

PORTUGUESE

Paper 9718/01
Speaking

Key messages

To do well in this examination, candidates need to:

- research the topic they have chosen for their presentation, including their ideas and opinions rather than just relying on factual information. This should also aid in raising points for discussion for the Topic Conversation section.
- make reference to the contemporary society or cultural heritage of a country where Portuguese is spoken. Failing this requirement will have a negative impact in their total mark for Content and Presentation', as this will be halved.
- ask a minimum of two questions during the Topic Conversation and General Conversation sections; these should be relevant to the topic under discussion, and will avoid having their mark lowered, or not awarded at all – for 'Seeking Information and Opinions' (should only one question or no questions be asked, respectively).

General comments

The standard of performance was very good this year with a great variety of chosen topics ranging from family life and cultural matters to sports and environment.

Generally, most of the examiners were well prepared. Examinations were conducted in an orderly and professional manner, with examiners clearly introducing candidates and examination centres at the beginning of the recordings indicating the end/beginning of each individual section. For the most part, pre-established time allocations were adhered to.

Overall, examiners set a friendly tone during the examinations, which led to candidates being at ease and consequently performing better in their examinations. Examiners were engaged with the candidates' responses, posing relevant questions and offering pertinent observations throughout the length of the recording. Most candidates were able to answer questions fully and appropriately, with a wealth of different vocabulary and structures.

In some instances, sections were not always clearly introduced or were conducted as a long uninterrupted conversation, or as an interview style conversation – where the teacher would ask questions and the candidate would answer, or vice-versa. Some candidates were, for example, asked to introduce themselves on the recording, with no further introductions from the examiner, and no information other than the candidate's name and number. Where examiners were not engaged with the candidate or used closed-ended questions, candidates mostly gave brief, limited responses, costing them valuable marks.

Teachers/examiners are reminded that candidates are assessed in different aspects – and for quality of language –, separately, in each part of the test. It is vital that each section of the exam is clearly introduced, as well as the centre and candidate name and number, and date of the examination.

In addition, examiners should endeavour to give candidates plenty of opportunity to expand fully on their answers, encouraging more engaging and meaningful interactions, and asking open-ended questions that candidates can relate to their daily life, past experiences or future plans. If a candidate appears uncomfortable or is unable to respond, examiners should sensitively shift the topic and offer alternative questions to provide the candidate with further opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do. Another beneficial practice would be to show genuine interest in the candidate's responses and respond appropriately, rather than moving on too quickly to the next question. This approach helps maintain a natural flow of conversation and allows candidates to perform with greater confidence.

In terms of administration, centres must ensure that the Working Mark Sheets are accurately completed using the electronic file provided by Cambridge. This is to avoid problems with handwriting and possible arithmetic errors in total mark calculations.

Comments on specific sections

Section 1

It was noted from candidate's voice projection and confidence shown, that most of them were fully prepared in advance to make a good, well organised and structured presentation on a chosen topic. They included not only factual information but also well-developed ideas and personal opinions, successfully linking their chosen topic to a country where Portuguese is spoken. Furthermore, they spoke in a lively and engaging manner, sounded motivated and invested in displaying secure knowledge of facts, while ensuring, to the best of their abilities, that they used the correct pronunciation, appropriate intonation and accurate use of language throughout.

Candidates are reminded that they need to make reference to the contemporary society or cultural heritage of a Portuguese-speaking country. There were still a few candidates who – regardless of how knowledgeable they were or how well they conducted their presentation – had their marks for presentation halved because they did not respect this requisite.

Candidates should refrain from memorising their presentations or taking too many cues to the exams room, as doing so may constrain their delivery and result in a performance that lacks spontaneity.

In this part of the examination, the examiner should clearly state the candidate's number, full name, syllabus code, and the date of the examination. This section should last no more than three and a half minutes, and the examiner should not interrupt the candidate during this time.

Section 2

Overall, candidates sounded motivated and invested in providing information and opinions while paying attention to the accuracy of their speech. In most cases, these candidates had prepared their presentation well, so had no trouble answering the questions asked by the examiners. They showed good understanding and were able to respond clearly, adding personal details and opinions to develop their answers.

Candidates who achieved higher marks were able to respond confidently and fluently to spontaneous, natural questions, using accurate and appropriate language. Those who asked at least two relevant questions, arising from the conversation, were eligible for full marks in the Seeking Information and Opinions criteria. The few candidates who only asked one question (or no questions at all) from the examiner missed on those full marks, having low or no marks awarded here.

