

PORTUGUESE

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

The paper was well received by the candidates. The teachers should be congratulated for preparing the candidates well. They should continue to expose the candidates to different sources of reading material so they can be used to extract information from the text, infer, deduce and decipher to answer the questions correctly.

General comments

The majority of candidates accomplished the exam within the given time. The stronger candidates were able to achieve full marks.

Very few candidates copied a whole chunk of the text to answer a question that required a brief response.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 – Questions 1–5

Mostly, the candidates did not give incorrect answers. **Questions 4** and **5** had very few mistakes, **Question 4** had some candidates choosing option A instead of B and **Question 5** had options A or D as it showed that they were not secure with the vocabulary.

Exercise 2 – Questions 6–10

Did not throw any concerns.

Exercise 3 – Questions 11–15

Question 11

Very few mistakes.

Question 12

Some candidates chose B, 'comer o bolo' showing that they didn't read the text but based the answer on their own experience.

Question 13

Well answered.

Question 14

The majority of candidates responded well, very few gave 'A inteligente e madura' while others chose B 'calma e sensível'

Question 15

Again, mostly correct, some opted for C, 'jantar com a namorada' when in the text 'nem vou jantar com a minha namorada' meaning I am not even going to have dinner with my girlfriend.

Section 2

Exercise 1 – Questions 16–20

There were few difficulties with this exercise. The candidates had to choose the options given in the box to complete the sentence after reading the text carefully.

Question 16

Some candidates used 'baixa' instead of 'calma', losing a point.

Question 17

Had few candidates choosing 'manhã' when 'tarde' was the correct answer as the text says 'ao entardecer'

Question 18

The answer should have been 'busca' but logically, without reading the text, it could seem correct 'comprar' and many candidates preferred it, and did not gain a mark.

Question 19

Many candidates chose 'muitas' when 'menos' should have been the correct answer.

Question 20

This question caught out many candidates and instead using 'baixa', they used 'esquenta' which is the opposite.

Exercise 2 – Question 21–30

This exercise didn't pose many problems.

Question 21

It was answered 100% correctly.

Question 22

Few candidates gave 'correr' and more said 'tênis' possibly because the following question asked 'who did Lara wanted to play tennis with?'

Question 23

Had no problems.

Question 24

All correct.

Question 25

Few said it was her friend Rafaela and many more said it was the teacher. The correct answer was 'her dad'.

Question 26

Well answered.

Question 27

Few candidates didn't answer correctly, saying it was very good.

Question 28

Some said 'corrida' instead of 'atletismo'.

Question 29

Very few said that her friend was going with her.

Question 30

Generally well answered but some candidates said 'to see her running' or to 'support her'.

Section 3

Exercise 1 – Questions 31–35

This true and false exercise led to some candidates justifying all the questions, not only the false one and/or copying big chunks of text to try to correct the sentences. Some candidates just put the sentence in the negative to correct the statements.

Questions 33 and **34** were the one with most wrong replies. The candidates that responding wrongly to **Question 34** had a tendency, many times, to get **35** wrong too.

The justification for **Question 33** became difficult to many candidates when they associated the language with the country and could not take forward how to justify it.

Question 34 related the answer to speaking English and not to the fact that there were too many candidates for this game.

Exercise 2 – Questions 36–42

Question 36

The majority of candidates understood the dynamic of this hotel in the text. Therefore they answered accordingly. Nevertheless other candidates did not understand it very well and gave wrong answers.

Question 37

Had no problems.

Question 38

This question had several answers: 'it was a small hotel'; 'it only had 3 floors'; 'there were always people to do the heavy jobs'; that Sr Henrique was a mechanic 'implying that he would repair the lift', etc. ...what was required was 'David carried the suitcase to the 3rd floor'.

Question 39

Mostly we had correct answers but there also some who wrote 'ela estava a cozinhar o cheiro'.

