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FOREIGN LANGUAGE PORTUGUESE

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| <p>Paper 0540/02 Reading and Directed Writing</p> |
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General comments

This year a good standard was achieved and it showed a continuous commitment from Teachers and candidates to perform well.

In general the Paper did not show any problems. In the comprehension exercises there were no problems and style and flair were present when it came to the written exercises.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1 - 5

This was an easy beginning to the Paper. Candidates from all Centres responded well to this exercise.

Exercise 2 Questions 6 - 10

These questions were very well answered.

Exercise 3 Questions 11 - 15

Almost everyone responded adequately to this simple exercise. All the items were identified in the text.

Exercise 4 Question 16

The stimulus for this short direct writing exercise was quite accessible – a note to a friend about going shopping – and MacDonald’s was a favourite choice for a place to eat although some candidates preferred fish restaurants.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 17 - 23

Some unintended problems appeared in this exercise. **Question 17** required a simple answer such as “travel agency” but some candidates went on writing about a place for people who wanted to travel or a place for people who wanted to study and travel. Also there were some candidates that swapped the answers for **Question 19** and **Question 20** not differentiating between benefits and what they could physically obtain.

The rest of the exercise was well answered.

Exercise 2 Question 24

The topic for this directed writing exercise - your school - was familiar to all candidates and there was a high level of performance shown here.

Most candidates made good use of the opportunities offered in the composition showing a good command of the appropriate vocabulary, creativity and imagination.

Some did not mention the school’s atmosphere and only briefly referred to the physical aspect of the school.

There were also cases in which communication was flawed by defective grammar and spelling. These difficulties are often due to the syntactic and morphological patterns either from the candidate’s mother tongue or the language spoken in the country where the candidate is living.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 25 - 34

This multiple-choice exercise was difficult for some candidates. The text was demanding and required careful reading. Some mistakes occurred as in **Question 28**, option **c** instead of **b** and in **Question 29** option **a** instead of **c**.

Exercise 2 Questions 35 - 42

The text did not produce major difficulties. A large percentage of candidates answered most of the questions correctly. Some gave the answer to **Question 36** in **Question 37** and vice versa and **Question 40** had vague answers.

Conclusion

Overall it was a well answered Paper and praise goes to all the Teachers who have been able to bring out the best in their candidates. Teachers are advised to continue their excellent work giving particular attention to the following:

- Exposing exam candidates to a wide variety of reading material
- Instilling an attentive approach to reading
- Increasing awareness of the structural features of the target language that enable candidates to acquire:
 - an increased discerning ability as recipients of a written message
 - an increased ability to use the language in writing.

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| <p>Paper 0540/03 Speaking Test</p> |
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General comments

This was the second year of the Speaking Test in its new format, and it is pleasing to report that it appears to have “bedded in” most satisfactorily. The great majority of candidates approached this component with confidence and, in many cases, enthusiasm. They had clearly been well prepared, and Centres are thanked for the time and effort taken to ensure the smooth and effective conduct of the test.

Occasionally, difficulties arose where the rubric was misinterpreted, and Centres are advised, as always, to ensure that the Teacher/Examiner conducting the test is familiar with the guidance offered in the first part of the “Teachers’ Notes”. It may be beneficial to highlight three issues in particular. First, in the Role plays, it is unnecessary and inadvisable to alter or extend the situation, as this can cause the candidate to omit an utterance and thereby lose marks. Second, it is important to remember that the Topic Conversation does not require a “Presentation” as in the previous syllabus, and so the candidate must not be allowed to deliver a prepared monologue. Third, it is in the candidate’s interest that he/she be given the opportunity to convey past and future meaning in both conversation sections.

Comments on specific questions

Test 1 - Role plays

Role play A

Cards one, two and three

There were no problems with this Role play.

Cards four, five and six

Almost all candidates performed well here.

Cards seven, eight and nine

Occasionally, the Teacher/Examiner utterances were altered significantly, causing difficulties for the candidate.

Role play B

Cards one, four and seven

This was tackled in a lively and imaginative way by many candidates.

Cards two, five and eight

Again, many candidates approached this Role play with enthusiasm. In a few instances, candidates omitted the third or fourth utterance. Teacher/Examiners are asked to watch out for this and to be prepared to guide them back if possible.

Cards three, six and nine

This Role play presented no difficulties in the great majority of cases.

Test 2 - Topic conversation

Nearly all candidates performed well in this section of the test. As indicated above, there were some candidates who treated this section as a "Presentation" and delivered a monologue. In such cases, Teacher/Examiners should intervene early with appropriate questions or comments in order to establish the "conversational" nature of the test.

Test 3 - General conversation

This section of the test was largely unproblematic, with almost all candidates performing well. Where candidates did less well, it was because the conversation was too short or because little or no opportunity was given to the candidates to convey past and future meaning. It would be greatly appreciated if Teacher/Examiners could indicate on the tape the point at which they move from the Topic Conversation to the General Conversation.

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| <p>Paper 0540/04 Continuous Writing</p> |
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General comments

This Paper was of the same level of difficulty as last year's and most candidates coped well with it.

As in the past, some candidates did not ensure their handwriting was immediately legible.

Although most candidates adhered to the required number of words for their answers, many wrote well in excess of the 140 words for each answer. Some candidates did count the number of words they wrote but they were not accurate in their additions - no credit is given for writing more than 140 words.

A few candidates wrote less than 110 words for each question.

Grammar

Many candidates demonstrated a poor knowledge of various aspects of grammar – spelling, gender of nouns, punctuation – some made no use of commas and/or full stops; agreement, position of the reflexive and object pronouns and tenses.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates chose this question. Most wrote good answers and included all the required points. Excessively wrong answers tended not to include all points in the first 140 words.

Some candidates included much irrelevant material by concentrating on details of the hotel and/or on the description of a typical day of their holidays. As a result, they did not include the last detail (the loss of their money) in the first 140 words.

- (b) Many candidates chose this question and there were many good answers, but as in (a), excessively long answers did not include the last detail (tourist activities) in the first 140 words.

Question 2

There were many good and interesting answers to this question. Excessively long answers tended not to include the last or the last two details. Sometimes candidates gave long lists of items they themselves and/or the client had bought. Many candidates used only the present tense and others did not know which past tense they should use.