

PORTUGUESE

Paper 8684/01

Speaking

Centres are to be commended for complying with administrative procedures and abiding by the rules of the examination. Most cassettes had a clear sound, but one Centre sent a cassette recorded at the wrong speed. Centres should check the volume and the speed of the cassettes before dispatching them.

On the whole Centres prepared candidates well for the exam. Candidates were aware of the timing of the different sections of the exam and they knew that their presentation should be about a topic that reflected the culture or heritage of a country where the language is spoken.

However, there were some issues with the following.

Working Mark Sheet

This year there were more arithmetical mistakes than last year. Examiners should add up the marks, total them carefully and then check them. If possible, a colleague should be asked to re-check them.

One Examiner wrote only sub-totals in A, B and C on the Working Mark Sheet paper, not individual marks in each box. All the boxes in the Working Mark Sheet should be completed. Another Examiner gave marks of 6 and 7 for aspects which have a maximum mark of 5. Examiners should remember to read the mark scheme carefully before conducting the exam.

Examiners should write candidates' names on the Working Mark Sheet as they appear on the Internal Assessment Mark Sheet and in the same sequence preferably. Every candidate's name should appear both on the Internal Assessment Mark Sheet and the Working Mark Sheet.

Signalling

Very few Examiners signal the different sections of the exam. Examiners should say: 'Now we are starting **Section 2** or **Section 3**'. It is very important to do so to make it clear for the candidate at the change to another part of the exam.

Cassettes

If a candidate's recording continues on the other side of the cassette, Examiners should indicate this on the label.

Examiners should avoid making unnecessary noise while the examination is being conducted. In some cases, there were noises of tables and chairs being moved.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Topic presentation

In **Section 1** most candidates chose a topic that reflected the culture or society of a country where the language is spoken. The topics were well organised with ideas and opinions included as well as factual points, and the presentations were lively. These candidates received the highest marks. However, weaker candidates chose a topic that was not country-specific such as: technological innovation, abortion, young people and problems, health and well-being, leisure activities, advantages and disadvantages of living in small towns and big cities, etc. These topics should be avoided unless they reflect the culture or society of a

country where the language is spoken. Examiners have to remember that if a candidate does not do so, his/her mark has to be halved. Examiners are reminded to read the mark scheme carefully.

Strong candidates presented topics such as: Christmas in Portugal, violence in Schools in Portugal, education in Portugal, obesity in Portugal and Brazil, young people in Portugal, rural and urban areas in Mozambique, sports in Mozambique and so on.

In **Section 1**, candidates should not be interrupted because they should present their topic for no more than 3½ minutes. It is only after the presentation that the Examiner should ask the candidates questions. One Examiner interrupted the candidate after 2 minutes and then the presentation lasted another 3 minutes. Another Examiner asked the candidate questions during his/her presentation. One candidate only introduced what he/she was going to talk about in **Section 1** and then developed it in **Section 2**. The candidate should introduce, develop and conclude his presentation in no more than 3½ minutes .

One candidate presented his topic in one minute and then asked the Examiner questions. Centres should guide the candidate and explain what is required to receive a high mark.

Section 2

Topic conversation

On the whole Examiners were well-prepared for the exam. They elicited answers to the candidates' topics well in **Section 2** and they had prepared pertinent questions. Most candidates asked the Examiners questions in **Section 2**. However, Examiners should remember that, for a candidate to receive a mark for 'Seeking Information and Opinions', the candidate should ask the Examiner questions and if the candidate does not, the Examiner should invite him/her to do so.

Some Examiners were not well prepared for **Section 2**. They continued asking questions about the candidates' topics in **Section 3** and only towards the end of the examination did the Examiners change the topic of conversation. Please, read the mark scheme carefully.

It is important that Examiners ask a range of open and closed questions in **Section 2** to challenge the candidates. Most Examiners gave the candidates time for candidates to express their views. A few Examiners gave long answers and so the candidates' time for speaking was reduced. Examiners should avoid giving long answers and they should also avoid asking 2 or 3 questions at the same time. While the candidate is presenting his/her topic, the Examiner should think of a variety of question forms to ask the candidate.

One Examiner spent 12 minutes asking the candidate questions about his chosen topic. The mark scheme indicates that **Section 2** should last between 7 and 8 minutes. Centres should provide a clock for the examination room and Examiners should abide by the timing in the mark scheme.

In **Section 2** the Examiner should not let the candidate speak about his/her topic without asking him/her questions.

The strongest candidates were forthcoming in developing topics and they were able to guide the discussion. They were consistently accurate and had a very good feeling for the language. Also, they had an extensive range of appropriate vocabulary and they asked the Examiners more than one question using a range of question forms.

