

FIRST LANGUAGE PORTUGUESE

Paper 0504/01
Reading

Key messages

To do well in 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 their sentences and showing a good grasp of grammatical structures. Full sentences instead of bullet points also score a higher mark.

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 capacity to summarise the main ideas in 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

This year's topic was very familiar for most of the candidates. These days nearly everyone uses the internet and is very knowledgeable about social media.

Candidates should try to write as clearly as possible and Centres should encourage them to write an initial plan, mainly for their second question, to avoid repetition of ideas and to encourage the use of synonyms as well as a good structured piece of work divided into paragraphs with an introduction, development and conclusion.

Candidates should also remember to re-read their work at the end to avoid spelling mistakes. Verb endings as well as conjugation of irregular verbs need to be learnt or revised. Practice and exercises are very important to prepare candidates for this exam, as quality of language is very important.

The interference of another language was clear in some of the papers, but this can also be avoided if candidates practice their reading and writing skills.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a)&(b)** A lot of candidates gave the same answer to these two questions. On question **(a)** the majority only said 'interact with other people/friends'.
- (b)** This question was answered correctly by nearly all candidates.
- (c) (i)** Most candidates answered this question correctly. Some only answered part of the question and for that reason only got 1 mark out of 2.
- (ii)** Nearly all candidates said the author didn't agree. Some candidates weren't able to say why correctly. Some also said they (candidates) agreed!
- (d)** Most candidates got this answer right.

- (e) A few candidates didn't get their 3 marks here. They only mentioned 'forma superficial de amizade' and 'transitam por grupos diferentes do seu'.
- (f) Most candidates got this answer right but some forgot to mention that 'it didn't look good to refuse a friend's request'.
- (g) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.
- (h) Many candidates answered this question correctly but quite a few also said it was Skype.
- (i) Most candidates answered this question correctly but many also referred to the fact that with the fast development of technology this 'barreira da amizade online' would still be overtaken in the future without mentioning the 'physical touch'.

Question 2

In **Question 2** candidates should read both texts and use their own language to answer the question, which wasn't the case with quite a lot of candidates who copied sentences from the texts. Candidates are expected to be able to summarise the main ideas of both texts and to produce their own well-structured piece of writing.

This year there were a lot of candidates who decided to write a long introduction to the topic. Others wrote short and sometimes repetitive answers, and some didn't make use of both texts to support their answers.

As the topic was relatively well known to all the candidates, some forgot to follow the instructions and just wrote about their personal opinion on the advantages and disadvantages of having virtual friendships.

FIRST LANGUAGE PORTUGUESE

Paper 0504/02
Writing

Key messages

This paper consists of two parts (Section 1 and Section 2). Candidates will choose one discursive or argumentative title out of a choice of four in Section 1 Argumentative and Discursive, as well as one title out of four from Section 2 Descriptive and Narrative. To do well in this paper, candidates are expected to answer **Section 1** and **Section 2** in a concise manner always relating to the chosen titles. To score high marks for **Style and Accuracy**, 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. They will also be evaluated in the range of vocabulary used to vary their choices accordingly. As for **Content and Structure** it is essential that candidates understand the different genres and choose those which suit their writing abilities. Successful candidates will demonstrate that they have developed their ideas consistently into paragraphs, displaying interesting openings to compositions in order to engage the reader from the start.

General comments

These year's candidates demonstrated that as a whole they were able to perform a coherently structured and well executed written work with imaginative stories, full of original ideas and good use of a relevant range of vocabulary. Most of the arguments were well-formed and accurately joined. Candidates should avoid repetition and proof read their writing so that their texts are structured thoughtfully. Another piece of advice concerns some candidates' handwriting which at times poses great difficulty of understanding and can lead to poor marks.

The most common errors encountered in this year's exam were:

- wrong spelling of the verb "Haver" when referring to temporal expressions "há" instead of "á";
- misspelling of the preposition "atrás". and the verb "trazer" in the 3rd person singular (traz);
- the misuse of the object pronoun after certain verbs: "ajudá-la/lo", instead of "ajudar-la/lo";
- incorrect usage of the verbs in their subjunctive forms "poder" and "pudermos";
- wrong use of the accent "crase" à ; which should always precede a feminine noun;
- incorrect usage of noun and adjective agreement "o professor era parecido"; instead of "parecida";
- lack of the subjunctive, especially in the argumentative essays when presenting or justifying their points of view;
- wrong usage of verb and subject agreement, which is paramount in the Portuguese language, e.g. "Nós fomos", instead of "fui";
- interference of the English language, e.g. "poluição"; "tecnologia";
- incorrect pluralisation of certain nouns e.g. "cidadãos" instead of "cidadões";
- misuse of some accents, especially in the 'proparoxítonas'.

