

PORTUGUESE

Paper 9718/01
Speaking

Key messages

In general terms, the standard of the June 2024 examinations was good. The performance of the candidates was satisfactory or good and the speaking tests were, on the whole, conducted well.

It must be noted that the examiners' preparation and skilful questioning were significant in enabling candidates to display their speaking ability. By setting a friendly atmosphere and putting candidates at ease, competent examiners allowed learners to respond well and show what they knew and could do.

Naturally, there is always room for improvement in the evidence of pre-examination preparation from both examiners and candidates.

In the instances where marks awarded by the centre did not match the candidate's language ability (sometimes higher, sometimes lower), their marks were adjusted. The main reasons as to why this was necessary were:

- During their presentation, candidates overlooking the requirement to place the topic in discussion in the context of a Portuguese speaking country or community.
- Candidates not meeting the requirement to seek information from their teachers in **Section 2** and **3** of the examination, and thereby losing marks for those parts.
- Examiners omitting to ask open ended questions, which then gave candidates little room to voice their opinions and/or elaborate on their answers.

Examiners are reminded that regional variations in Portuguese with regard to pronunciation and vocabulary must be considered and respected.

General comments

Candidates will do particularly well when all involved are well prepared. Support from examiners is crucial in making sure learners are aware of the requirements of the speaking test, and well in advance, so they get themselves prepared.

It is important to ensure that the instructions listed in the syllabus are thoroughly read prior to the examination, and that procedures are observed by all involved: centres, examiners and candidates.

Examiners should be mindful that a candidate's presentation must include the topic of discussion in the context of a Portuguese speaking country or community. Furthermore, if a candidate does not ask questions during **Section 2** and **3** of the examination, they cannot be awarded any marks for seeking information or opinions. Examiners should prompt candidates to do so, with no loss of marks for being reminded.

Examiners are also reminded that the correct timings for each of the sections of the test must be respected, and that each section of the test must be correctly started and ended (by signalling its beginning and its end on the recording). Candidates are assessed for quality of language separately in each part of the examination so teachers should ensure that candidates are given ample opportunity to do well in each part of the test.

It is important to note that candidates who are asked open questions will generally fare better at the speaking test. When they are asked closed questions, this often results in short answers, with no opinions being offered. Asking questions relevant to their daily life, past experiences, or future plans generally provides opportunities for more engaging and meaningful interactions.

In addition, when a candidate shows discomfort with a particular topic, or are unable to provide an answer, examiners should change the subject and ask different questions to allow the candidate the opportunity to respond.

It is also helpful when the examiner shows interest in what the candidate is saying and reacts accordingly, without immediately moving to another question, thus keeping the conversation flowing as naturally as possible.

Lastly, centres are asked to make sure that a dedicated and quiet space is reserved for the conduct of the speaking tests, which must take place without interruption or intervention. At times, candidate voices can be difficult to hear, given the level of noise around the area in which the test is being recorded. In addition, when uploading the required documentation e.g. WMS to Submit for Assessment, this should be done using the electronic files provided by Cambridge. This is to avoid problems with handwriting and possible arithmetic errors in total mark calculations.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Candidates should consult the topic areas in Section 3 of the syllabus and give a presentation on a specific topic from that list. This should be prepared in advance.

For the most part, candidates were well prepared and aware of the requirements for the presentation part of the examination. They spoke about something they were familiar with and had some knowledge of. It was clear they knew that the presented topic should reflect the context where the target language is spoken. Some candidates, nevertheless, overlooked this requirement and had their presentation marks reduced, simply because they did not respect this requisite. For the future, teachers should make sure that context is a very clear point to all candidates taking the speaking test. It is also important to note that some candidates talked for considerably more than three and a half minutes, not adhering to the required timings.

Overall, candidates who achieved good marks were able to link their chosen topic to a Portuguese-speaking country. They presented not only facts but also ideas and opinions, did not need to consult their notes, and spoke in an interesting and lively manner. Furthermore, they used correct pronunciation, intonation, and accurate language. It is important to note that candidates are not allowed to read from a script or consult information other than a few bullet point notes. They should be encouraged to practice their presentation skills and make sure they are not using pre-published texts as their own. Their research should be merely used as a source of information and inspiration.