Weaker candidates delayed in giving a response, were not accurate, and had limited vocabulary to express their ideas. Some of these candidates did not ask the Examiner a single question, therefore they lost marks.

Section 3

General Conversation

Most Examiners were very well-prepared for this Section. They asked questions about free time, sports, theatre, books the candidate liked reading, the difference between the country the candidate was born in and the country he was living in, food and drink, obesity, family, tourism, studies, immigration in Portugal, women in society, etc.

Some other Examiners continued asking the candidate questions about the topic he had presented. This section should begin with questions about the candidate's background and interests and should move quickly to a conversation discussing more abstract and/or current issues within the general topic areas. It would not be appropriate to continue talking about the topic the candidate had presented.

A few Examiners did not prepare questions before the exam started and they struggled to continue the conversation. Examiners should prepare their questions beforehand in order to guide the candidates more effectively.

In **Section 3** candidates should ask the Examiner questions. If they do not do so, they should receive no marks. Examiners should invite the candidate to ask him/her questions.

CONCLUSION

It is important that Centres tell candidates that they should not read their prepared topics from a prepared script. However, they may prepare a cue card.

Centres should remind candidates that their chosen topic should reflect the culture or society of a country where the language is spoken.

It is essential that Examiners explain to candidates that in both **Sections 2** and **3** candidates should ask the Examiner questions in order to receive marks.

The most important conclusion is that Centres should prepare candidates by explaining exactly what he/she is expected to do during the exam, and that the Examiners should abide by the specified timing and by the instructions for the 3 sections of the exam.

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Paper 8684/02
Reading and Writing

General comments

Most candidates coped well with most parts of this paper.

As in previous years, many candidates were not always sure of grammar - agreement, tenses, gender of nouns, spelling, punctuation, use of capital letters.

Many candidates did not ensure that their handwriting was legible and that any words copied from the question paper were copied correctly.

Some candidates did not ensure the pages of their work were fastened in the right order and many did not leave spaces between answers, which made it difficult to read and mark their work. Some scripts were fastened in a way that made it difficult to turn over the pages and read candidates' answers.

Some Centres with a large number of entries did not ensure scripts were submitted in the right order

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Most candidates answered most parts correctly.

Question 2

Most candidates coped well with all parts of this question.

(c) many candidates did not know how to conjugate *voar*. "voou", "vouaste" and "voas-te" appeared frequently.

(d) many candidates wrote "anunciara" instead of "anunciará".

Question 3

Most candidates answered all parts well and included all or most required details in their answers.

Sometimes candidates wrote excessively long answers and included details which were irrelevant to the questions they were answering.

(c) many candidates missed 'eletricista'. Simply "trabalhou" was an insufficient answer.

(e) many candidates omitted to state that the experiments were Brazilian or proposed by Brazilian Schoolchildren.

Section 2

Question 4

Most candidates coped well with most parts. As for **Question 3**, there were many excessively long answers with details that were irrelevant to the questions being answered.

(d) despite long answers, many candidates missed that fact that Bruno had studied aerospace engineering.

(e) some candidates failed to mention that Bruno had to plan corrective measures if temperatures were not as they should be.

Very few candidates answered **(f)** correctly. Many wrote that Bruno “pensa ser o autor do único relato conhecido de um interveniente na viagem do caminho marítimo para a Índia”. Some wrote “ambos foram autores dos descobrimentos”. Many of the answers illustrate how candidates simply quote directly from the text without thinking whether or not they are answering the question.

Question 5

Many candidates wrote well in excess of the required number of words, even though the instructions are clear.

Candidates had to “compare and contrast”. There were some good answers, but very often candidates simply gave lengthy descriptions of what one of the characters did without pointing to similarities or differences between the two men.

The general impression was that many candidates did not think about the answers they were going to write and simply repeated details that they had supplied in their answers to previous questions.

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Paper 8684/03

Essay

General comments

All the questions in the exam paper were attempted. A few candidates presented generally accurate essays with extensive vocabulary and confident use of complex sentence patterns. These essays were clearly relevant, well illustrated and coherently argued and structured. These were written by the strongest candidates.

In some essays, candidates wrote about the topic, but did not answer the question; or if they did, they referred to the question in the two last paragraphs of the essay.

A few essays were very weak with consistently pedestrian sentence patterns and persistent mistakes.

One candidate wrote about three questions, but the instructions clearly state that candidates should attempt only one.

Some candidates did not write the number of words required; they should write between 250 and 400 words.

Most candidates showed a weak grasp of punctuation. There were several examples of missing accents and incorrect spelling.

Below are some examples from the candidates' essays.

