

FIRST LANGUAGE PORTUGUESE

Paper 0504/01 Reading
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Key messages

Teachers should train their students 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 to once again avoid repetition of ideas
- write a good, structured piece of work, divided into paragraphs with a short introduction, development of the points from **both texts (Question 2)** and a short conclusion
- think carefully about what the question is asking them before they start to answer
- be able to summarise. The number of lines for **Question 1** should be an indication of how much they should write.

Candidates should:

- carry on trying to write as clearly as possible and make sure their handwriting is legible
- read the texts carefully
- avoid bullet points in their answers
- take key 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
- look for information in **both texts** for **Question 2**, but there is no need to keep writing 'no texto A', 'no texto B'
- not give their own opinion (**Question 2**).

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 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 contribute to a higher mark.

In **Question 2** candidates are expected to use their own language and write their own text based on the two texts they read; they should not give their opinion. 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

Doing volunteering work, raising funds for a good cause and all the work that is involved with the 'art of donating' is something that we've all come across with at home, school or work and for that reason candidates should be familiar with the type of work that was mentioned in text A. The advantages and disadvantages of having pets as well as the benefits of adopting an animal, mentioned in text B, is also a very popular topic therefore it should not be too difficult for candidates to answer **Question 2**.

This year there were still answers based in only one text, but many candidates referred to both texts in a balanced way to answer **Question 2**. Unfortunately, there were still some candidates who decided to ignore the texts and give us their own opinion.

Quality of Language

The quality of language varied. The notion of agreement of verb with subject was still visible. Basic agreements of adjectives were also routinely ignored by some candidates. Many exams revealed an adequate expression (3 marks). The syntax and the vocabulary were simple, and there were some technical errors, but many candidates tried to improve the quality of their answers, and some revealed more sophistication in terms of syntax and vocabulary use, and more accuracy overall (4/5 marks). Very few exams were graded with a weak performance (2 marks), corresponding to limited expression, lack of clarity, limited vocabulary and general clumsiness.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates received two out of three marks in this question, as many were unable to identify the answer related to 'it has value for those who give and receive.' Common responses included 'dar algo gratuitamente' e 'sem esperar receber nada em troca'. Few candidates conveyed the idea of 'ato de solidariedade' which was not accepted on its own, although it would be accepted if linked to any of the other points required. Some candidates used the expression 'contexto de caridade' and this was a valid answer, too. Besides providing complete answers for the third bullet point from the mark scheme, a wide range of phrases with the same meaning were given such as 'para um mundo melhor', 'para uma sociedade sem desigualdades', 'para um mundo mais justo e igual', 'para uma sociedade futura menos desequilibrada', etc, these were credited with one mark with the Benefit of Doubt.
- (b) Candidates seemed not to have read this question carefully, resulting in many providing incomplete or unrelated answers. Candidates could develop their responses conveying that schools supported volunteering where the first point was achieved by using different verbs instead of 'apoiar' (support) or 'valorizar' (value), such as 'incentivar', 'encorajar', 'implementar', 'promover', 'incluir atividades', or expressing the same meaning using phrases such as 'incluir e convencer alunos a fazer serviços comunitários', 'muitas escolas já tinham organizações de voluntariado', etc. Though most candidates gained just two marks, they were able to explain the third aspect very well when referring to getting youngsters involved with the community, changing their behaviours and getting responsibility when engaging in volunteer projects.
- (c) This question was understood by most candidates. However, a 'yes' or 'no' answer without a justification would not get one mark. Some candidates also wrote 'no, the place doesn't matter' by rephrasing the question, but once again this wasn't accepted on its own. To be able to get one mark for the first part of the question, candidates should have said that volunteering could be carried out anywhere, or even give examples where it could be done. Some candidates attained two points for this question, as the vast majority wrote down the second aspect correctly with all its three parts, 'vontade, tempo e dedicação', or one or two of them, which was also accepted.
- (d) This seemed to be a difficult question. Only a few candidates provided adequate answers. Most attempted to answer without fully understanding the question, probably because the meaning of 'tímidas' was misunderstood. Nevertheless, some candidates were able to explain the low expectations.
- (e) With four possible answers for this question most candidates got full marks or at least two marks with good, structured answers, varied vocabulary and at times complex syntax.
- (f) Although many candidates appeared to understand the question and the meaning of 'montanha russa', they provided partial answers, mentioning only the negative aspects or stating it was both positive and negative without explanation. Unfortunately, not many answers touched the two opposite moments with complete explanations and got two marks. Interestingly, many candidates mentioned the high and low moments but without a meaningful justification which shows a poor interpretation of the question where an explanation is clearly requested.
- (g) This question was well understood by candidates, and the majority received full marks.

