

FIRST LANGUAGE PORTUGUESE

Paper 0504/01
Reading

Key Messages

In order to do well in this paper, candidates need to:

- use their own words as much as possible and not copy full sentences from the text;
- write an initial plan, mainly for **Question 2**, to avoid repetition of ideas;
- use synonyms in order to once again avoid repetition of ideas;
- write a good structured piece of work, divided into paragraphs with an introduction, development and conclusion;
- think carefully about what the question is asking them before they start to write.
- make an effort to write as clearly as possible and make sure their handwriting is legible;
- read the texts carefully;
- avoid bullet points in their answers;
- lift the information from the text, in **Question 1**, but try to use their own words as much as possible;
- plan their answers, re-read at the end to avoid repetition and mistakes with agreement of gender and number;
- in **Question 2**, finish with a concluding paragraph without repeating everything that has been said previously.

Candidates are expected to answer **Question 1** in a concise manner, always relating to the information in the text but preferably without bullet points. 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 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 a straightforward one which candidates found easy to understand. In general candidates coped well with the questions and were able to give accurate answers to most of the questions.

Portuguese sayings are an important part of the language and cultural aspects of a country. These were tested in two of the questions this year.

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.

Quality of Language

The quality of language varied from excellent to very poor. The very weakest candidates found it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form. The notion of agreement of verb with subject seemed to be a foreign concept to the weakest candidates. Basic agreements of adjectives were also routinely ignored by some candidates. Some candidates used bullet points in their answers, which doesn't help towards achieving a full mark.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) This question was answered correctly by nearly all candidates. There were quite a few options here but the majority answered: *lose weight, get more energy and avoid health problems*.
- (b) This question was a bit tricky for some candidates who only repeated what was already in the quote by writing: *If people know what to eat they will live better*. This kind of answer scored 0 points.
- (c) This question was answered correctly by most candidates.
- (d) A great number of candidates did not achieve the maximum three marks available for this question, because they repeated information and did not mention that correct nutrition can affect the results of a competition (medals).
- (e) Many candidates only scored two marks out of three because they didn't mention how difficult it was for Marcelo to find healthy food to buy when he was not at home/when he was at work.
- (f) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.
- (g) In order to achieve one mark for this question, candidates had to write that children had to either learn how to cook or make their own food. '*To be able to practice*' wasn't accepted.
- (h) Most candidates answered this question correctly.
- (i) There were a few options here but the majority of candidates answered this question correctly and achieved three marks.

Question 2

Candidates tend to waste up to 50 words introducing the topic for no reward because they tend to rephrase the question or ask rhetorical questions or even repeat themselves.

There is also a tendency to come up with their own experience of the topic. This year was no exception and a few candidates came up with a list of ideas of why people should change their eating habits instead of going back to both texts. Candidates should be reminded that they have to refer to both texts for the information they need in order to get their 15 marks available for content.

It is recommended that candidates count carefully the number of words that they have used and record them at the end of their answer. The most successful candidates often showed clear evidence of planning, drafting and editing their material with the word limit in mind.

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 grammatical structures. They will also be evaluated in the range of vocabulary used. 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';
- use of sentences that are too long;
- misuse of accents.

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 for quality of language some candidates lost marks due to wrong usage of verb tenses (e.g. mixing present and past tenses; or non-agreement between the verb and the subject); and misuse of accents.

Candidates are advised to practise reading and carefully 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) **E aceitável matar animais com outros fins que não sejam só o consumo da sua carne. Discuta.**

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, and showing good knowledge about this theme. Candidates with top marks presented a consistent well developed and logical argument.

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

- (b) **Como podemos combater as manifestações racistas que ainda se veem em eventos desportivos por todo o mundo? Desenvolva.**

Fewer candidates chose this topic, and those who did find it hard to express their ideas on the given theme. Overall they presented a range of different examples of well-known moments when footballers were victims of racism but most of them did not discuss the main question of the topic – what can be done to end manifestations of racism amongst sport events?

It is advisable that candidates carefully read the questions and structure their writing before answering to ensure a clear understanding of the task requirements.

- (c) **A vida nas grandes cidades seria muito melhor se todos usassem formas alternativas de transporte como o ônibus/autocarros ou a bicicleta. Concorda?**

A great number of candidates chose this topic and in general their written work was coherently structured and well presented. Overall candidates managed to write a strong argument and to present their personal viewpoint on the topic. This theme seemed to be close to candidates' reality and culture, and they often presented examples relating to traffic issues in their own cities as well as using evidence from research and the media to support their arguments for and against the topic. A good number of candidates showed maturity in their argumentative writing as well as interest in the topic.

- (d) **O desenvolvimento tecnológico permite avanços importantes, mas cria também problemas graves. Discuta.**

This was the most popular choice and candidates seemed very keen to discuss the topic. Overall the results were successful and most candidates used a range of appropriate vocabulary to display their personal viewpoints on the theme which made the works very pleasant to read. The majority of candidates shared their strong viewpoints and made clever use of evidence from media, facts and statistics to support their arguments for and against the chosen title. Most works presented a well-defined and developed argument.

Section 2

Descriptive and Narrative compositions

(a) Descreva um domingo típico da sua infância.

This and question **(d)** were equally popular choices amongst this year's candidates as their descriptive essay. Most candidates seemed very happy to remember and share sweet memories from their childhood. A great number of candidates managed to write a strong descriptive answer, using well developed ideas and images to describe a variety of complex atmospheres. The candidates in the top bands successfully used adjectives and nouns to evoke senses and create appropriate environments; as well as involving the reader throughout their writing. Most works presented a variety of details of smell, size, shape and colour, making the whole experience quite pictorial and pleasant to read. The less able candidates used little description and often their writing developed more as a narrative (or storytelling). Candidates are advised to practice reading and writing descriptive pieces.

(b) Termine uma narrativa com a seguinte frase: 'O resultado foi completamente inesperado: muita bondade, compreensão, e acima de tudo um amor profundo.'

This was a less popular choice for a narrative piece of writing amongst this year's candidates. Nevertheless those candidates who were able to reach the top band of marks on this question successfully elaborated their sentences displaying their stories in a very imaginative way and creating complex and sophisticated narratives. Some candidates found it difficult to accurately join their ideas and bring the story to a smooth ending that included the requested sentence.

(c) Escreva um texto narrativo intitulado: 'Segredos, nunca mais!'

A good number of candidates chose this title as their narrative piece of writing. Amongst those who attempted this topic, successful candidates presented carefully balanced sections of the story, building up the whole text to a climax and leading to a natural conclusion. Less able candidates used simple narrative with very short and repetitive structures. Candidates should practise using more complex sentences when writing narratives.

(d) Descreva o mundo no ano 2050.

This and answer **(a)** were equally popular choices amongst this year's candidates as their descriptive essay. Overall the candidates produced very imaginative descriptions of the future, showing a great deal of imagination but also emphasising their concerns regarding pollution and technology issues. A great number of candidates used a good range of vocabulary when describing places, objects and people. Others however identified relevant facts but moved between present and future making the reading inconsistent and difficult to follow. It is, therefore advisable that candidates plan their work before they begin writing.