

PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE

Paper 8684/01
Speaking

Key Messages

In order to perform well in **Section 1** and avoid losing marks unnecessarily, candidates **must** demonstrate knowledge of the contemporary society or cultural heritage of a country where Portuguese is spoken. Centres should give candidates some guidance about which topics best lend themselves to this. Candidates who received higher marks chose topics such as 'Education in Portugal', 'Tourism in Mozambique' or 'Music in Brazil'. The best presentations contained relevant facts, well thought-through opinions and hypotheses, and put forward interesting points for discussion in **Section 2**.

In **Section 2**, the strongest candidates were able to seek information from and the opinions of the Examiner with a high level of accuracy and by using a range of question forms. In some cases where candidates did not do this, the best prepared Examiners prompted the candidate to ask him/her questions by using a range of pertinent questions and different question forms. Examiners should, however, avoid long complex questions.

In **Section 3**, candidates performed best when the Examiners had prepared questions about the candidate's background and interests, but were also able to discuss more abstract areas and/ or current issues within the general topic areas. In some instances, candidates lost marks because they did not ask questions in **Sections 2 and 3**.

General comments

On the whole, high levels of communication skills were displayed by candidates. The best teachers/Examiners were aware of how to elicit the best performance from their candidates. There were instances, however, where the threefold nature of the Speaking test was difficult to distinguish because the transition between **Section 2** (the Topic Conversation part) and **Section 3** (the General Conversation part) was not announced. When this happens, the moderation process becomes harder, as it is difficult to award the marks allocated for each one of these Sections if they are **not** announced and conducted as separate elements of the speaking examination. Please make sure that each Section of the examination is signalled and that the timing of the recording complies with the regulations in the Mark Scheme.

Most Examiners were sympathetic and made the candidates feel at ease. Examiners should familiarise themselves thoroughly with the requirements of the exam to ensure that candidates can access the full range of marks, and that their marks accurately reflect, not only their level of ability and linguistic proficiency, but also their performance in the test as it has been set. Marks can only be awarded for completion of tasks set by CIE so it is vital that Teachers/Examiners adhere to the tasks specified in the syllabus – this is done to ensure a level playing field for all candidates.

Administration

Some Centres did not send the MS1 form. Please ensure that this form is completed and sent and that the slot 'Mark' is completed with the total mark.

There were also instances where Centres did not add up the marks of the different sections properly and, in some instances, Centres did not transfer the marks correctly onto the MS1 form. Please ensure that the marks are checked by both the Examiner and a colleague to avoid arithmetical errors and that all the slots in the MS1 form are completed with the details of the examination and the Centre.

Quality of the recording

On the whole, this year there were not many problems with sound and most candidates were clearly audible. However, some of the problems identified that should be avoided in future were:

- different Sections recorded separately with gaps in between - each Section of the examination should be recorded without pauses, and each Section should be announced;
- CDs arriving broken - please ensure that the CD is in a case or well packed before sending it;
- the recording stopping after 5 minutes - please make sure that the entire test has been recorded before sending the CDs;
- background noise – please ensure that the examination is recorded in a quiet place.

Examiners are reminded that CDs are strongly preferred.

Application of the mark scheme

Generally marking in Centres was close to the agreed standard. A few instances of harsh or rather generous marking were encountered and marks were adjusted as necessary.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1 – Topic Presentation

The strongest performances were of candidates whose presentations included references to the culture of Portuguese-speaking countries. In these cases, candidates were able to deliver their presentations with reference to their cue cards, some illustrative material, such as maps, diagrams, statistics, pictures or short articles. These presentations flowed naturally, were delivered within the time prescribed (three and a half minutes) and provided plenty of opportunities for a fruitful exchange of ideas between the Examiner and the candidates in **Section 2**.

Section 2 – Topic Conversation

In this Section, the strongest performances were of candidates whose presentations provided material for at least 6 questions. Well-prepared examiners were able to get the best out of the candidates by asking mostly open-ended questions. The best candidates were able to access the full range of marks because they asked the Examiner questions. It is important to remember that this should be a two-way conversation that lasts 7-8 minutes, and not a continuation of the topic presentation.