- (h) Most candidates received only one mark for this question, because although they explained how donating can be rewarding and cause joy, they confused the work of a donor with the work of a volunteer.

Question 2

The answers to **Question 2** revealed a good engagement with the topic. Candidates who received higher marks effectively synthesised the main ideas from both texts, using their own words, sophisticated grammar, and vocabulary, and produced virtually error-free work.

Some candidates focused exclusively on one text, resulting in lower marks as they could not reach the fifteen points for content. Only a few candidates used a bullet-point style, and a couple wrote about the topic without referring any ideas from the texts, resulting therefore in lower marks too, as there were not enough ideas to obtain points for content.

Some candidates were outstanding, providing good insight on the summary and kept their answers within the word limit. Most candidates were very able to write up to 250 words with a neat handwriting that facilitated the marking when going through their thoughts and points of view about the topics of both texts.

This year candidates were able to tune in, feeling empathy, comparing, giving emphasis to the main points and combining both texts to express their understanding on these heartwarming topics which trigger humanitarian actions and develops the sense of citizenship responsibility in most youngsters and adults nowadays.

Question 2 - Writing: Style and Organisation

In terms of expression, most candidates revealed a satisfactory expression in own words, with some sense of order. A reasonable number of candidates displayed good expression in recognisable summary style, with good focus and linkage. There were a few cases in which the structure of the summary was expressed with great self-awareness and sophistication, relating to a personal, coherent and cohesive organization of the text, the use of own words and of advanced level syntax and connectors.

Question 2 - Writing: Accuracy of Language

Many candidates were able to express themselves with appropriate syntax and vocabulary and their texts exhibited few technical errors. Adequate and good language uses were the most common features in the cohort. Nevertheless, centres should work with candidates on the use of prepositions, verb tenses and subject/verb and non-phrase agreement. Some work on organisational skills in terms of discourse with adequate linkers to group ideas, keep the balance and focus whilst applying sophisticated qualifying words, action words with different verb tenses to enhance their complex syntax as well as using precise varied vocabulary would also be beneficial. Unfortunately, once again spelling was a major critical area, maybe due to interferences from languages such as English and mostly Spanish.

FIRST LANGUAGE PORTUGUESE

Paper 0504/02
Writing

Key messages

- It is important to pay attention to the recommended word limit. Short answers are unlikely to meet the criteria needed to be placed in the higher bands.
- Candidates need to carefully write their answers and avoid the excessive use of connectors and pay attention when using word separation, punctuation and accents.
- Candidates should practice question analysis and text construction, so they can develop the confidence to spend some time analysing the questions, identifying key pieces of information, ideas and facts they want to convey prior to writing.
- Candidates need to better understand the requirements of descriptive essays and focus on a good vocabulary selection (particularly adjectives) and appropriate verb tenses (past imperfect).
- Candidates need to better understand the difference between descriptive and narrative tasks.
- Candidates need to carefully read the questions, and make sure they clearly understand the task required – if description is requested, they need to describe the ambience, what they see, smell, feel, etc. and avoid narrating stories. They also need to make sure they understand all the terms used in each sentence, to ensure they are giving the correct answer.

General comments

Candidates achieving higher marks developed well-structured answers focusing on what was asked of them and often kept the reader interested. A good number of candidates wrote sound introductions, developments and conclusions.

Narratives scoring higher marks in **section 2** revealed a good capacity to transport one's mind to a different world, involving the reader with well sequenced events and interesting descriptions of what it meant to be in the story.

Few candidates showed the necessary language maturity to write accurately when hypothesizing.