Question 40

The same as the above, but 'conserto do carro' (repairing the car) was also misspelt as 'concerto' which is a 'concert'. Others said that he was also a carpenter and painter. The answer was that he was repairing a car.

Question 41

The answer had to include the idea that D. Joana was saying something less flattering about her husband. There were numerous reasons given to this question.

Question 42

Here, once again, the most common answer was that the whole family worked in the Hotel but what was required it was that they all helped with whatever it was needed but they had their own jobs outside the Hotel.

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

Most candidates were 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.

In terms of Examiners' performance, a few centres responded to our recommendations in last year's individual reports and showed actual improvement, especially in the execution of role plays and length of conversations. However, in some instances we are still seeing the same mistakes being repeated year after year. Centres are reminded to share the Moderator's report with their Examiners and it is expected that Examiners will take the feedback given on board.

Examiners should familiarise themselves with the structure of the paper to ensure candidates complete all tasks as indicated in the syllabus and teachers' notes. A few Examiners are still not following the instructions regarding role plays and specific.

Recordings

Recordings this year were mostly of excellent quality. Please check all CDs before posting as two centres sent us empty CDs. Please ensure that the CD is well packaged to avoid damage. One CD arrived broken.

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.

Sample

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

Documentation

All centres sent us the correct documentation this year. Centres are reminded to check additions carefully. More centres this year made mistakes in their additions. Please note that the final mark in figures must also be entered as well as shading the lozenges.

Comments on specific questions

Role Plays

Most Examiners seem to have taken more time and care to prepare the role plays, which is reflected positively in the marks for this section.

It's important that the Examiner sets the scene for the role play. The Examiner should always start the role play, not the candidate. A few Examiners wait for the candidate to start the role play and this can cause the role play to follow an unexpected path. If it is a telephone conversation, the role play should reflect this.

A few Examiners are still creating new tasks or missing out tasks. 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 missed out 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. A number of Examiners are still not doing this.

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. Candidates were frequently awarded marks when this task was not completed.

Topic Presentation and Conversation

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

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 more than 5 minutes.

It is important that candidates make their presentation without interruption (unless it goes over 2 minutes). 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. Examiners are reminded to ask questions about past and future in both sections. Many Examiners forget to ask questions eliciting the future in this section.

General Conversation

Most Examiners indicated the transition from topic to general conversation very clearly. Thanks you for following the recommendations in last year's report.

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 Examiner should talk more than the candidate. This happened on a few occasions. The Examiner should only say enough to engage the candidate.

Please make sure to keep to the timings specified for this section. 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.

Areas for improvement:

- Teacher/Examiner should try to avoid asking closed questions which candidates can answer by saying "yes", "no" or 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.
- Many centres based most of their questions on family, School, holidays and free time, often repeating the same questions from candidate to candidate and the conversations lacked spontaneity. Please try to explore different subject areas especially with more able candidates. Please 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. Some Examiners forget to ask questions to elicit the past tense in this section. 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”.

Assessment

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

Centres are reminded that special attention should be given to assessing role play tasks. Some Examiners were quite lenient and awarded marks for tasks that had not been completed or had 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. For example, answers with the wrongly conjugated verbs should not get 3 marks. Please read the Teacher's Notes for detailed instructions on how to assess.

When assessing quality of language, Centres are reminded that candidates need to show that they can use past and future consistently to be awarded marks above 9. It is important to ask questions to elicit past and future in both conversations.

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| <p>Paper 0540/04 Writing</p> |
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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

Candidates' creativity, as well as social, professional and educational engagement were once again common features of the responses this year, which would have made many teachers and parents proud. There was also plenty of evidence of the high level of preparation of many candidates, shown by how well they dealt with the demands of the paper and by the effort they made to demonstrate their level of language.