Please make sure that the transition between **Sections 2** and **3** is announced.

Section 3 – General Conversation

Good performances in **Section 3** started off with an interaction about the candidates' background and interests, but quickly moved on to a conversation about issues within the general topic areas listed in the syllabus. Well-prepared Examiners were able to keep the use of 'yes/no' questions to what was strictly necessary and ask a variety of open-ended questions to elicit rich responses from candidates, thereby giving them access to the full range of marks. Some of the more popular topics this year were: family, future plans, hobbies, global warming, equal opportunities and generation gap.

Examiners are reminded that the start of this Section should be announced clearly and that it should last 8-9 minutes.

PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE

Paper 8684/02
Reading and Writing

General Comments

The two texts concerned the lives of two female football trainers who become successful in their careers. The questions on the Paper gave candidates the opportunity to display a range of vocabulary and expression in their answers, and to paraphrase.

Most candidates seemed to be familiar with the layout of the Paper, although a few individual candidates seemed unprepared for the question types although these had not changed in any way.

Most candidates had a fair to a very good level of expression in the language, and some could have gained more marks if they had approached the questions more carefully by following the rubric and by paying attention to accuracy in the use of accents and correct word endings.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section 1

Question 1

This question required candidates to find a word or a phrase in Text 1 which had the same meaning as the definitions given in (a) to (e).

The words given were of a similar level and frequency to those encountered in papers of previous years and most candidates were able to find the correct words/phrases. Candidates should take care that the word or words they choose from the text correspond grammatically with those they provide, that all elements are included in their answers, such as an article (as required for (c) 'uma raridade'); and that extra unnecessary words are not written.

Weaker candidates failed to use the same part of speech, and sometimes used words not found in the text as answers.

Question 2

This Question required candidates to re-express sentences from the text beginning with phrases provided in the Question.

- (a) required a sentence transformation from a passive verb form to an active one.
 - (b) required candidates to provide a sentence with a 'que' clause and the inversion of the reflexive verb.
 - (c) required the use of the subjunctive after 'Talvez'.
 - (d) required a change of preposition and a 'que' clause.
 - (e) required a tense change using a past verb form.
- (b) and (c) were answered least successfully, with candidates omitting to invert the verb and to use the present subjunctive form of the verb 'ser'. On occasion for (e), candidates introduced a new verb in order to deal with the sentence transformation, which was unnecessary and they therefore did not gain a mark.

Question 3

This Question assessed candidates' ability to use paraphrase in Portuguese. Occasionally, candidates wrote overlong answers instead of being selective in their wording, or relied too heavily on 'lifting' complete phrases from the text.

(a) was sometimes answered incompletely as candidates omitted the fact that the team was 'de jogadores masculinos'.

(b) candidates often failed to explain sufficiently what the first step was and therefore did not gain a mark if they included this as one of the two points

(c) was a particularly difficult question for candidates who did not have the vocabulary range to know or paraphrase the expression 'cria repercussão'.

(d) Many candidates simply listed from the paragraph and gave as many examples as they could find in it to answer the question. Some also failed to select the third point about Benfica do Rio's successes with the trainer in the 'Mundialito', presumably due to the fact that it was not located in the same paragraph. Candidates are advised to read texts slowly and carefully to ensure that they do not miss points which are relevant in answers, and to leave time to check through the texts before the end of the examination for any missing details.

(e) Many candidates answered this question successfully, although some included all the information about the trainer's experiences outside Brazil, losing a mark for mentioning 'Martinica', where she was not successful. Again, candidates need to read questions carefully before selecting the information for their answers so that they do not lose marks through the inclusion of irrelevant information.

(f) This proved to be a question where candidates did not read far enough in the text for their answers.

Candidates needed to find two separate points, and many considered being invited to train other countries ('Bolívia' and 'as Ilhas Virgens') as two points, where in fact, they could have found two other quite separate points.

