

PORTUGUESE

Paper 8684/01
Speaking

Key messages

The Speaking examination was generally not conducted according to regulations in the Mark Scheme and, as a result, some candidate lost marks. Candidates are being penalise through no fault of their own because many examinations are not being conducted according to the instructions. Examiners should read the Mark Scheme about the conduct of the Speaking exam and the timing of each section.

In order to perform well in **Section 1** and avoid losing marks unnecessarily, candidates must demonstrate knowledge of the contemporary society or cultural heritage of a country where Portuguese is spoken. Centres should give candidates some guidance about which topics best lend themselves to this. Candidates who achieved a high mark presented a topic about the Portuguese-speaking world in **Section 1**. The topics were fully organised with ideas and opinions and also factual points. Candidates who were less successful presented a topic, but they did not mention the culture of a country where Portuguese is spoken.

In **Section 2**, the strongest candidates were able to seek information and the opinions of the Examiner with a high level of accuracy and by using a range of question forms. In some cases where candidates did not do this, the best prepared Examiners prompted the candidate to ask him/her questions by using a range of pertinent questions and different question forms. Examiners should, however, avoid long complex questions.

In **Section 3**, candidates performed best when the Examiners had prepared questions about the candidate's background and interests, but were also able to discuss more abstract areas and/ or current issues within the general topic areas. In some instances, candidates lost marks because they did not ask questions in **Sections 2 and 3**.

General comments

On the whole, high levels of communication skills were displayed by candidates. The best teachers/Examiners were aware of how to elicit the best performance from their candidates. There were instances, however, where the threefold nature of the Speaking test was difficult to distinguish between because the transition between **Section 2** (the Topic Conversation part) and **Section 3** (the General Conversation part) was not announced. When this happens, the moderation process becomes harder, as it is difficult to award the marks allocated for each one of these Sections if they are **not** announced and conducted as separate elements of the speaking examination. Please make sure that each Candidate and Section of the examination is signalled correctly and that the timing of the recording complies with the regulations in the Mark Scheme.

Most Examiners were sympathetic and made the candidates feel at ease. Examiners should familiarise themselves thoroughly with the requirements of the exam to ensure that candidates can access the full range of marks, and that their marks accurately reflect, not only their level of ability and linguistic proficiency, but also their performance in the test as it has been set. Examiners are reminded not to ask long and complex questions or give long answers in order to maximise the candidate's opportunity to express themselves.

In addition, candidates should **not** present themselves in **Section 1** and they should not be interrupted in this Section either. However, in **Sections 2 and 3**, Examiners should invite candidates to ask questions so that candidates do not lose marks.

Marks can only be awarded for completion of tasks set by CIE so it is vital that Teachers/Examiners adhere to the tasks specified in the syllabus – this is done to ensure a level playing field for all candidates.

Administration

Some centres did not send the MS1 form. Please ensure that this form is completed and sent in and that the slot 'Mark' is completed with the total mark.

There were also instances where Centres did not correctly transfer marks from the Working Mark Sheet to the MS1 form. Also, there were some arithmetical errors. It is important to ask a colleague to double check that the marks were transferred and added correctly.

Quality of the recording

Centres and examiners are reminded that the recorded examinations they send to CIE should be double checked to see if the candidates were recorded and if the sound is clear for the marks to be moderated.

It is important to label the CDs and their cover with centre number, component and syllabus number. Also, they should be wrapped properly so that the CDs are not broken or damaged.

Most CDs were recorded with clear sound and in very few cases the sound was variable. Examiners are reminded that they should check the sound before the examination and also after it. They should also avoid background noise.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

The strongest performances were of candidates whose presentations included references to the culture of Portuguese-speaking countries. In these cases, candidates were able to deliver their presentations with reference to their cue cards, some illustrative material, such as maps, diagrams, statistics, pictures or short articles. These presentations flowed naturally, were delivered within the time prescribed and provided plenty of opportunities for a fruitful exchange of ideas between the Examiner and the candidates in **Section 2**.

Candidates are reminded that they should not introduce or talk about themselves. They should start the examination by saying what their topic is and start presenting it immediately. Candidates should not be interrupted during their presentation, which should last no longer than 3 and a half minutes.

In this Section, candidates should not read from a script they prepared. They are allowed to bring a cue card in Portuguese to remind them of the main points. They can also bring in a limited quantity of illustrative material such as maps, diagrams, statistics, pictures or short articles. Full instructions are given in the Mark Scheme.

Section 2

In this Section, the strongest performances were of candidates whose presentations provided material for at least 6 questions. Well-prepared examiners were able to get the best out of the candidates by asking mostly open-ended questions. The best candidates were able to access the full range of marks because they asked the Examiner questions. It is important to remember that this should be a two-way conversation that last 7-8 minutes, and not a continuation of the topic presentation.