Candidates must ask the examiner at least one simple question, in order to be awarded minimum marks. Examiners are reminded that if a candidate does not ask questions spontaneously, they should provide encouragement by prompting with phrases such as 'is there anything you would like to ask me?', ensuring that candidates are given plenty of opportunities to fulfil the requirements for maximum possible marks. Examiners who actively engaged with the candidate's chosen topic and responses, helped to create a supportive environment in which candidates could perform at their best.

In some examinations, the required time limits were not respected, which is something examiners should take into consideration in future series.

Section 3

In this section, candidates should be able to discuss at least two or three different/new topics in greater depth. Examiners who asked a variety of open-ended questions, relevant to candidates' experiences as students, created opportunities for them to demonstrate their linguistic ability. Most candidates responded with confidence and natural fluency to a range of topics, expanding beyond the original question, expressing personal opinions, while also asking questions of the examiner – and were awarded higher marks. They showed no difficulties with comprehension and were able to respond to and develop even to unexpected topics, while sounding motivated and invested in providing information and opinions, and paying attention to the accuracy of their speech.

Topics such as family life, leisure activities, food and healthy eating, travelling, future aspirations, suggested improvements to their school, experiences prior to joining the current school or country, use of technology, sports, and music enabled candidates to engage fully and perform at their best.

In some cases, however, the correct structure of the examination was not respected, with some candidates bringing topics to be presented and/or discussed during this last section of the test, as well as some candidates making detailed references to the content of a specific book, with the examiner occasionally asking questions. Some candidates referred back to the subject of the Topic Conversation – either by own initiative or prompted by the examiner and lost valuable marks for repeating material.

There were instances where timings were not respected, and candidates were not prompted to ask questions from the examiner. Candidates can achieve more marks by asking relevant questions during this section. Examiners should avoid making long comments or asking lengthy questions so that candidates have as much time as possible to show what they know and can do.

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Paper 9718/02
Reading and Writing

Key messages

To do well in this paper, candidates need to:

- use their own words and avoid copying sentences from the passages
- pay attention to gender agreement, verb tenses and the use of the subjunctive mood
- use a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical structures
- read each question carefully and be mindful of word limits where specified
- proofread their answers to ensure accuracy in spelling and punctuation.

General comments

Overall, candidates performed well demonstrating their ability to understand and respond to both texts. They were also able to give their own opinions demonstrating their language skills.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Most candidates performed well in this question. Weaker responses added extra words or copied phrases from the passages.

Question 2

(a) Most candidates performed well in this question. Weaker answers had issues with gender agreement; given that 'refeição' is a feminine noun in Portuguese, it required the past participle 'preparada'.

(b) There were a variety of good responses to this question.

(c) Most candidates demonstrated understanding of the linking expression 'Para além de'. Weaker responses omitted the subject 'Cozinhar'.

(d) Weaker answers omitted the verb 'optar', which was required to retain the same meaning. The preposition 'por' was also needed after the verb 'Optar' for answers to be grammatically correct.

(e) This question required candidates to use the subjunctive mood. Weaker answers included 'É provável que refeições preparadas em casa usam...', which is grammatically incorrect.

Question 3

(a) Successful responses used their own words. A variety of expressions were used to convey the idea of 'vida agitada', including 'vida atarefada' and 'vida corrida'. Weaker responses copied sentences from the passage.

(b) Some candidates seemed to think that this question referred to how our cooking habits have changed or why they should be changed, while the focus was on why it is easy to change them.

Candidates should underline the key words in the question so that they do not lose focus when answering it.

(c) The main issue when answering this question was rewriting the sentence '*o enfraquecimento da transmissão de habilidades culinárias entre gerações*'. Successful responses wrote '*as habilidades culinárias foram transmitidas de forma mais fraca entre as gerações*', which conveys the same idea. They also managed to change the sentence '*o consumo dos alimentos ultraprocessados*' to '*o consumo de alimentos processados*'. This minor change in preposition keeps the sentence grammatically accurate and preserves the meaning.

(d) Lifting was the main issue with this question. Successful answers wrote: '*Planejar as refeições traz união e prazer para as famílias*'. This sentence combines two ideas together, avoiding copying sentences from the passage.

(e) Some candidates used bullet points to answer this question:

- desenvolve a autonomia
- aumenta a confiança
- melhora as habilidades cognitivas.

It is important to note that when using this type of format, it may still be necessary to substitute some words. Weaker responses included '*fortalece as habilidades cognitivas*') which is exactly as it appears in the passage.

(f) Weaker responses included information that was not in the passage. Candidates needed to read the question carefully and answer according to the text provided.