(g) was a difficult question for many candidates as it required them to understand a complex sentence using a subjunctive form to express modality in the form of a wish. They needed to interpret the meaning in order to give the second point. Stronger candidates were able to do this, and re-expressed the meaning of the sentence well for the first point.

Section 2

Question 4

This Question was answered well by candidates who were well prepared and knew that they should avoid lifting entire phrases.

- (a) The first point of this Question was often missed by candidates, although the information was given in the text. Candidates needed to have read beyond the first paragraph of the text in order to find the information that the trainer was the first woman to train a male football team.
- (b) This Question required candidates to understand the meaning of 'dispensar cuidados maternais'. Many erroneously took the meaning of the verb to be the same as 'dispensar de', and therefore lost a mark. Some weaker candidates did not attempt to re-express the phrases in their answers and did not gain any marks for 'lifting' information straight from the text.
- (c) This was not a difficult Question to find the parts of the text which were relevant to the answer. However, it required candidates to paraphrase, and again, some lost marks unnecessarily for not attempting to do so.
- (d) This Question did not give many problems to candidates if they used paraphrase to re-express the ideas. Candidates needed to include in their answers the idea that the trainer overcame the taboo/difficulties in order to gain full marks.
- (e) This was fairly straightforward to answer, although some candidates referred to a later part of the text and therefore lost marks.
- (f) Three possible points could be used for the two points required for answers to the Question, and most candidates were able to find these.

Question 5

The summary Question was not difficult as there were obvious points of comparison and contrast between the two trainers to make. Some candidates did not do so well, although their level of Portuguese was sometimes very good, and this was probably due to a lack of preparation for this type of summary exercise. Candidates often failed to identify concrete examples, and tended to give their opinions on the position of women in world football, for example, or gloss over the details and generalise too much. Some candidates ignored the word limit and wrote too much, thereby losing marks.

Language Quality Overall

There were many examples of carefully crafted answers, where candidates wrote accurately and naturally. However there was a tendency for some candidates, who otherwise expressed themselves quite fluently, to make basic errors with spelling and to forget to use accents. They therefore did not gain the marks they could have achieved if they had paid more attention to accuracy. More practice in writing and in paraphrasing in preparation for the examination would have helped these candidates to gain higher marks.

PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE

Paper 8684/03

Essay

General Comments

The best essays contained clearly relevant, well-developed points backed up with examples and explanations, and were organised in clear paragraphs. These essays showed a very good command of complex grammatical structures and a wide variety of vocabulary.

The strongest candidates also displayed greater awareness of the impact correct punctuation, spelling and accentuation have on their ability to construct texts that are easy to follow and understand.

Some good examples of correct use of punctuation are shown below:

'Afinal de contas, sem a Internet acho que muitos de nós iríamos ser'

'A verdade é que a Internet acelerou o desenvolvimento da nossa espécie,abrindo-nos portas que de outra maneira,ainda estariam fechadas.'

Stronger candidates also avoided errors such as:

Separating the subject from the verb with a comma:

- 'As maiores desvantagens, são o cyberbullying...'

Using commas to separate full sentences where a full stop or a linking word should be used instead:

- '... a Internet tem sido uma distração para adolescentes, alguns deles preferem passar o dia ...'
should be '...a Internet tem sido uma distração para adolescentes. Alguns deles preferem passar o dia ...'

In the essays of the stronger candidates, spelling and accentuation were, on the whole, very accurate. In the essays of some candidates, however, spelling and accentuation did, at times, impede communication or reflected poor grasp of rules. The words shown below seemed to be particularly challenging for these candidates:

Spelling

INCORRECT SPELLING	CORRECT SPELLING
estam	estão
paressesm	parecem
diferente	diferente
disvantagens	desvantagens
maguar	magoar
morrão	moram
mais (but)	mas
adolescentes	adolescentes

Accentuation

INCORRECT ACCENTUATION	CORRECT ACCENTUATION
tivessesmos	tivéssemos
nao	não
vivêm	vivem
vôce	você
tambêm	também
faría	faria

Candidates are advised to read widely, both quality fiction and non-fiction, as exposure to the written form of Portuguese will help consolidate knowledge of spelling and accentuation rules.