1. *Punctuation*

Some weak essays showed that candidates separated the subject from the verb by a comma. This should never be done, unless there is an intervening phrase. Some examples were:

- 'A resposta para o problema da pobreza, é que todos os países ...' should be 'A resposta para o problema da pobreza é que todos os países ...', 'Isto, garante a estes países pobres, uma defesa.' should be 'Isto garante a estes países pobres uma defesa.' 'Diferentes empresas interessadas, pagam a uma televisão ...' should be 'Diferentes empresas interessadas pagam a uma televisão ...'.

Some other examples of poor punctuation were:

- 'Embora alianças como o G8 ajudaram é preciso fazer mais ...' should be 'Embora alianças como o G8 ajudaram, é preciso fazer mais...'; '...todos os países deste continente formam parte desta aliança eu acho que todos os países ...' should be '... todos os países deste continente formam parte desta aliança. Eu acho que todos os países ...'.

Candidates should be aware that, when there are two full sentences, either a comma or a full stop should be used dependent on the structure.

Some good examples were:

- 'A cultura está sendo esquecida, o que é inaceitável.', 'Os filhos, não convivendo e falando com os pais, tornam-se independentes.', 'Não encontrando o conforto desejado junto dos pais, os filhos viram-se ...', etc.

2. *Accents*

There were several mistakes in the use of accents. Some words were incorrectly accented as in:

- 'atrás' should be 'atrás', 'tábù' should be 'tabú', 'areá' should be 'área', 'populaçao' should be 'população' and so on.

Some words were accented unnecessarily and these were:

- 'pôndo' should be 'pondo', 'drásticamente' should be 'drasticamente', 'dáda' should be 'dada', 'económicamente' should be 'economicamente', etc.

It is important that words have the right accent because, if not, their meaning will be different. Some examples were:

- 'país' (country) should be 'pais' (parents), 'está' (is) should be 'esta' (this), 'têm' (They have) should be 'tem' (he, she, it has), 'as vezes' (the times) should be 'às vezes' (sometimes).

3. *Spelling*

There were some very weak examples of misspelled words. These were:

- 'discosoems' should be 'discussões', 'muitas das vesesse' should be 'muitas das vezes', 'quaz' should be 'quase', 'dezavesa' should be 'desavença', 'akilo' should be 'aquilo', 'Axo mal...' should be 'Acho mal ...' and so on.

Some candidates spelt words the way that they pronounce them. Some words were:

- 'cumuns' should be 'comuns', 'intresse' should be 'interesse', 'realment' should be 'realmente', 'custuman' should be 'costumam', etc.

4. *Verbs*

Some weak examples were:

- 'There is/are' was written as 'á' instead of 'há'.
- The wrong form of the verb was used in 'Ela quer fazer...' should be 'Ela quer fazer ...', '... arranjo uma nova namorada' should be 'arranjou uma nova namorada', '... para que as pessoas podam ...' should be '... para que as pessoas possam ...', '... estos materiais que eles não utilizão.' should be '... estes materiais que eles não utilizam.', 'Os miúdos já teram alguma ...' should be 'Os miúdos já terão alguma ...' and so on.

The best essays showed a good command of both form and spelling of verbs, and the subjunctive and the passive voice were confidently used. Some examples were:

- 'Se pensarmos bem ...', 'Para que isto não aconteça ...', 'Porém, por mais difícil que seja, esta ...', '... este problema poderá ser visto ...', 'Se o esforço necessário é aplicado ...', etc.

Several candidates used the personal infinitive incorrectly. Some examples were:

- '... nós devemos resolver para poder ter ...' should be '... nós devemos resolver para podermos ter ...', 'Querem usar os novos estilos para mostrar ...' should be 'Querem usar os novos estilos para mostrarem ...', '... são mandados pelos próprios pais por não ter condições...' should be '... são mandados pelos próprios pais por não terem condições ...', etc.

5. *Pronouns*

Some reflexive pronouns were misplaced in the sentence. Some examples were:

- 'Eu acho que devia-se arranjar ...' should be 'Eu acho que se devia arranjar ...', 'É na educação que nota-se ...' should be 'É na educação que se nota ...', 'Se ajudam entre eles.' should be 'Ajudam-se entre eles.', etc.

The indefinite pronoun 'todos' needs an article after it. Some incorrect examples were:

- 'todos domingos' should be 'todos os domingos', 'todos membros da família' should be 'todos os membros da família', etc.

Some other mistakes were:

- 'resolverlos' should be 'resolvê-los', '... eles educam-os ...' should be '... eles educam-nos ...', 'istos casos' should be 'estes casos' and so on.

6. *Prepositions*

Some mistakes were:

- 'por o que viu' should be 'pelo que viu', 'dependiam na agricultura' should be 'dependiam da agricultura', 'tendem em ter dificuldades' should be 'tendem a ter dificuldades', etc.