Please make sure that the transition between **Sections 2** and **3** is announced.

Section 3

Good performances in **Section 3** started off with an interaction about the candidates' background and interested, but quickly moved on to a conversation about issues within the general topic areas listed in the syllabus. Examiners were well prepared and asked a variety of open-ended questions to elicit rich responses from candidates, thereby giving them access to the full range of marks.

Examiners chose a good range of topics. Some examples were family, future studies, free time, health and food, living abroad, animal rights and the environment. Examiners are reminded to vary the topics discussed in this Section if they have more than one candidates. In addition, the topics in **Section 3** should be different to the topic presented by the candidate in **Section 1** and discussed in **Section 2**.

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Principal Examiner Report for Teachers

Examiners are reminded that the start of this Section should be announced clearly and that it should last between 8 and 9 minutes.

PORTUGUESE

Paper 8684/02
Reading and Writing

Key messages

To score full marks in this paper, candidates had to demonstrate that they had read and understood the texts and could express themselves clearly. Quality of Language is also important in order to achieve a high mark, therefore candidates should display a good command of the language by spelling words correctly, varying the way they start their sentences and show a good grasp of grammatical structures.

General comments

The two texts were about The Carnival in Rio and Santo António of Lisbon which are two famous cultural topics from Brazil and Portugal. Nevertheless, some vocabulary proved to be slightly challenging for some candidates.

Candidates should avoid writing in bullet points in order to get full marks for their answers; this is taken into account when awarding the extra 5 points for Quality of Language – Accuracy. Candidates should also always make an effort to write legibly, and make sure their handwriting is clear.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

This question required candidates to find a word or a phrase in Text 1 which had the same meaning as the definitions given in (a) to (e).

The words given were of a similar level and frequency to those encountered in papers of previous years and most candidates were able to find the correct words/phrases. Candidates should take care that the word or words they choose from the text correspond grammatically with those they provide, that all elements are included in their answers, and that extra unnecessary words are not written.

Some candidates wrote, for example, for **1(c)** *lutas e combates* – *combates* was the correct answer but we couldn't accept it as both words were left for us to choose the correct one. Quite a lot of candidates also used the word *desfiles* for **1(b)** which wasn't correct, the accepted equivalent to *caminhada* was *passeata*.

Question 2

This Question required candidates to re-express sentences from the text beginning with phrases provided in the Question and demonstrate their knowledge of grammar. This proved to be challenging for many candidates. Answers should not contain spelling mistakes, including incorrect accents where applicable, and unnecessary additions. The only changes to be made to these sentences are those grammatical and syntactical ones that the new introductory words elicit. Accuracy is crucial in this task and candidates have to make it very clear which spelling and accentuation is used in their answers.

Question 3

This Question assessed candidates' ability to paraphrase in Portuguese. Occasionally, candidates wrote overlong answers instead of being selective in their wording, or relied too heavily on 'lifting' complete phrases from the text.

- (a) Some candidates needed to be more specific with their answers 'in Brazil' was a bit too vague.
- (b) The vast majority of candidates only mentioned one detail for this question: Easter celebrations in 1641.
- (d) Many candidates simply mentioned the fact that new samba schools had emerged and for that reason were only awarded one point instead of three.

All the other questions were, generally, well answered.

Section 2

Question 4

- (a) Many candidates copied most of the first paragraph to answer this question which wasn't what was required.
- (c) Some candidates forgot to mention that this event was also sponsored by the Town Hall as well as some local companies.
- (d) Few candidates mentioned two details for this answer.

Question 5

The best responses to this summary Question demonstrated the candidates' skill in paraphrasing. Many candidates did not know much about Santo António therefore they purely relied on what was in the second text and some assumptions were also made that do not reflect what happens during the celebrations of this Patron Saint in Lisbon. It is important that candidates have knowledge and awareness of cultural topics from the Lusophone countries when learning the language.

Most candidates adhered to instructions regarding the word count, but in the future it would be better and easier for the examiner to mark if candidates write answers to questions (a) and (b) separately.

- (b) Most candidates gave good answers, mainly suggesting that by keeping the traditions people will learn more about their past.

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Paper 8684/03
Essay

General comments

Many excellent responses contained confident use of complex sentence patterns. These responses were generally accurate with extensive vocabulary. As regards content, they were clearly relevant and detailed with coherent arguments and well structured. In addition, there were clear paragraphs with an introduction, development and conclusion. The strongest candidates were able to use accurate sentence patterns, avoid persistent errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling and accentuation and could show balanced arguments and relevant opinions about the subject matter so that the question could be answered fully and properly. Candidates needed to think about their ideas before writing an essay and organise them with an introduction, development and conclusion.

