

OCR Report to Centres

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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F887 Listening, Reading and Writing (1)

Generally, most candidates were able to cope with the paper. However, examiners reported that very often, as in previous years, candidates could not express themselves clearly in English and/or Portuguese.

Candidates should be encouraged to follow the instructions carefully throughout the paper and particularly in answer to questions 8(a) and 8(b).

Most candidates showed evidence of gaps in basic grammar, making errors of an elementary kind (spellings, endings, verb forms, gender of common nouns, adjectival and other agreements, punctuation). Spelling tended to be poor, with candidates unsure of the correct spelling of words and when and which accent to write.

As in any examination, candidates are expected to follow instructions and ensure their writing is legible.

Section A: Listening and Writing

Task 1

This multiple choice exercise in Portuguese was generally well-answered by the majority of candidates. There was no pattern to wrong answers.

Task 2

This task shows candidates' command of the language. Most candidates coped well with this gap-filling exercise. There was no pattern to wrong answers. Candidates should ensure their answers make sense in the context of the written text as well as the text they have heard. In addition, candidates must ensure they correctly copy the words they have chosen.

Task 3

Many candidates demonstrated that they had a poor command of the English language, even though the answers did not require complex language structures. Candidates are expected to know fairly basic vocabulary and structures in English.

In question 3(a) many candidates failed to state that students had to be enrolled in state schools. 'Public schools' was incorrect. 'Young naturalists' was another frequent wrong answer. In question 3(d) (iii) many candidates failed to mention that the amounts were in reais. Numbers without reference to the appropriate currency are meaningless; candidates are expected to know the currencies of Brazil and Portugal and express them correctly.

In questions 3(e) (ii) and 3(h) many candidates did not know the verbs 'assess' or 'evaluate'. In question 3(i) some candidates used the verb 'fund' instead of 'found'. It is important that candidates preparing for this examination practise expressing themselves clearly and unambiguously in English.

Task 4: Writing

Examiners reported that candidates coped well with this writing exercise. Most candidates conveyed most or all the information successfully. Some candidates referred to *preços* for 'prizes'. Some candidates did not know how to convey 'ID card'. Simply *identificação* or *cartão ID* were incorrect. *Documentários* was used sometimes for 'documents', *intendo* for 'I intend', *ofício* or *oficina* for 'office' and *lanche* for 'lunch'.

As in previous years, some candidates used the singular familiar forms of the possessive adjective and subject pronoun, which should not be used when writing to adult strangers; the space in which the answer was to be written started with *Prezada senhora*. Candidates are expected to know forms of address in Portuguese and not to mix *tu* and *você*, *seu* and *teu* when addressing a stranger.

A few candidates omitted one or two items of information and a few wrote much more than was required. Some answered the questions which were meant to be asked.

Quality of Language – Accuracy was generally poor, with frequent errors of an elementary kind (punctuation, spelling, endings, verb forms, gender of common nouns, agreements), and vocabulary and structures were strongly influenced by English and other languages, usually Spanish. Future candidates are advised to concentrate on improving their quality of language.

Task 5: Reading

Most candidates coped well with this multiple choice exercise in Portuguese. There was no pattern to wrong answers.

Task 6: Reading

Most candidates coped well with most questions. Some candidates ticked more than ten boxes and some ticked fewer than ten. There was no pattern to wrong answers.

Exercise 7: Reading

Many candidates made a successful attempt at answering most of the questions, though some scored badly by simply lifting material from the text and making little or no attempt to use their own words. Presentation of work was often poor. Candidates often wrote excessively long answers and did not ensure they limited the length of their answers to the spaces provided. This was usually because they simply lifted material from the text.

Quality of Language was usually poor and many candidates did not ensure they copied lifted material correctly.

In question 7(k) candidates frequently gave only one detail, namely that Gaspar's parents could not afford to pay for the course, and did not mention that they could not get support from any organisation. In question 7(m) candidates frequently did not ensure their answers made sense. Single-word answers such as *complicado* and *abandonado* did not sufficiently describe attitudes. In this exercise, candidates are expected to show that they have read the text and can express themselves clearly, using their own words as much as possible. The answers to questions 7(n) (i) and (ii) often showed whether candidates had read and understood the text. Wrong details such as ... *pensa que ja tenha sucesso em uma carreira de futebol* and the single word *futebolista* illustrate both poor Quality of Language and understanding of the text.

Task 8a: Reading and Writing

This exercise required the candidate to demonstrate an understanding of the text and the answer must be based on the content of the text. Unfortunately, however, most candidates disregarded the instruction *deve basear-se no texto* and also the word limit, writing well in excess of 100 words on modern technology or matters which were not mentioned in the text. This explains why very few candidates gained more than a few marks for their answers. Writing excessively long answers on irrelevant matters cannot gain many marks.

A few candidates used the page provided for the answer to question 8(a) to start their answer to question 8(b); candidates are expected to follow instructions, which are also given on the first page of the script.

Task 8b

In this exercise candidates were asked to write about the cinema in the future. Most candidates wrote about the cinema in the past and/or present and only by chance gave their ideas on how it might be in the future. Very often the focus was on technology rather than the cinema, and candidates simply repeated or continued what they had written in answer to task 8(a). Consequently, most candidates gained only a few marks for their answers. Many candidates wrote well in excess of the recommended number of words.

