible a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures. When possible, candidates should try to avoid the repetition of words from the instructions.

General comments

Many candidates showed that they were well-prepared for the exam by dealing successfully with the demands of the paper and by clearly demonstrating their level of language.

A lot of candidates made opportunities to show a wide range of vocabulary by developing their answers and writing more about certain elements of the question. This meant they were able to enjoy writing what they wanted to and demonstrate their command of verbs and grammatical structures. However, candidates must be careful not to get carried away and lose focus on the task. It is absolutely necessary that candidates cover all of the tasks in order to achieve full marks. Many candidates ensured they covered all the content required by organising their ideas into paragraphs. Making a quick paragraph plan can help candidates to deal with all aspects of the question. Moreover, responses organised into paragraphs leaves some space for any corrections or changes candidates may wish to make when they go back to edit their work.

When candidates managed to re-word the instructions and describe the given situation as much as possible in their own words, this meant they immersed themselves in that context, which made it easier for them to imagine the content of their answers and to feel more creative. This paraphrasing or manipulating of the language used on the question paper boosted candidates' language marks as no marks are given for language that is copied directly from the instructions. Furthermore, the process of paraphrasing the instructions helped to ensure candidates had thought carefully about the required content and were less likely to lose points for missing out any of the required content.

It is important for candidates to manage their time to allow for the process of editing what they have written. This editing includes: correcting spellings; tidying up handwriting, replacing repeated words with synonyms and making absolutely sure they have included all the information that is asked for. Producing one edited version with neat crossings-out is a better use of time than trying to rush through both a rough and a final copy. Nevertheless, it is important that their work is legible and handwriting should be as tidy as possible. Candidates should be aware that they can use the spaces or spare pages in the answer booklet for writing out a plan or doing rough work, such as checking spellings.

Checking spellings carefully is especially important for candidates who also speak languages such as Spanish as the risk of interference is much higher. Among the common misspellings, were: *siguiente*, *cuando*, *estaba*, *habia*, *ficaba*, and conjugations of *comenzar*, and *conocer*. Although these misspellings could be understood and may have successfully communicated the message intended, the misspelt verbs were not rewarded in **Section 2** and they may also have lowered the mark for 'Other Linguistic Features'. Candidates also need to be reminded of the need to pay attention to the correct use of accents and the correct agreement of verbs and adjectives (masculine/feminine and plural). High frequency words to focus on are: *esta/está* and *e/é*.

For **Section 1, Question 2** and for **Section 2**, candidates are advised not to waste the limited time available counting words. They should see the space available in the answer booklet and the number of words suggested as an approximate guide as to how much they should be writing. It is expected that in order to cover all the required content, it would be necessary for candidates to write something close to the minimum suggested number of words. If candidates want to, they can write in more depth about certain aspects of their choice but we remind candidates that they do not benefit from writing excessively long answers.

There is no bias towards any variation of Portuguese, so candidates can write in European, Brazilian or African variations, or a mix of these, and both *pre-acordo* and *post-acordo* spellings are accepted. Candidates should choose the appropriate register for their answer, but there is a certain level of formality expected, which means that certain contractions or slang expressions may not be rewarded.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

This question required candidates to write a list of eight items which could reasonably be expected to be found in the centre of a town or city and the vast majority of candidates scored the full five out of five marks. Most candidates wisely based their answers on the suggestions shown in the pictures. However, it is important that candidates know that these are just suggestions and that the mark scheme guides Examiners to be open-minded in what they accept as reasonable answers. Furthermore, there is some tolerance of misspellings and missing or wrongly placed accents. Articles were not necessary and any mistakes in articles were ignored when marking this question. Weaker candidates should be strongly encouraged to write a minimum of 5 answers, even if they are unsure about spelling or acceptability.

Question 2

The majority of candidates scored full marks for this question, which required candidates to give information about their home, who lives there, how the housework is shared (or not) and what they would like to change about their home and why. Most candidates were successful in providing plenty of relevant information using a level of language that was well above the basic, straightforward and generally accurate level which is all that is needed to get full marks.

Most candidates sensibly answered the questions one-by-one and in order. This gave a structure to their response and meant that they provided all the necessary information for each of the questions, without missing anything out and losing any marks for content.

Question 2 is not an essay or a letter and simply requires the candidate to provide the required information with some detail or elaboration. It is a simple task for many candidates and so should be completed quickly to ensure candidates have plenty of time to produce a well-planned, written and edited response to Question 3. As already mentioned in the General Comments above, it is not necessary to count the number of words and candidates can use the space available as a guide to how much to write. There was also some tolerance of misspellings and missing or wrongly used accents in this second question of **Section 1** as the focus here remains on the effective communication of information.

Short lists of information, such as the rooms in the home, the members of the family and the housework done earned candidates Communication marks. It is necessary, though to include some detail or opinion to achieve full marks for Communication. So, for example stronger candidates may have not only listed the rooms but given an opinion about one of them or made a comparison between rooms of their home. To answer the question about who lives in the home, a stronger candidate may not only have listed the family members, but also commented on their relationships or their ages or mentioned how they would like to live with more or less people or what activities they do or don't do together. We remind candidates that they can make up information in order to be able to write more and better Portuguese, so for example a candidate who actually lives with just one parent may have invented a menagerie of pets in order to show off their range of vocabulary and to ensure they earned plenty of marks for that part of their response.

Section 2

Question 3

In the second section of the paper, it is very important that candidates make sure they provide all the required information, whether that was a description, an explanation, an example, an opinion, a reaction or narrating a sequence of events. Again, candidates may well have invented information to embellish their own personal experiences in order to broaden the range of language they could show.