In general candidates achieved between 70% to 85% of the total allocated marks; however there were various instances when less able candidates lost marks as they used the wrong register appropriate to the different writing tasks (e.g. wrong usage of personal pronouns and verbs; slangs, contractions; e.g. "pra" instead of "para", etc.) as well as not writing enough to justify their arguments. As for quality of language some candidates lost marks due to wrong usage of vocabulary (interference of L2) misuse of accents in Portuguese and also wrong use of verb tenses (e.g. mixing present and past tenses in a narrative writing and poor use of conjunctions to make more complex sentences).

Candidates are advised to practise reading and following instructions as this is a crucial element to the successful accomplishment of these tasks.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1 Argumentative and Discursive compositions

(a) Todos podemos ajudar a melhorar o meio ambiente. Desenvolva.

A great number of candidates chose this topic and successfully developed their ideas for or against it. The great majority made use of interesting detailed and expressive words involving the reader throughout their writing, showing great knowledge about this theme.

A few however repeated themselves and that made the reading rather tiring. Candidates should avoid repetition and aim to use sophisticated vocabulary to grab the reader's attention.

(b) O sistema educativo não prepara os jovens para o mercado de trabalho. Dê a sua opinião.

Few candidates chose this topic, and those who did found it hard to express their ideas for and against the given theme, which made the meaning rather unclear. It is, therefore advisable that candidates practise at length the appropriate use of "for" and "against" arguments in an argumentative essay, as well as showing clear understanding of paragraph sequencing in a narrative composition.

(c) Deveríamos ser todos vegetarianos! Concorda?

A great number of candidates chose this topic and in general their written work was coherently structured and well executed. They used a good range of appropriate vocabulary to display their personal viewpoints on the theme which made the reading quite pleasant to go through. Successful candidates presented evidence from the media, facts and statistics to support their arguments for or against the chosen title, demonstrating that they are well read and can show maturity in their argumentative writing.

(d) Para suceder na vida temos que nos comparar constantemente com os outros. Elabore.

Very few candidates chose this topic as their narrative composition. The topic seemed to pose difficulty to those who chose this theme as their writing lacked organised paragraphs as well as being unclear in the use of arguments to justify ideas, leading to rather confusing pieces of writing. Candidates should practise the use of linking words and paragraph sequencing.

Section 2

Descriptive and Narrative compositions

(a) Está numa festa para a qual foi convidado/a à última hora e onde não conhece quase ninguém. Descreva o ambiente, as pessoas à sua volta e como se sente.

This was one of the most popular choices amongst this year's candidates as their descriptive essay. This theme seemed to be part of most learners' reality and culture, and a great number managed to write a strong descriptive answer. Most of the candidates successfully used adjectives and nouns to evoke senses and create the appropriate environment and atmosphere to describe their experiences at a party. Most candidates gave plenty of details of size, shape and colour, making the whole experience quite pictorial and pleasant to read. The less able ones failed to use interesting vocabulary and didn't use a good variety of sentence structures. Candidates should avoid all forms of repetition.

(b) Escreva uma narrativa que termine com a frase: "E este foi o melhor presente do mundo."

This was another popular choice for a narrative piece of writing amongst this year's candidates. Those who were able to reach the top band of marks successfully elaborated their sentences displaying their stories in a very imaginative way and including some elements of flashback to illustrate them effectively. Their ideas were accurately joined together, building the whole story to a climax. Some however overused dialogues amongst their characters, losing marks in that respect.

- (c) **“Era noite. A chuva caía torrencialmente sobre a nossa casa. Como sempre acontece em noites de tempestade, ficamos sem eletricidade.” Continue a narrativa.**

A great number of candidates chose this title as their narrative piece of writing. Some of them successfully created a realistic atmosphere as they narrated the events. Some of this year's candidates managed to write in more lengthy sentences. Less able candidates used very short and repetitive structures. Candidates should practise using more complex sentences when writing narratives.

- (d) **Descreva um/a professor/a e a forma como ele/a influencia a sua vida pessoal e escolar.**

Very few candidates chose this topic. Amongst those who attempted this topic, successful candidates mastered the use of building up the whole text to a climax and leading it naturally to a conclusion. Others however moved between present and past making the reading patchy and inconsistent. More able candidates used a good range of vocabulary when describing people, which was extremely relevant to the topic. Candidates are strongly advised to plan their essays before they begin writing.