

FIRST LANGUAGE PORTUGUESE

Paper 0504/01

Reading

Key Messages

To do well on 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 the sentences and showing a good grasp of grammar structures.

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 on 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

Candidates understood the texts well and were able to answer the questions in a reasonable way. Many were still too attached to the original text and struggled to find their own words to answer some of the questions. There were some very concise answers but also some very detailed ones.

In preparation for this Reading paper, more work needs to be done regarding spelling as well as grammar such as verb endings, conjugation of irregular verbs (e.g. *ver* and *ler*), difference between *falam*, *falaram* and *falarão*, direct object pronouns (-o, -a) and indirect object pronouns (-lhe) and accents. Centres should work on this with candidates and stress the importance of quality of language with more practice and exercises as accuracy is very important to score higher marks on this paper.

Candidates should also make an effort to write as legibly as possible, some handwriting was very difficult to read.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) (i) In general candidates did not have any problems with this question. The vast majority mentioned the clothes Ivone and Andreia were wearing as unusual for women, suggesting they were doing a man's job as well as the fact that they had to be quiet while guarding the Palácio de Belém.
- (ii) In order to get full marks candidates had to mention not only how noisy and lively children were surrounding the guards but also how the noise was associated with bees or other insects. Many candidates failed to mention both reasons and quite a few explained the meaning of 'zumbir' as speak/talk which wasn't correct. 'Zumbir' was also wrongly described as something zombies do.
- (b) Nearly all candidates answered this question correctly.
- (c) This question proved problematic for a lot of candidates. They couldn't see beyond the sentences used in the original text and found it difficult to explain its meaning. Many said the uniform was different because the guards had to wear it the whole day. A lot of candidates did mention how uncomfortable it was in the summer as it was too hot but mentioning the fact that they could add more clothes underneath as an answer on its own wasn't sufficient.

- (d) This question didn't seem to be difficult to answer, only a few candidates failed to mention the right reasons by saying that Ivone had always wanted to do this kind of job and that her dad introduced her to the job.
- (e) Many candidates simply lifted the expression from the text by saying "as mulheres marcam/fazem a diferença" without any other explanation.
- (f) Candidates should pay more attention to the questions because this one was about Carla's present challenges but many candidates wrote about the past, how she had struggled with the lack of facilities she faced as a woman when she started her job, etc.
- (g) Nearly all candidates answered this question correctly.
- (h) Some candidates probably didn't quite understand this question because they explained the expression as if Rita shouldn't get involved with other people at work.

Question 2

In **Question 2** some candidates tried to detach themselves from the two texts in order to demonstrate their knowledge by producing an independent piece of work but weren't always very successful, being quite repetitive and often only developing two or three ideas.

A few candidates expressed their opinions on what men and women should do depending on their religion, but also went far back to the time when men used to hunt and women were at home. It seems that the concept of a myth wasn't understood by some candidates because no matter what opinion they had about the fact that male and female professions were a myth, they all said that such distinction shouldn't exist.

There were also very good responses that showed consistent analysis and a clear style. Successful candidates selected essential information and examples from the two texts and were able to link them with their own points of view using appropriate and precise vocabulary.

FIRST LANGUAGE PORTUGUESE

Paper 0504/02

Writing

Key Message

In order to be successful in this paper, candidates should respond well to the question asked, demonstrating fluency, well-developed ideas and adequate control of grammar, spelling and punctuation.

General Comments

Candidates are required to write two compositions for which the maximum mark is 25 for each of them. The first mark is out of 12, for Style and Accuracy, and the second mark is out of 13, for Content and Structure.

The main objective for Style and Accuracy is to assess the candidate's fluency, construction of sentences, usage of vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and grammar.

For Content and Structure the main objective is to assess how the candidate responds to the topic and the way their ideas and points are developed.

Some candidates were awarded high marks as a result of their great care in spelling, punctuation, accents and well-structured sentences, as well as the demonstration of their ability and care to understand the type of question being asked (argumentative, descriptive or narrative).

The most able candidates wrote lively and interesting compositions demonstrating an excellent ability to express their personal views and a good control of grammar.

On the other hand, some candidates did not read the question carefully enough. Some wrote a good introduction but did not develop their ideas. In other cases the answer was disorganised and the argument difficult to follow. Candidates need to understand that it is not so much the quantity of ideas that matters but the quality of the way in which they are expressed. Time management is also important – there were answers which seem to have been rushed.

Examples of recurrent errors and weaknesses are:

- Spelling *atravéz, concerteza, cidadãos, em fim, derrepente*.
- Usage of verb *haver* in the plural, *havam, muitas pessoas, haviam muitos jovens nas ruas*.
- Repetition, *há um ano atrás, cabe-nos a nós*.
- Lack of accent in verbs in the plural, *palavras proporoxtonas, queríamos, tínhamos, considerávamos*.
- It is evident that a number of candidates are not familiar with the rules of accentuation and consequently lose marks for Accuracy.
- Colloquialisms, *que nem, tá, tão, távamos*.
- Confusion in the usage of words, *bem – bom, mal – bem, traz – trás – atrás*.
- Position of pronouns, *me sinto, me recordo, organização que resgata-as, levando eles*.
- There was a heavy reliance on the word *coisa*, which often indicated a certain limitation in vocabulary.