Question 4

(a) Weaker answers focused only on explaining the excuses people give when they do not feel like exercising. They required an explanation of two details.

(b) Lifting was an issue in this question. Successful answers substituted words like '*dia-a-dia*' with '*rotina*'. When giving examples, candidates can make use of synonyms or words with similar meaning. For instance, instead of writing '*como ir ao dentista*', successful responses used variations such as '*como ir ao médico*'.

(c) Weaker responses could not link the financial sense of the expression with its metaphorical meaning in relation to health, particularly how exercise can be seen as an investment.

(d) Most candidates answered this question appropriately. Successful answers used the passive voice '*muitas despesas são poupanças por funcionários saudáveis*'. Other candidates confused the terms '*empregado*' and '*empregador*'.

(e) Successful responses included four details. Weaker answers omitted one or two of them.

Question 5

(a) Most candidates performed well in this question. Weaker responses exceeded the word limit and did not use their own words to answer this question.

(b) There were very interesting activities, ranging from playing football to sleeping. Successful answers described the activity and explained how it contributes to a healthy life. Weaker responses exceeded the word limit.

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Paper 9718/03

Essay

Key messages

To do well in this examination, candidates need to:

- use correct grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- use a wide variety of verb tenses, complex sentences, linking words and synonyms to avoid repetition.
- revise grammar rules before taking this exam.
- pay attention to the keywords to answer the question that is being asked.
- write a detailed, clearly relevant and well-illustrated essay.
- 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.

General comments

Good responses were detailed, well-illustrated, relevant to the question and structured in clear paragraphs. They used signpost words such as firstly, in addition, in conclusion, etc to organise the writing.

It is important that candidates study or revise grammatical 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.

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

Candidates were asked to write about how school-sponsored events could influence our interactions with the community.

Most candidates were able to present good ideas with relevant examples. Weaker responses deviated from the question and focused on social events in general rather than the school-based ones.

Question 2

Candidates had to write about their thoughts on the energies and healing powers of natural stones and crystals.

There were very few responses to this question.

Question 3

Candidates had to write about whether a four-day work week could be more profitable for everyone and support their ideas on this topic. This was the most popular question. Successful responses showed deep

knowledge about the topic and used complex grammar structures and wide range of vocabulary. There were extensive essays with a variety of examples from different cultural contexts.

Weaker essays deviated from the topic by writing about salary structures and lost marks for Content.

Question 4

Candidates had to give their opinions on whether single-sex schools were more advantageous for learning than mixed schools.

This was also a popular question. Weaker responses did not support their ideas and deviated from the topic by focusing on issues such as bullying and harassment.

Question 5

Candidates had to give examples on how sustainable agriculture could help preserve the environment.

Successful responses were well-structured with clear paragraphs and original ideas. They used a wide range of vocabulary and grammar structures. These were coherently argued and generally accurate responses.

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Paper 9718/04

Texts

Key messages

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

- use their own language
- show their ability to organise material
- demonstrate close attention to detail of passages
- have a good insight when discussing characters
- be sensitive to the language and to the author's intentions
- plan their answers, re-read at the end to avoid repetition and mistakes with agreement of gender and number
- refer to the question using quotes where possible (without page numbers). Use varied and relevant illustrations, referring to different passages from the story to provide examples that reinforce their points of view.
- finish with a concluding paragraph without repeating everything that has been said previously.
- write legibly ensuring their handwriting is clear.

Quality of Language is also important to achieve a better mark; therefore, 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. To be able to show some literary techniques would also be a bonus.

General comments

Candidates are reminded to answer **three** questions from **three different texts**. Those who answered more than one question from the same book were limited to low band marks. Candidates should aim for answers between 500 to 600 words. For Questions 1(a), 2(a) and 3(a) candidates should try to write up to 300 words for (a)(i) and the same number of words for (a)(ii). Weaker responses exceeded the number of words for the first part of the answer and only included a short paragraph for (a)(ii).

This year the most popular questions were **Question 4(b)** and **Question 5(a)** followed by **Question 2(a)** and **Question 3(a)**.

Candidates who had not read the books attempted to write about **Questions 1(a), 1(b) and 2(b)** and **4(b)** including general statements about these topics that were not relevant to the questions.

In general, candidates were able to demonstrate that they had read the books. Weaker responses were often superficial and did not fully engage with the demands of the question. It is important to understand the question and think of a few items that are relevant to that specific question, before writing the answer. Weaker responses focused on a single aspect of the response, leading to repetition rather than development. In many cases, points were stated but not supported with examples from the text.