In this part of the examination, examiners should introduce the candidate by saying their name and number, as well as the centre name and number, and add the syllabus and the date of the examination. There are still a few centres where this requirement is overlooked.

This section should last for no more than three and a half minutes and the examiner should not interrupt the candidate during this time.

Section 2

In this section, the candidate must be prepared to expand on the topic presented in **Section 1**. Candidates are also required to ask questions of the examiner about their knowledge and opinions on the topic presented and will lose five marks if they do not do so.

Candidates who achieved the higher marks were able to respond confidently and fluently to spontaneous and natural questions using accurate language. They had prepared their presentation well and did not have difficulties in responding to the questions asked. They were given plenty of opportunities to show their knowledge and they answered questions thoroughly and competently. In addition, those candidates were aware that they needed to ask the examiner for their opinion on the topic presented. In some instances where the candidate failed to do so, they were prompted by the teacher to ask questions. Some candidates took the opportunity to do so, some did not. This shows that there are still candidates who are not fully aware of this requirement.

Section 3

In this section, the examiner should invite the candidate to discuss at least two different/new topics. The best candidates responded with confidence to a variety of topics, expanding from the original question and offering their point of view as well as asking questions of the examiner.

Examiners who actively engaged with candidates' topics and answers created an environment where they could perform to the best of their abilities and were able to achieve good marks. They were asked a variety of open-ended questions, relevant to candidates' lives as students and covering topics such as family life, leisure activities, food and healthy eating, travel, future plans, changes they would make to their school, their life before coming to the country/school, potential changes to school, use of technology, sports, music etc. thereby enabling them to perform well and demonstrate their abilities. There were, sadly, still the odd instances where the examiner would continue discussing a topic already spoken about during the presentation or around some expansion of content mentioned in **Section 2**.

Examiners are reminded that candidates must be asked questions which are relevant to the topic under discussion. Most importantly, the test is about the candidate's linguistic ability and knowledge, and therefore, they must be given all possible opportunities to demonstrate their skills.

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Paper 9718/02
Reading and Writing

Key messages

It is important that candidates consolidate their knowledge of vocabulary and sentence structures in Portuguese language. To score full marks candidates are required to read the rubrics carefully and avoid copying sentences from the texts when responding to questions 3 and 4.

General comments

Overall, most candidates attempted to answer all the questions with very few instances of no response. Candidates needed to change the adverb in **Question 2(d)**. This did not seem to be fully understood. Some candidates just copied whole sentences from the text to answer **Question 3(c)**.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Most candidates performed well in this question, especially in **(a), (b) and (c)**. Candidates needed to understand the context of the passage to be able to use the correct linking word in **(d)**.

Question 2

- (a)** Successful responses included the correct verb tense.
- (b)** The best responses had the correct subject-verb agreement.
- (c)** Candidates needed to identify the object of this sentence to be able to complete the phrase 'É com...'.
- (d)** Many candidates were able to change the verb to subjunctive. Candidates also needed to replace 'aqui' with 'ali/lá'.
- (e)** A good number of candidates performed well in this question.

Question 3

- (a) This question required a short answer, and most candidates performed well. The best responses used their own words to identify the two parts required.
- (b) Most candidates were able to use their own words to explain the meaning of 'virar moda'. The best responses demonstrated a very good understanding of what was discussed in the text.
- (c) Successful responses replaced the words from the text with appropriate synonyms using their linguistic skills to connect all the parts required.
- (d) Good responses used very few words from the text.
- (e) The best responses used their own words to identify the three benefits required.
- (f) Good responses correctly identified the three points required using their own words. They expressed their ideas clearly and accurately.

Question 4

- (a) The best responses integrated the meaning of the expression 'pensar mais verde' with the reason why there are more 'brechós'.
- (b) Many candidates tried to use their own words to explain the expression 'maus olhos' and they demonstrated good knowledge of this common saying by using a wide range of synonyms.
- (c) The best responses avoided copying long phrases from the text and were able to paraphrase using their own words.
- (d) In this question, candidates needed to identify the key word 'democracy' to develop their responses and relate them with the text.
- (e) Successful responses avoided copying long phrases from the text and used their own words.
- (f) There were good responses that included original sentences and wide range of vocabulary.