Many candidates have written new titles when answering the questions, which is not a requirement and in some cases have drawn them away from the purpose of the question. Candidates should instead concentrate in answering/discussing what was requested in each question.

Overall, there were many mistakes related to punctuation and accentuation and verb-subject agreement. Candidates are advised to carefully write words and sentences to ensure they are following the correct spelling and the right grammar structure.

There were a significant number of answers/scripts with a strong interference of English and Spanish language. Some scripts, with strong interference of Spanish language, scored very low marks because candidates struggled to demonstrate an acceptable knowledge of the Portuguese language, and the overall sentences did not make much, or in some cases, any sense.

Examples of using expressions and/or words from the Spanish or English are: *pisar no botão* (press the button), *por instância* (for instance), *reinarçar* (reinforce), *capabilidade* (capability), *adaptativo* (adaptive), *ethnicidades* (ethnicities), *lidar a* (lead to), *echo*, *beneficial*, *reporteira* (female reporter), *sobreexploração* (overexploitation), *locação* (location), *revelantes* (revealing), *ninguma*, *habia-me*, *aplicar* (apply), *gran porcentage*, *se encuentra*, *eligem*, *oscura*, *volver*, *container*, *extraño*, *fijei*, *ensinança*.

Other common mistakes were with words such as: *descaçar, extéricos, iluminar, conforto, envolvidos, imediato, oportunidades, oque*; difference between *tem/têm, vem/vêm/veem, haver/a ver, esta/está, nos/nós, -am/-ão* (confusion between the ending in the past and future tense).

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

- (a) *A natação é considerada o desporto mais completo. Concorda com esta afirmação?*

This was the most popular question amongst candidates. At higher bands there was a consistent quality of well-developed ideas, logical stages in an overall complex argument, where each stage of the argument is linked to and follows the preceding one. Many candidates included relevant points in their answers, but these were only developed partially with some effectiveness.

Weaker candidates deviated from the topic and wrote about sports in general and the overall structure lacked a sense of sequencing, with intrusive ideas or misleading sentences. There was little evidence of planning to identify arguments in favour or against. This being a familiar topic, candidates seem to have relied on what they knew to approach the task, rather than brainstorming different points of views.

Very few candidates showed a capacity to use appropriately linking devices to structure their arguments and across all candidates it was noticeable some misuse of or lack of accurate accent marks. Some candidates also used commas between the subject and the complement of a sentence. For example, '*Cientistas, descobriram que...*' ou '*A natação é, um desporto completo*'.

- (b) *O multiculturalismo traz vantagens para todos. Concorda com esta afirmação?*

Some candidates wrote a new title for this question, instead of brainstorming the topic to expand their answer.

In the higher marks there was a consistent quality of appropriately developing points, following logical stages in an overall complex argument, where all stages of the argument are linked coherently and follow the preceding one. Many candidates presented several relevant points to their argument but sometimes have not fully developed them effectively.

Weaker candidates did not understand the meaning of '*multiculturalismo*' and its implications, and therefore the development was very simple and not always logical. There was also an instance where a candidate misunderstood the word '*multiculturalism*' for '*fisioculturismo*' and wrote a whole essay against body building rather than agreeing or disagreeing with whether multiculturalism is advantageous to all.

- (c) *Pensamentos positivos contribuem para a concretização de sonhos. Elabore dando a sua opinião.*

Along with **Question 1 (a)** this was also a popular question amongst candidates in this section and many candidates have also written a new title for this question, which is not required.

Answers in the top marks have followed the performance at the other questions where candidates showed a consistent quality of well-developed ideas, logical stages in an overall complex argument, where each stage of the argument is linked to and follows the preceding one.

Many answers could not be placed at the top bands, as the quality of the explanation was not consistent, there was some repetition and candidates missed opportunities to link ideas within and between paragraphs.

As in the other questions in **section 1**, weaker candidates wrote short answers, where the structure lacked a sense of sequencing, and the development was very brief and simple and not always logical.

- (d) *Os desperdícios alimentares têm um impacto negativo no meio ambiente. Dê a sua opinião.*

Some candidates showed very mature and assured command of the language. However, some evidenced poor language skills, particularly in relation to verb agreement, by producing sentences as: '*Se todos fizerem um pouco de esforço, teríamos um meio ambiente mais...*' The correct way would be '*Se todos fizessem um pouco de ... teríamos*' ... or '*Se todos fizerem um pouco... teremos...*'.