It was common to see candidates striving 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 developing and going into greater depth with certain aspects of the content. Furthermore, it gave them the chance to 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 essential that candidates cover all of the tasks in order to achieve full marks. No matter how fluent and how linguistically able they may be, candidates must write what is required in order to achieve the highest scores. Many candidates ensured they covered all the content 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 the context, which made it easier for them to imagine the content of their answers and to be 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. It was evident that some candidates had not edited or proof-read their work, although fortunately the majority did. This editing includes: correcting spellings; tidying up handwriting, replacing repeated words with synonyms and making sure they have included all the information that is asked for. Evidence across the scripts shows that it is much better use of time to produce one edited version with neat crossings-out than trying to rush through both a rough and also a final copy. Furthermore, it is important that their work is legible and handwriting should be as tidy as possible, so that Examiners can identify content that deserves rewarding. Candidates should be aware that they can use the spaces or spare pages in the answer booklet for writing out a plan or for 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 mis-spellings, which should have been avoided, were: *siguiente*, *cuando*, *estaba*, *habia*, *ficaba*, and conjugations of *comenzar*, and *conocer*.

Although these mis-spellings could be understood and may have successfully communicated the message intended, the mis-spelt 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 **Question 2** in **Section 1**, and for **Question 3** in **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 without needing to worry about the word limit. But the quality of answers is more important than the length and it is essential that all aspects of the task are dealt with. Candidates 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 One

Question 1

This question required candidates to write a list of 8 items which could reasonably be expected to be found in their bedroom and the vast majority of candidates scored the full 5 out of 5 marks. Most candidates 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 mis-spellings and missing or wrongly placed accents. Articles were not necessary and any mistakes in articles were ignored when marking this question. It is especially important for weaker candidates to attempt a minimum of 5 answers, even if they are unsure about spelling or acceptability. As stated above, answers can be written in European, Brazilian or African variations, or a mix of these, and both *pre-acordo* and *post-acordo* spellings were rewarded.

Question 2

The majority of candidates also scored full marks for this question, which required them to give information about their life as a candidate; which subjects they like and why; who helps them more with their studies and how; a description of their School or college and saying what they would like to study in the future 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 risking missing anything out and carelessly 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 of the candidates and is worth only 15 out of the total 50 marks 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 mis-spellings 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 subjects they studied or the facilities at their School earned candidates Communication marks. However, to achieve full marks for communication it is necessary to include some detail or opinion. So, for example stronger candidates may have not only listed the subjects they liked but also compared differing reasons for liking them. It may be worth reminding 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

gets no help outside School with their studies, may have invented the support they get in order to demonstrate their range of vocabulary and to ensure they earned plenty of marks for that part of their response. In summary, in order to get full marks for Communication, there needed to be more than simple facts or a minimal response to a question asked. For Language marks, provided that there was at least some range of verbs and mostly accurate grammar, most candidates also scored well.

Section Two

Question 3

In the second Section of the paper, it was again absolutely essential that candidates made sure they provided 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 imagined or invented information or experiences in order to give them the opportunity to broaden the range of language they could show in the examination.

The main difference in the marking of **Section 1** and **Section 2** is that the expectations regarding the level of language produced are higher. As well as the accurate use of verbs, candidates were also rewarded for the range of appropriately used 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* and *foi*. Alternatives to these include *vi*, *vimos*, *fui* or *fomos*. Or, instead of these, candidates could add subordinate clauses with verbs such as *Achei bom que*, *Notei que*, *Gostei que* or *Fiquei feliz quando*. These meant a wider range of verbs were being used and rewarded. The strongest candidates showed little repetition of vocabulary and included descriptive language with explanations, justifications and points of view, giving them the opportunity to show the depth of their knowledge of Portuguese.

In this section, long lists of nouns, such as countries visited, 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.

Some weaker candidates might have found it useful to use the question rubrics to get them started on each of the tasks. Incorporating or lifting words and phrases from the instructions could scaffold the candidate's answer if they were unable to get started on their answer. Some candidates lifted the opening phrase for **Question 3a** and only made minimal adaptations. However, they should know that no marks were awarded for lifted language as this did not demonstrate what they themselves were able to produce independently. It is important that candidates, especially stronger ones were prepared to paraphrase the instructions and this was essential for candidates who were aiming to score highly on this paper. Some examples of how this could be done are included in the following comments on specific questions.