The words and phrases shown below seemed to be particularly challenging for some candidates:

Punctuation

Candidates need to be aware that a lack of punctuation can prevent the precise transfer and flow of ideas. Here are some examples:

Some candidates' sentences	Correct sentences
Outro exemplo, são os mapas ...	Outro exemplos são os mapas... (The subject should not be separated from the verb.)
... Recursos naturais são porcisos, Há países que para os obterem recursos naturais são precisos. Há países que para os obterem ... (A full stop should have been used because there is a full sentence after 'precisos'. Also, small letters should be used after a comma.)
Apesar de ser uma realidade pouco provável.	This sentence should be part of a previous one and not a new one.
Good examples	
1. O currículo está em constante mudança, pois os jovens devem aprender ... (A comma is used before a linking word.)	
2. Embora o mundo esteja continuamente a mudar, penso que as alterações ... (In complex sentences with a linking word, a comma should be used to separate full sentences.)	
3. Por último, determinaria ... (When beginning a sentence with sequence words, the candidate is reminded to use a comma.)	

Spelling

Candidates need to be aware that for an essay to achieve a good mark, spelling is also important. Here are some examples:

Some candidates' spelling	Correct spelling
tamem	também
unão	unam
mustrar, suprar	mostrar, superar (candidates need to be aware that spoken and written language are different.)
au ponto	ao ponto
poie	põe

Accentuation

The correct use of accentuation is also important for candidates to achieve a high mark. Here are some examples:

Some candidates' accentuation	Correct accentuation
... eles teram que ir a biblioteca eles terão que ir à biblioteca ... (When the preposition is 'a' and the noun requires the feminine article 'a', the accent is necessary. Also, the verb is wrongly spelt.)
Imagina o colégio à começar ...	Imagina o colégio a começar... (An accent is not necessary before the infinitive.)
... muitos tem desenhos muitos têm desenhos ... ('Tem' without an accent is singular and with an accent it is plural.)
Unnecessary accents	
lêr, têr, exêmplo, existêm	ler, ter, exemplo, existem

Singular and Plural

Here are some examples:

Some candidates' examples	Correct examples
A vasta quantidade de dinheiro que se gasta em explorações espaciais também podiam ser ...	A vasta quantidade de dinheiro que se gasta em explorações espaciais também podia ser ... (When the subject is long, candidates need to check that the verb is correctly used.)
... os livros electrônicos são mais fácil para utilizar e são mais útil os livros electrónicos são mais fáceis para utilizar e são mais úteis ... (The adjective should agree with the noun.)
As inovações tecnológicas ajuda na partilha ...	As inovações tecnológicas ajudam na partilha ... (The verb should agree with the subject.)

Foreign language interference

Here are some examples:

Some candidates' examples	Correct vocabulary
cambiar	trocar
casi	quase
siglo	século
quizás	talvez
Por ejemplo	Por exemplo

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

There were many excellent responses which showed a good knowledge of the topic and there were examples of what young people could teach the world. Candidates said that young people could teach old people how to use technology. Also, they were more tolerant of race, gender and sexuality, and so could teach this tolerance to the world. With regards to vocabulary, stronger candidates were able to find synonyms rather than repeated use of the same word. Candidates should be aware of punctuation because there were very long sentences without a full stop which prevented the clear transfer of ideas.

Candidates are reminded that, when they finish writing their essay, they should reread it for correct punctuation, spelling and accentuation.

Question 2

Candidates are reminded that they need to address the whole question when writing. Some responses were more about electronic books and they did not mention libraries or bookshops which were also mentioned in the question. Good responses were well illustrated, coherently argued and structured.

Candidates need to develop their topic in clear paragraphs and they should answer the question appropriately.

Question 3

Many candidates had problems with the meaning of 'curriculum'. Some wrote that mobile phones should be abolished, that there should be free afternoons, that there should be more time for lunch and so on. Good answers were about introducing practical subjects into the curriculum such as how to open a bank account, how to understand more about emerging markets in the world and so on. These answers were fully illustrated and they addressed the question.

In order to achieve a high mark, ideas should be grouped in clear paragraphs with an introduction, development and conclusion. In addition, it is necessary to use correct punctuation, spelling, accentuation and a variety of grammar structures. The vocabulary should be varied as well.

Question 4

Candidates wrote that instead of spending money on space exploration, it should be spent on poor people, the environment, medicine and so on. Some others wrote that money should continue to be spent on space exploration so that we could have a better idea of what is around us and we could understand more about meteors and planets. Another idea was that we could use materials from other planets. Most candidates answered this question appropriately.

Again candidates are reminded to write in clear paragraphs and to avoid long sentences without the correct punctuation.

Question 5

Some candidates wrote about natural resources, but did not mention measures to prevent wars among countries because of disputes about natural resources, or they presented answers in the last paragraph only. Candidates, who achieved a higher mark, wrote that there should be conferences and lectures about how to use resources, laws that controlled the exploration of natural resources, diplomacy and agreement between countries and so on.