Question 5

- (a) The best responses summarised both texts clearly and accurately.
- (b) Candidates that performed well in this question included their preferred 'brechó' using a variety of ideas. The best responses were clearly organised with appropriate linking words.

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Paper 9718/03

Essay

Key messages

To score full marks in Language, candidates need to:

- show a very strong command of the language using correct grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- use a wide variety of verb tenses, complex sentences, linking words and synonyms to avoid repetition of words
- revise grammar rules before taking this examination

To score full marks in Content, candidates are required to:

- pay attention to the keywords to answer the question that is being asked,
- organise their ideas in clear paragraphs. An essay consists of an introduction, development of ideas and a conclusion. It is very important to brainstorm main ideas before writing so that these are coherently organised, argued and structured.
- write a detailed, clearly relevant and well-illustrated essay.

General comments

Good responses were detailed, well-illustrated, clearly relevant to the question and coherently argued and structured in clear paragraphs. They showed a confident use of complex sentences with extensive vocabulary and good sense of idiom.

It is important that candidates study or revise grammar rules, punctuation and the use of the different pronouns in Portuguese language.

Weaker responses deviated from the question and lost marks for Content. Candidates should highlight the key words in each question and answer it fully with detailed, relevant and well-structured examples and opinions.

The use of signpost words is very important to structure the essay. Stronger responses used phrases such as 'firstly', 'in addition', 'in conclusion' and so on.

Candidates are reminded that they should only answer to one question. Legibility is important to convey the message clearly.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Urban and rural life: Candidates had to write about rural tourism as a family's sought-after activity.

This was a very popular question. Successful responses contrasted rural with urban life to explain the appeal of rural tourism. They included very well-illustrated answers and, in many cases, even mentioned their own personal experience.

Weaker responses deviated from the question and did not understand the concept of 'turismo rural'. Others focused solely on living in cities and missed the tourism aspect.

Question 2

Food and drink: Candidates had to express their opinions on whether what we eat reflects our personal values.

The best responses were detailed, clear and well-structured. They explored how factors like religion, culture, ethics and finances influence diets.

Weaker responses deviated from the question and included general ideas about food, diets, alcoholism and obesity. Some responses were based on dietary choices only. Candidates needed to write about the link between food and values.

Question 3

Sport: Candidates had to express their opinions on whether the sports practised by men and women will attract the same number of fans supporting the athletes.

This was a popular question. Successful responses included relevant and detailed ideas, showing an ability to develop arguments and draw conclusions. Some responses integrated the physiological differences between men and women and their impact on athletes' performance and, consequently, on sports' popularity.

Weaker responses focused on sports in general deviating from the question. Candidates needed to highlight the key words of the question so that they could include relevant ideas. Others included lengthy introductions about the origins of gender inequality deviating from the specific question asked.

Question 4

Cultural life/heritage: Candidates had to write about the protection and promotion of our cultural heritage.

Most candidates who chose this question were able to develop their ideas and draw conclusions. The best responses were detailed and well-illustrated. They were clearly relevant, coherently argued and well-structured.

Some candidates provided suggestions for the promotion of cultural heritage with actions for both the government and citizens. Others recognised the positive impact of cultural heritage on a country's economy, identity and self-esteem. They went beyond simply describing cultural heritage and analysed its broader impact on peoples' lives.

Weaker responses provided lengthy descriptions of specific cultural elements such as places, monuments, celebrations without explaining the relevance of heritage preservation.

Question 5

War and Peace: Candidates had to express their opinions on the importance of the Nobel Peace Prize.

Very few candidates chose this topic. Successful responses demonstrated in-depth knowledge of the topic and were well-structured with a wide range of ideas.

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Paper 9718/04

Texts

Key messages

To do well in this paper, candidates are required to:

- answer **three** questions from **three different texts**: candidates need to ensure that they answer one question from section 1, one question from section 2 and another question on a different text.
- plan their responses carefully and try not to write everything they know about the book in one question.
- refer to the question using quotes where possible (without page numbers) and provide relevant examples to support their points of view.
- write a concluding paragraph without repeating what has been said previously

General comments

The best responses showed close attention to detail of passages, had a good insight when discussing characters and were sensitive to the language and the author's intentions. They displayed a good command of the language and a good grasp of grammatical structures.