- (a) This task about work experience required candidates to describe what they did; what they learned and what they felt about a period of work experience. This was a popular choice in **Section 2**, perhaps as many candidates seemed to be writing from personal experience. There was indeed a wide range of experiences described which reflected the international candidature of the IGCSE and made interesting reading for Examiners, particularly regarding the professional and personal benefits of work experience for candidates.

As regards the marking awarded for 'language', most candidates noted the verbs in past tenses: *fez*, *aprendeu* and *gostou* in the bullet-pointed instructions and consequently made appropriate use of past tenses in those parts of their answers. Because of some crossover between what was done – *o que fez* – and what the candidates learnt – *o que aprendeu* – at the workplace, 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.

Although it was not essential, some suitable letter etiquette was used by nearly all of the candidates who scored higher marks, especially for 'Other Linguistic Features'. The tone would be

relatively formal, avoiding slang or inappropriate expressions. Any opening or general comments 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 communication 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 could then end with a short but appropriate ending such as '*Atenciosamente*' or '*Cumprimentos*', etc.

- (b) There were fewer responses to this task, but they generally described interesting experiences and a high level of social responsibility from candidates. Many candidates described one environmental problem, such as littering or polluting and one social or crime problem, such as lack of support for the homeless or witnessing crimes. Only a very small minority of candidates failed to describe two situations, as the instructions stated quite clearly that two descriptions were required. While some candidates put the blame for the problems on the police or council or government it was interesting how many candidates said that the citizens themselves were responsible for a lack of action or engagement or for having made poor choices when electing leaders.

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. The final bullet point, which required ideas about future actions, worked well as a conclusion to end the articles.

Most candidates noticed the past tense verbs: *presenciou* and *se sentiu* in the instructions and then proceeded to correctly use a range of past tense verbs to describe the two situations that they had witnessed. Many also paid attention to how the instructions in the final bullet point made it clear that a future tense – *farei/fará* or *vou + infinitive* or a conditional would be required to write about how they planned to improve the situation in their city. 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 palestras nas escolas e vou fazer uma campanha nas ruas e se for possível eu faria muito mais*. 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 conditional would also have been noted towards a high mark for 'Other Linguistic Features'.

- (c) This option was chosen by a slight majority of candidates and produced some lovely stories about how a holiday contributed to family union and togetherness. There was huge range of destinations described, some in great detail.

It is recommended that candidates paraphrase the instructions and many candidates could have earned several more marks for 'Verbs' and 'Other Linguistic Features' by beginning with a sentence such as '*um presente inesperado trouxe muita alegria para minha família – a oportunidade de escolher aonde viajaríamos numa viagem em família*.' Paraphrasing this opening sentence would also have helped lead candidates into writing about the family's reaction to the gift or prize. As previously mentioned, no marks are given for words and phrases that are lifted directly from the instructions and this is an unadvisable exam technique, apart from weaker candidates who need something to get themselves started. Unfortunately, some of those who lifted the phrase, then also missed communication points by failing to describe how the family reacted.

Candidates who chose 3(c) also did well at spotting the past tense verbs in the instructions: *reagiram*, *foi*, *viajaram*, *usaram* and *fizeram* and then used appropriate past tense verbs in their answers. Higher marks went to candidates who used a range of verbs; *fomos* was the most commonly used verb to talk about the travels but would only get a tick for the first time it was used. Extra marks for 'Verbs' and possibly for 'Other Linguistic Features' were earned for alternatives to *fomos*, such as *viajámos para*, *visitámos*, *escolhemos visitar*, or *pegámos um trem para*.

Finally, it should be said that while candidates may enjoy writing creative or original answers, it is the quality of the Portuguese they use 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 in order to successfully demonstrate their full ability to write in Portuguese during their exam.