In both Questions 8(a) and 8(b), the Quality of Language was generally very poor. In some cases it was impossible to understand what was meant.

Vocabulary and structures were sometimes quite strongly influenced by Spanish. Most candidates used a restricted range of vocabulary and structures, frequently repeating the same words and phrases.

Candidates' handwriting was frequently very unclear; illegible work cannot gain any marks.

As in tasks 4 and 7 candidates are given the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of the Portuguese language in tasks 8(a) and 8(b). A good command of grammar and vocabulary is required to achieve this.

F888 Listening, Reading and Writing (2)

This year's A2 paper elicited a good, solid capability from the candidates across the range of tasks. Many had evidently prepared well for Section C, the essay. Thoughtful preparation with guidance from teachers really allowed for many stimulating essays.

Good solid marks were achieved by candidates when they:

- wrote accurate and good quality Portuguese, paying attention to eliminate any first language influences
- planned their time properly and allocated an hour or more to Section C
- took time to read the rubric and adhered to instructions
- re-read their responses, making necessary corrections
- wrote concisely to fit the word limit and kept to the space provided
- wrote in an appropriate register, avoiding contemporary informal speech and colloquialisms where inappropriate

SECTION A: Listening and Writing

Task 1: Listening

The majority of candidates did very well with the four questions, though some lost marks by not answering as fully as they should have done.

Tarefa 2: Compreensão auditiva

There were several areas of difficulty, where candidates were not detailed enough in their answers, or they misunderstood which details were required, particularly with reference to the football strip launch event (2d). 2(j) was not executed well.

SECTION B: Reading and Writing

Tarefa 3

This was mostly well done with a majority of candidates gaining high marks. This kind of task generally requires some prior practice.

Tarefa 4

A significant percentage of candidates wrote an answer containing too many words, and were therefore not as concise as they should have been. In this instance, they did not gain marks.

Tarefa 5

Most candidates tackled this task enthusiastically, providing some very creative answers. Areas of weakness were noted for the spelling of *ominassem* (answer to [h]), with many spelling it as *dominacem*. Candidates often overlooked the need for a subjunctive in [h].

Tarefa 6

Performance was mixed, as the task discriminated well amongst candidates. Answers to 6(a)ii and 6(c) were less well executed. In order for candidates to achieve the highest marks for Quality of Language they should use their own words as far as possible and avoid copying large parts of the text.

Tarefa 7

The task of transferring meaning does not suit everyone. There were particular difficulties with how to render *passou a enfrentar, pelo homem, o aumento do nível do mar, escassez de alimentos*, as well as how to spell 'pollution'.

Tarefa 8

Response to this task was mixed. On the one hand, there were those candidates supplying one-word synonyms, whilst others provided 5 – 7 word definitions

Tarefa 9

In 9(a) the rule of agreement of verb with a singular subject was overlooked considerably. There were various different spellings of *afetar*: *afeitar, afectar, efeitar*. Very few candidates used the present continuous form of *elevantar* in 9(b).

Tarefa 10

Candidates lost marks in Quality of Language for copying large amounts of text into their answers. Candidates should be encouraged always to answer in their own words, using good structures and vocabulary, as set out in the specification and rubric.

SECTION C: Writing

In this year's exam the range of topics was broad, with some proving more difficult than others. Marks awarded in the Relevance section are reduced where candidates only refer superficially to a Portuguese-speaking country or community. Having an in-depth knowledge of how the topic is influenced and affected by a Portuguese-speaking country or community, together with hard facts, is essential for doing well in the essay, which after all, offers a total of 45 marks. It is certainly noticeable when a candidate has done his/her research and comes to the exam armed with useful details and statistics, and this is productive in terms of the final mark scored.

Adherence to the word count (not to exceed 400) is advisable in order to allow for sufficient content and analysis. The Structure and Analysis aspect was somewhat overlooked in many essays, despite being worth 15 marks, and candidates should be encouraged to make an essay plan which sets out their argument.

High-scoring candidates wrote in a focused, dynamic and informed style, showcasing topic-related vocabulary and accurate language within an analytical framework. Many showed they could present both sides of an argument and these skills were rewarded with high marks.

Quality of Language (exercises 6, 10 and essay) rewards candidates who pay attention to detail. Spelling could have been better and candidates should be encouraged to pay much more attention to accents.

Question 11 proved very popular and in most essays candidates drew on some aspect of womanhood from across the spectrum of Portuguese-speaking countries. Specific data to support opinions and arguments was provided by only a minority of candidates.

Question 12 required candidates to describe their role within an imagined organisation, followed by, or interwoven with, an evaluation. There was not enough evaluation.

Questions 13 and 14 dealt with renewable energy and a visit to a recycling centre. Candidates tackled both of these with passion and imagination, often supported by ground-breaking ventures in Brazil, or community initiatives in Portugal. Use of target vocabulary was generally good, leading to animated analysis.

Question 15, though a favourite choice, was regrettably one in which candidates did not support their writing with statistics and specific information, and there was a tendency to treat digital technology as comprising mobiles, laptops and television. The examiners would like to have read also about other aspects of digital technology and future trends.

Questions 16, 17 and 18 were answered by fewer candidates. 17 particularly allowed candidates to emphasise the legacy of the Portuguese Empire, citing Brazil or Portugal, and to provide evidence-based analysis.

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