

PORTUGUESE LITERATURE

Paper 8672/04

Texts

Key Messages

To do well in this paper, candidates are expected to answer **three questions, each on a different text**. One question from **Section 1**, one from **Section 2** and one other. Candidates are expected to use their own language, show their ability to organise material, demonstrate close attention to detail, good insight when discussing characters and be sensitive to the language and to the author's intentions. Quality of Language is also important in order to achieve a better mark. Therefore candidates should display a good command of the language by spelling words correctly, varying the way they start the sentences and showing a good grasp of grammatical structures. Being able to show knowledge of some literary techniques would be a bonus.

General Comments

In general, it was clear that most candidates were well prepared by the Centres on all books. The best candidates displayed knowledge of a wide range of vocabulary and structures as well as the ability to use these accurately and appropriately. The use of direct and indirect object pronouns and the position of these in a sentence caused some problems.

“fala-se” and “falasse” was also a source of confusion for some candidates. It might be worth challenging the candidates with extra/parallel work on the subjunctive when studying the texts in class. The misuse of the 3rd person plural (present tense) and future tense was also very common in some answers.

There was a small number of candidates who were not familiar with the structure of the paper and ended up answering **Questions (a) and (b)** from the same group. Candidates need to be aware that they have to read at least three of the six books recommended and each question answered needs to be about a different text. This is clearly stated in the instructions and the syllabus.

When answering questions it is also important that candidates write down the question number they are attempting to answer and if they are answering **(a)** or **(b)**. Writing the book's title or author's name is not enough. Page numbers are not necessary because candidates will have different editions, but in order to provide a reference, Centres can advise candidates to refer to the chapter instead of the page number.

In order to avoid mistakes in agreement of gender and number, candidates should always re-read their work before handing it in.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section 1

Question 1

The majority of candidates who answered this question were more successful with **Question (b)**. In general there were very good answers with detailed illustrations of passages and good insight shown when discussing the relationship between Virginia, Laura, Daniel and Natércio. Answers to **Question (a)** tended to be basic and superficial and did not display deep understanding of the real meaning of Virginia's sentence.

Question 2

- (a) Many candidates took this question as an opportunity to write everything they knew about the book, but were able to pinpoint the important passages for **Question (i)**. **Question (ii)** was not answered as successfully, as some candidates only answered a very short paragraph on this question, others did not quite understand the interest the villagers had in the Silvestres.

- (b) There were some good answers to this question where candidates were able to demonstrate solid understanding of the book and relate this to the focus of the question.

Question 3

- (a) Answers to this question were in general well organised, and candidates substantiated their points with clear and relevant references to the book. Candidates were able to compare the real situation and problems the country had and the reason why Ndalú did not have to read his own message on the radio. Candidates also selected different passages from the book to explain how and why Aunt Dada was so important.

Section 2

The majority of candidates who answered **Question 4** were more successful with **Question (b)**. The focus was mainly on José Bunchman and candidates also briefly described the Minister and the man with the hidden face, but failed to answer the question which was to compare their differences and similarities. Some **Question (b)** answers would have benefitted from better planning and more attention to detail, to avoid unnecessary repetition and superficial information.

In **Question 5(a)** many candidates agreed with the statement but were not quite so successful at explaining how. Very few candidates successfully managed to compare the state of Portugal at the end of the Estado Novo with O Delfim, which in turn limited the range of marks they could access.

Nearly all candidates could identify 3 symbols in their response to **Question 5** but only in the best answers were candidates able to both identify and explain the meaning of the symbols. Usually this kind of question does not raise many problems so it was surprising to see how difficult it was for some candidates to write about what the symbols represented. For example, many candidates rightly identified the lagoon as a symbol, but only wrote about what it was and what had happened there, without explaining what it represented.

Question 6

This was a popular question, and for the second year in a row it was a pleasant surprise to see candidates had deep knowledge of the story of Paulina Chiziane and were able to answer both **Questions (a)** and **(b)** using only relevant material.