Candidates placed in higher bands showed a deep understanding of the topic and were able to produce consistent, well-developed, well-structured and complex arguments.

Many candidates made relevant points but struggled to develop them fully and effectively.

Candidates placed at lower bands seemed to have misread the question and wrote about environmental issues in general, not about food waste and its negative impact on the environment, as required.

Section 2

Question 2

- (a) *Imagine que está a celebrar uma ocasião especial com a sua família ou amigos. Descreva a celebração, as pessoas, a comida e o ambiente.*

This was the most popular question amongst candidates in this **section 2**.

Candidates with higher marks wrote an interesting text, with well-defined, well-developed ideas and images, describing a complex atmosphere with a very good range of details.

The most common events were a birthday party, a wedding or a Christmas celebration. The fact that they wrote about an event they took part in helped to produce a text with a more personal touch.

Many candidates had a good selection of ideas and images, and the overall picture was largely consistent, but they were not as creative as the best candidates. Several candidates, however, wrote a narrative text, which means they missed the key instruction of the question: 'Descreva'. Understanding the differences between a narrative and a descriptive text is crucial to be placed in the top bands.

Overall, there was a good selection of vocabulary relevant to the content. However, too much repetition decreases the quality of the content. Candidates need to vary the words by using synonyms to express similar concepts, feelings or ideas.

Candidates have also struggled to use the verb tenses appropriately and the wrong sequence of verb mode and tense was sometimes used to express hypothetical situations.

Some candidates struggled to emphasise the description of the people, places and food and felt that it was easier to narrate the events, which unfortunately have drawn them away from the purpose of the task.

As in **section 1**, many candidates decided to give a title to their answers, which is not a requirement.

- (b) *Está na sala de aula e o/a professor/a está a ensinar técnicas de relaxamento. Descreva o ambiente à sua volta e o que está a sentir.*

This was the least popular question amongst candidates in this section.

Candidates scoring high marks have shown that they fully understood the topic and included a good selection of interesting ideas and images, with a range of details.

Candidates scoring lower marks wrote a narrative text and missed the objective of the task. In these cases, there was some structure, but the writing lacked direction and intent.

Overall, most candidates managed to use good descriptive skills to answer the question.

- (c) *Imagine que acorda de manhã e se transformou num animal. Escreva um texto narrativo contando o que se passou a seguir.*

Candidates at the top marks wrote complex narratives where the different sections of the story were carefully balanced and the climax carefully managed.

Many candidates wrote relevant answers to the topic, but they missed opportunities for appropriate development of ideas, and the climax is not effectively described and led up to. It is very important for candidates to understand the importance of orderly writing and sequencing of sentences that provide clarity and engage the reader in the events or in the atmosphere. The use of detail and build-up of character and setting was often missed.

A few candidates resorted to writing dialogues, but it rarely interfered with the quality of the narrative.

Poor command of punctuation and paragraphing impeded the understanding of some texts and influenced the quality of some answers.

- (d) *Escreva um texto narrativo sobre um super herói que tenta salvar o Planeta.*

This was the second most popular question in **section 2**.

Overall, the candidates did well when answering this question. However, many candidates did not pay attention to a key important aspect of the topic. '*tenta salvar o Planeta*'.

For candidates to be placed at top bands they need to produce a text that is interesting, with cogent details when appropriate and necessary, and where the different sections of the story are carefully balanced, and the climax is carefully produced.

Candidates must produce texts that show creativity and that are engaging to the reader.

Many candidates wrote relevant answers to the topic, but many missed the opportunity to develop their ideas appropriately and produce an effective and led up to climax.

There were some answers that were simplistic with poor development of characters, suspense build-up or climax.

It was difficult to see evidence of planning to aid the writing process and some responses felt rushed towards the end. Candidates are advised to plan their writing appropriately and coherently to help the writing process and to help with the sequencing of ideas. Candidates should plan their writing to give them time to read their answers at the end in order to adjust anything that they feel that it is not clear.