- There were frequent attempts to use phrases which do not exist in Portuguese. Although these may be understood by people who are familiar with idiomatic expressions in English, they are not accessible to people without that background knowledge and cannot score any marks for this reason. Examples: *Estou lá para você; Um sorriso de orelha à orelha; Uma cereja no topo do bolo.*
- There were also attempts to use English words as if they were Portuguese: *illegal, different, tecnologia, Cellular, alcohol, atmosfera, contraceptivo.*

Comments on Specific Questions

Section 1 Discussion and Argument

- (a) This question required candidates to demonstrate their ability to discuss consumerism and its impact on the environment. Some candidates wrote about people wanting to have material things observing that the satisfaction derived from them tends to diminish quickly. A number of candidates lamented the fact that the continuous desire to have more and more goods has drastic effects on the environment. Others observed that most global economies see growth as their principal objective. In addition, manufacturers plan their production and sales methods to encourage people to replace their possessions regularly. Today's ideal purchase is tomorrow's outdated possession. One of the consequences is the negative impact this has on limited natural resources.

It was gratifying to see a number of candidates looking beyond their own interests and worrying about how this consumerist behaviour would affect the future of their children and grandchildren. However, some candidates did not go beyond the issue of consumerism itself, to grapple with its environmental consequences. This is an example of candidates not reading the questions carefully.

Some candidates concluded that renewable energy and more efficient technology would help to reduce the problem. Some became so engrossed in the issue that they found it difficult to keep their composition to the required length.

- (b) This question was chosen by a large number of candidates. There were good examples of well-planned essays. It was good to see candidates getting straight into the subject, sometimes expressing very strong opinions, even disagreeing with the opening statement in the question, arguing that parents and families are to blame for their children's delinquency. Others blamed the influence of television and video games.

Some candidates suggested that governments should invest in sports facilities in order to keep young people off the streets. A number of candidates only focused on the first part of the question and did not address the issue of delinquency. There were signs of some prejudice, such as the attitude that people who live in 'comunidades' are sad, poor and from lower classes.

It was very good to see candidates know when and how to bring their answer to an interesting and powerful conclusion. These included comments on the value of team work, how to live in society and on moral values.

- (c) Unfortunately some of the candidates who chose this topic produced rather repetitive and unfocused compositions about bullying. There was a tendency to use statistics which, although they supported the argument being developed, seemed to lack a convincing basis.

- (d) A significant number of candidates chose this topic, which was generally well managed, although at times compositions were very long, demonstrating a lack of proper planning and coherence of ideas.

The topic allowed candidates to express their own personal opinions about overpopulation. Many mentioned the one-child-policy in China. A number defended the idea that developed countries do not face this problem – it is a problem in developing countries. Others defended the approach that there is a positive side to having many children, i.e. that children will eventually take responsibility for their parents and grandparents in their old age. Some thought that having a large population will increase the number of scientists and educated people who could help to solve the world's problems.

It was pleasing to see responses which revealed the ability to consider all aspects of the question including its huge social implications.

Section 2 Description and Narration

- (a) Fewer candidates chose this topic. Those who did, usually wrote a straightforward account of time they had spent in helping charities, e.g. to organise food parcels. Some showed a strong sense of audience, making their text interesting and pleasant to read.
- (b) As in other questions, very few candidates answered the second part of the question and consequently lost marks. Candidates should make an effort to improve this aspect of their essay writing skills. On the other hand, there were many examples of good content and excellent choices of appropriate and varied vocabulary. Some candidates showed a clear sense of audience, using a good choice of adjectives and phrases to describe a particular favourite dish from their own country, e.g. *o sabor salgado e doce, picante e adocicado; Sabores e texturas leves e fortes representam a mistura de pessoas do meu país.* There were, however, candidates at the other end of the spectrum who restricted themselves to writing out a recipe.
- (c) Candidates who chose this question produced a wide range of compositions. A few were successful in writing a careful and well-conceived story, paying good attention to its climax. But many spent too much time setting the scene instead of developing a straightforward story. Candidates should focus on the heart of the narrative and not go into unnecessary details.
- (d) In general candidates were successful and effective in their description of their favourite song. Images and atmospheres were well defined and developed. There were many examples of good writing, including the usage of appropriate adjectives such as: *'Sinto-me flutuando em um céu azul.'*; *'Leveza harmônica, uma verdadeira obra de arte.'*; *'Canção que desde criança segue os meus passos e encanta minha vida.'*; *Melodia suave e alegre, letra encantadora e envolvente.*