In terms of quality of language, some candidates were still translating words or expressions from another language into Portuguese which were not always correct. The verb 'to introduce' for example can be read in Portuguese as 'to insert'. 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. They should also practise writing on a variety of topics to get used to different structures in Portuguese. They could use varied and

relevant illustrations, referring to different passages of the story to provide examples that could reinforce their points of view.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

José Lins do Rego: *O Moleque Ricardo*

(a) This question was popular. Most candidates responded to both **parts (i)** and **(ii)** of the question, although many tended to focus more heavily on the Carnival part at the expense of the other part about Sr. Alexandre. Candidates who achieved higher marks addressed both parts of the question in a balanced and thorough manner. Successful responses went beyond general descriptions of the way Carnival was celebrated in Recife in **part (i)**, offering specific examples linked directly to relevant passages from the text. Weaker responses only copied parts of the extract and kept repeating themselves writing about how this festivity is still important for Brazilians. In **part (ii)** stronger responses demonstrated insight into the character of Sr. Alexandre, effectively analysing his role and relationship with Ricardo and the other workers from the bakery as well as the betrayal of his dedicated wife in the book.

(b) Stronger responses demonstrated a balanced discussion of both aspects, offering relevant insights into life in the city and in the countryside as portrayed in the book. Their responses included specific examples related to work, relationships, and the character's perceptions, effectively illustrating their points of view with well-chosen and meaningful details from the text.

Question 2

José Eduardo Agualusa: *A Rainha Ginga*

(a) Not many candidates selected this question, but those who performed well were able to contextualise their responses, providing relevant details about the characters' motivations and the nature of their relationship. In **part (ii)**, stronger responses successfully selected and explained a couple of well-chosen examples, clearly linking them to the question and providing appropriate context to support their interpretations.

(b) This was a very popular question. Many candidates referred to the history of Ginga, how important and strong she was as a woman. A great number of candidates were able to provide thorough descriptions of the kind of woman and queen Ginga was for her people and offered developed analyses of her behaviour and personality traits. These responses demonstrated a deeper understanding of the text and the ability to interpret and engage critically with the character's actions and motivations. Weaker responses needed to provide examples from the book to explain their views.

Question 3

João Tordo: *As três vidas*

(a) This was a popular question; however, some focused too heavily on **part (i)** which limited their potential to achieve higher marks. Weaker responses mentioned the relationship between the main character and Camila but were unable to justify with examples why he was in love, there was hardly any evidence for this statement. Others featured only a brief introduction followed by an abrupt leap in the narrative, lacking smooth transitions and sufficient illustrative detail. In **part (ii)**, stronger responses presented a more focused and insightful discussion of the secondary character and her interests, clearly demonstrating an understanding and insightful perception of her role within the broader context of the story.

(b) Not many candidates selected this question. The ones who answered this question mentioned the relationship between Camila, Gustavo and Nina as they were younger, living with their grandad and were also able to explain how they grew apart.

Question 4

Ariano Suassuna: *O Auto da Compadecida*

- (a) Many candidates who addressed this question demonstrated familiarity with the text. However, although several provided some examples, they often focused on only one aspect of the answer, the church's role. This limited their ability to deliver a more nuanced response that reflected a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the author's intentions.
- (b) This question was highly popular among candidates. While many were skilled at recounting the story and providing numerous examples, not all engaged deeply with the material or reached clear, insightful conclusions. Weaker responses took a generic approach, relying heavily on their own personal perspectives.

Question 5

Miguel Sousa Tavares: *Equador*

- (a) This was also a very popular question. Good responses were able to describe Luís Bernardo's personality before and after going to São Tomé e Príncipe. They also provided relevant examples explaining the reasons behind Bernardo's feelings of distress, offering insightful reflections on the character's challenges and concerns.
- (b) Candidates who decided to write about Bernardo's task in trying to convince the English consul slavery did not exist in São Tomé e Príncipe were able to find good illustrations to support their answers.

Question 6

Djamilia Pereira de Almeida: *Luanda, Lisboa, Paraíso*

- (a) Not many candidates attempted to answer this question. The most successful essays effectively described and analysed the life events that impacted the characters' relationship throughout their lives. Weaker answers were a bit superficial and needed to refer to the examples and passages from the book to justify their points of view.
- (b) While some candidates merely retold the story, others provided an unbalanced explanation of the title. The most successful responses went beyond summarising the text to infer the author's intentions and explore the overall meaning of the story. Weaker responses were not able to explain the ambiguity in the name of the place where Cartola and Aquiles lived, 'Paradise'.