The preposition and the article were not contracted in 'transmitir conhecimento a nova geração' should be 'transmitir conhecimento à nova geração', 'optariam em ir a escola' should be 'optariam em ir à escola', etc.

7. *Singular and Plural*

Some mistakes were:

- '... um dos maiores crescimento...' should be '... um dos maiores crescimentos ...', 'eles vai progressar' should be 'eles vão progredir', 'eles vai poder ter' should be 'eles vão poder ter', 'vidas completamente diferente' should be 'vidas completamente diferentes', etc.

8. *Capitalization*

Some countries were written with small letters. Some examples were: 'portugal' should be 'Portugal', 'espãha' should be 'Espanha' and 'moçambique' should be 'Moçambique'.

There were also some examples of capital letters used after a comma. These were:

- '... e muitos outros, Mas a problema ...' should be '... e muitos outros, mas o problema ...', '... a personalidade deles, Que faz chocar ...' should be '... a personalidade deles, o que faz chocar ...', '... entre muitos pais e filhos, Porque eles são ...' should be '... entre muitos pais e filhos, porque eles são ...', etc.

9. *Gender*

Some mistakes were:

- 'seu família' instead of 'sua família', 'uma topica' instead of 'um tópico', 'uma problema' instead of 'um problema', 'o saúde' instead of 'a saúde', etc.

Questions

Topic 1

This was the most popular question in the exam.

The candidates who received the highest marks were the ones who wrote a generally accurate essay with a good range of vocabulary. These candidates discussed the topic with details and illustrations. The essays were well organised in paragraphs with an introduction, development and a conclusion.

Weaker candidates did not answer the question, but wrote about the generation gap in general. These candidates produced a text with persistent errors with little degree of accuracy.

Candidates wrote that fashion, TV, different types of education, lack of communication and time to dedicate to children, globalisation, and mobile phones were the main causes of conflict between parents and children.

Weaker candidates wrote about the education parents had had in the past, but did not answer the question about why there are conflicts between parents and children.

Some paragraphs were too long with full stops only at the end.

Topic 2

Weaker candidates wrote about the media in general, but did not answer the question.

Some candidates wrote that people are attracted by sensationalist news in newspapers, on the Internet, and on television because they get home tired and they want to listen to light news. Others wrote about sensationalist news, but did not mention 'profit', which is part of the question. One candidate wrote that if people like sensationalist news, the media should not be blamed for this. Some were positive about the question saying that sensationalist news is good for us to be aware of what could happen to us.

Topic 3

Stronger candidates wrote about the measures that should be taken to end illiteracy. Some examples were that:

- governments should pass a law to make education compulsory,
- there should be night Schools for older people,
- social assistants should check that children are attending School,
- governments should prohibit child labour,
- people should help by giving books to Schools in poor areas.

Weaker candidates wrote about education, but did not answer the question. The essays were sketchy and unspecific and the candidates showed a limited capacity to argue.

One candidate wrote the whole essay as one paragraph.

Topic 4

Some candidates gave examples of alliances and wrote about them in general, but forgot to write about how these alliances would bring a better future for poorer countries.

Some candidates thought that alliances were not helpful because rich countries took advantage of poorer countries. Some others wrote that there should be agreements regarding import and export between rich and poor countries. Rich countries should install multinational companies in poorer countries to create more jobs. Rich countries should help eliminate corruption in poor countries and so on.

A few essays were not easily legible.

Topic 5

Many candidates did not answer the correct question, which was about what should be done to preserve the traditions of a country. They wrote about cultural heritage in general.

Good candidates wrote that traditional stories should be passed from generation to generation in the family; special days should be celebrated in a special way; there should be more books written about traditional customs and more museums showing representative items and so on. These essays were well illustrated.

Recommendations

There are two important aspects of the essay exam that candidates should remember.

The first one is to answer the question that is asked and not to write about the topic in general. The candidate has to remember that in order to receive a pass, he/she needs to write a well-planned essay with clear examples.

The second aspect is that all candidates, particularly native speakers of Portuguese, need to study before sitting the exam. They should revise the rules of punctuation and accenting, and they should be careful about spelling. Both these are important for a good mark.

Centres could help candidates by passing on the comments on this report to them.

Candidates should write on the answer sheet the number of question that they intend to answer.

A few candidates first wrote a plan, which is important to write a coherent essay. Candidates should read the instructions carefully and brainstorm their topic before writing so that they can write within the word limit.

Another point that candidates should remember is to check their writing for mistakes before handing the paper in.

Finally, candidates should always follow the instructions in the question paper.