

PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE

<p>Paper 8684/01 Speaking</p>

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.

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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<p>Paper 8684/03 Essay</p>
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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.