Grammar

Candidates with good control of grammar wrote sentences such as:

- '...todos conseguem ter acesso à Internet, quer seja para pesquisas rápidas ou longas.' ('à' is used correctly and there are linking words.),
- 'É pouco provável que tome esta decisão.' (The subjunctive is used correctly.)
- '... a comida servida em cantinas para que seja saudável.' (Good use of linking words and the subjunctive.)

However, some candidates had problems with the contraction of the preposition 'a' and the article 'a', when to use 'a' ou 'à' or which accent to use.

INCORRECT	CORRECT
acesso a Internet	acesso à Internet
Porquê ir às lojas se temos a Internet á nossa disposição?	Porquê ir às lojas se temos a Internet à nossa disposição?

There were also some problems with pronouns such as:

INCORRECT	CORRECT
...qualquer humano vai buscar a forma de têr-lho.	'...qualquer humano vai buscar a forma de tê-lo.
Isso fáz-lo ficar anti-social.	Isso fá-lo ficar anti-social.
...todas partes do mundo.	...todas as partes do mundo.

Vocabulary

As mentioned above, the most fluent pieces of writing displayed a wide range of vocabulary, used both appropriately and accurately. However, there were, in some cases, instances of interference of other languages. Whilst it may not be difficult for a speaker of Portuguese to read and understand what these words mean, they still distract the reader from the wider points being made by the writer. Words that were commonly misspelt due to interference include the following:

POOR VOCABULARY	CORRECT WORD
obtener	obter
inseguridade	insegurança
escole	escolhe
solamente	somente
inequalidade	desigualdade
voluntade	vontade

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

This was the most popular question chosen by candidates. Very good candidates discussed the topic in clear paragraphs with an introduction, development with many examples and a pertinent conclusion. These candidates showed they had extensive vocabulary and used punctuation, spelling and accentuation correctly.

A common problem detected in weaker essays was long sentences with little or no punctuation. This can affect meaning and place a strain on the reader.

Most candidates mentioned that the advantages of the Internet are that it saves time and it is very convenient. In addition, they gave examples by saying that we can shop online, do research, contact friends and family, and companies can develop their businesses online. Some disadvantages were that there are bad sites for children and that we can become anti-social.

The best essays showed clear evidence of careful planning.

Question 2

Most candidates agreed with the topic and wrote that if we lived in a more egalitarian society, there would be fewer crimes. However, they also mentioned that greed and envy can make us commit crimes.

The stronger candidates gave specific examples to back up their arguments and structured these coherently.

Question 3

Most candidates wrote that the individual should be responsible for combating obesity, but they also made suggestions about what the authorities should do to help people, such as limiting the number of fast food restaurants, providing healthier options for students at school, building more parks where people can do exercise, and making psychologists available in clinics to help obese people.

Good essays tackled both parts of the question: what the individual and what the government should do. These were well planned with details and they were clearly relevant to the topic.

The weaker essays failed to mention what the government should do, and again some candidates wrote long paragraphs with no full stops.

Question 4

Strong candidates wrote about how the reduction of working hours per week would or would not help with the problem of unemployment and why. These essays showed confident use of complex sentence patterns with very few errors. They were also clearly illustrated with relevant examples and answered both parts of the question. There was clear evidence that candidates had considered their arguments carefully and had planned their writing.

Question 5

Most candidates wrote that they were not in favour of using animals for testing and they said that the suffering that animals have to go through does not justify testing them for cosmetics. Some candidates said that it is acceptable to test animals to discover new vaccines or cures for some diseases. On the whole, as above, the better essays were well structured and displayed confident use of a wide range of vocabulary and complex grammatical structures, and few, if any, punctuation and/ or spelling errors.