This year the most popular questions were **Question 3(b)**, **Question 5(b)** and **Question 4(b)** followed by **Question 6(b)**.

Candidates need to follow the instructions carefully when making their choice of questions. There were some candidates who answered to both **Question (a)** and **Question (b)** on the same text. Other candidates answered three questions from one section. These candidates were limited to low band marks.

Most candidates were able to demonstrate that they had read the book. Others could not address the questions fully and gave superficial answers. For example, some weaker responses to **Question 1(a)**, **1(b)** and **2(b)** included general statements or short paragraphs about these topics that were not relevant to these questions.

It is important to understand the question and think of a few items that are relevant to that specific question before writing the texts. Some candidates provided a summary of the stories without addressing the questions. Others cited many passages from the books without attempting to analyse or reflect their considerations on those extracts.

Some answers were difficult to read. Candidates should always try to write legibly and make sure their handwriting is clear.

In terms of quality of language, some candidates were translating words or expressions from other languages into Portuguese and some of them were not correct. There were less grammar mistakes this year, but candidates could improve on the use of verb tenses and appropriate connectives when studying the texts in class. Candidates should also write on a variety of topics so that they get used to different structures in Portuguese.

Comments on specific question

Section A

Question 1

José Lins do Rego: *O Moleque Ricardo*

(a) This was a popular question. The best responses fully addressed the question describing how the character's life was before moving to the city and providing examples of Ricardo's daily tasks, his relationships, his aspirations and curiosity based on the information available to him. They also summarised the main events of the character's life after living and working in the city, citing his worries, work situation and the relationships he began to form. Weaker responses tended to address part (i) or (ii) partially, focusing more on one part than the other.

(b) Weaker responses wrote about Ricardo's whole life without focusing on what happened to him when he got to Recife. They needed to include the positive and negative aspects of Ricardo's life in the city and how he had to adapt to a new type of life, a new job and new friends.

Question 2

Agustina Bessa Luís: *A Sibila*

(a) Weaker responses to part (i) of this question copied sentences from the extract. In part (ii), the best responses addressed the specific question asked and were supported with relevant examples. Most candidates knew who the siblings were and suggested reasons for their jealousy.

(b) The best responses were supported with careful analysis of the behaviour that was expected from men and women of the time. Many candidates focused on Maria and Francisco as well as Estina and her husband.

Question 3

João Tordo: *As três vidas*

(a) Few candidates answered this question. The most successful responses addressed both aspects of the question, demonstrated a deeper understanding of Artur in part (ii) and were supported with relevant examples. Weaker responses just focused on one part of the question.

(b) This was the most popular question, with many successfully drawing connections between various elements of the story and proposing multiple interpretations of the book's title. The best responses demonstrated not only a full understanding of the narrative but also integrated detailed analysis supported with relevant illustrations.

Question 4

Ariano Suassuna: *O Auto da Compadecida*

(a) Many candidates who answered this question demonstrated familiarity with the text. Several candidates were able to express their viewpoints on Severino's end of life. Only a few offered a nuanced response that reflected sensitivity to the author's intentions.

(b) This was a very popular question. Weaker responses referred to various parts of the book and provided examples without explaining the author's use of irony.

Question 5

Manuel Lopes: *Os Flagelados do Vento Leste*

(a) Few candidates chose this question. The best responses not only illustrated the thought process behind the character's decisions by mentioning the letters Maria Alice sent to her family, but also delved into her feelings of distress showing insightful reflections on the character's connections and concerns.

(b) This question was very popular. Many candidates wrote about Leandro's relationship with his family, mentioned his past and were able to contrast the type of person Leandro was before and after meeting Libânia with meaningful illustrations to support their perspectives.

Question 6

Pepetela: A Geração da Utopia

- (a)** Not many candidates answered this question. They needed to explain exactly what Elias represented and why Pepetela thought this character would illustrate so well what happened in the country.
- (b)** The most successful responses not only summarised the passages effectively but also went beyond the text to infer the author's intentions. Weaker candidates did not focus on the question itself and instead explained the whole story summarising the role of each character in the book. There were some attempts to infer its meaning, while others simply retold the story without understanding what this octopus represented.