What was different in **Section 2** is that the expectations regarding the level of language produced were much higher. As well as the accurate use of verbs, candidates were also rewarded for the range of grammatical structures and the range and appropriacy of the vocabulary used. Stronger candidates needed to remember to push themselves to include a wide variety of grammatical structures, such as subordinate clauses (including relative clauses), a variety of conjunctions and even attempt to use subjunctives (present, imperfect or future). Regarding tenses, candidates needed to read each of the bullet pointed instructions and think about what tense should have been used to respond to that part of the task. Each verb was only rewarded once for each of its forms, on its first use, so candidates should have aimed to avoid repeating common verbs, such as *tinha, tem, havia, estava*. Alternatives to these include *vi, vimos, fui ver* or *fomos ver*. Or, instead of these, candidates could add subordinate clauses with verbs such as *Achei bom que, Notei que, Gostei que* or *Fiquei feliz quando*.

In this section, long lists of nouns, such as types of food on sale, were not rewarded, but the use of conjunctions or linking words to add cohesion, such as *além disso, por isso, embora, enquanto, apesar disso*, or *mesmo que* was rewarded, as it showed skilful use of the language and helped the candidate's writing to flow. Furthermore, it is important to note that in order to score highly in **Section 2**, candidates needed to be much more careful with spelling and the correct use of accents as expectations were higher and there was much less tolerance of mistakes.

Incorporating or lifting words or phrases from the instructions can scaffold weaker candidates' answers. Some candidates lifted the opening phrase for questions 3(a) and 3(c) and only made minimal adaptations. However, candidates, especially stronger ones should be made aware of the drawback of doing this: no marks are awarded for lifted language as this does not demonstrate what candidates are capable of producing for themselves. It is important that candidates are prepared to paraphrase the instructions and this is expected from candidates who are aiming to score highly on this paper. Examples of how this can be done are given below.

- (a) This task about regional culture required candidates to describe a '*feira popular*' and was the most popular of the three options in **Section 2**, perhaps as many candidates seemed to be writing from personal experience. There was indeed a wide range of celebrations described which reflected the international candidature of the IGCSE and made interesting reading for examiners.

As there was some crossover between what there was to see – *o que viu* – and what the candidates did – *as atividades que fez* – at the event, examiners were careful to look for and reward all relevant content. Those candidates that organised their replies in paragraphs were best able to fully demonstrate that they had covered all the required content.

As regards the marking awarded for 'language', most candidates noted the verbs in past tenses: *fez*, *viu* and *estava* in the bullet-pointed instructions and consequently made appropriate use of past tenses in those parts of their answers. Stronger candidates did not need to copy the phrase '*que celebra a cultura da região com...*' as they ensured that the content of their response described the cultural aspects of the music, dance and food and drink. Similarly, there was no need to copy '*que estava à venda*' when describing the food as this was evident from the context, although some candidates did paraphrase this with expressions such as '*a comida que comprei lá...*'

The instruction requiring a comment on how to improve the party for the following year was an opportunity for stronger candidates to use conditionals or even subjunctives, such as '*seria bom se tivesse menos...*' or '*as pessoas gostariam mais se (não) houvesse...*'. Fortunately, there were very few candidates who forgot or who ran out of time at and failed to mention their plans for the following weekend, which was good as it was the perfect opportunity for them to show how well they could use the future tense or *vou + infinitive* or conditionals or subjunctives.

Although it was not essential, some suitable letter etiquette was used by nearly all of the candidates who scored higher marks. This would be relatively informal in tone, but not contain slang or inappropriate expressions. Any opening or general comments or friendly chit-chat should have been limited and brief, as, despite it being authentic and natural, candidates needed to get on with covering the required content as that is where the marks would be earned. Similar advice applied to the end of the letter, where candidates should have ensured they had dealt fully with the final task and then ended with a short but appropriate ending such as '*Até logo*' or '*Grande abraço*', etc.

- (b) There were fewer responses to this task, but they were all interesting to read and described a fascinating range of language learning experiences that the candidates had had. As this task was an article, many candidates chose an appropriately semi-formal tone and began with a suitable brief introduction, before getting stuck into the main content as required by the bullet-pointed tasks.

Candidates noticed the past tense verbs: *aprendeu* and *foi* in the instructions and then proceeded to correctly use a range of past tense verbs. Many also paid attention to the future tense – *fará* – in the final bullet point and then used future tense or *vou + infinitive* or conditional to write about how they would improve their language skills in the future. When describing two or more plans, stronger candidates were able to earn more points for verbs by using a range of expressions such as: *eu farei um curso no exterior e vou fazer aulas extras e se for possível eu faria um semestre de colegio lá*. In this example, the candidate's use of the verb '*fazer*' would have been rewarded three times for the different tenses used, plus the use of a subjunctive would also have been noted.

- (c) Many candidates chose this option, which required them to tell a story about an 'adventure' that they had after they entered a deserted restaurant. Most candidates wrote about surprise birthday parties, although there were also candidates who ended up learning to work as a chef, saw concerts by famous pop bands or even solved crimes.

Although most candidates were able to successfully use past tenses to tell their story, some struggled to cover all the required content in sufficient detail. This may have been due to the fact that they became involved in their story telling, lost focus on the instructions and forget to check that they were covering all the required bullet points. As recommended previously, making a simple paragraph plan would ensure that candidates include all the required information and earn full marks for content.

To conclude, it is worth mentioning that while creative, original or impassioned answers may be more enjoyable for candidates to write, it is the quality of the Portuguese used to communicate the information required that determines the candidate's grade. It is hoped that future candidates can benefit from the content of this report so that they are successfully able to show their full ability under exam conditions.