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**Paper 9718/01
Speaking**

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Paper 9718/02
Reading and Writing

Key messages

Candidates are strongly advised to practise for this paper by carefully studying past papers and accompanying mark schemes. In this way they can familiarise themselves with the different types of questions on the paper and gain a better understanding of what is expected in their answers to gain maximum marks.

General comments

The two texts dealt with home-schooling and online education. The questions on the paper gave candidates the opportunity to display a range of vocabulary and expression in their answers while requiring them to paraphrase and summarise ideas.

Most candidates seemed to be familiar with the format of the paper and were able to write answers to all the questions.

Almost all candidates had a fair to very good level of expression in the language. Candidates who read the texts carefully and who used a range of expression and vocabulary rather than 'lifting' directly from the texts themselves, tended to do very well.

Attention to accuracy of grammar and use of accents and correct word endings also attracted higher marks.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

This question required candidates to find a word or a phrase in Text 1 which had the same meaning as the synonyms or definitions given in **(a)** to **(e)**. Candidates should write only the word or words from the text that the given word or phrase in the question could replace.

Most candidates performed well in this question, especially in **(a)**, **(c)** and **(e)**.

Some candidates explained the meaning of the word instead of finding the correct correspondent from the text. A few did not include '*na maioria*' for **(d)**.

Question 2

This question required candidates to re-express sentences from the text, beginning with phrases provided in the question.

In this question, candidates were expected to show manipulation of the language by fronting (moving a clause from one position in the sentence to another), changing the verb from the active to passive voice or changing a verb from the indicative to subjunctive mood and vice versa.

Candidates who had practised exercises of this type of task tended to do well, with **(b)**, **(c)** and **(d)** proving to be the most demanding. In **(b)** most candidates used '*podem ser*' instead of '*podem ter*' or a reasonable

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alternative, in **(c)** most candidates used the perfect tense instead of the plusperfect. In **(d)** most candidates used *'estava'* or another verb on the imperfect instead of *'encontrei'* or a synonym on the perfect tense.

Question 3

This question assessed candidates' ability to paraphrase in Portuguese to answer the comprehension questions.

Candidates who attempted to use their own vocabulary and expression were rewarded in the 'quality of language' mark, as were candidates who were able to answer clearly and concisely. Candidates did well if they were selective in their wording, avoiding writing overlong answers or relying too heavily on 'lifting' complete phrases from the text.

Other candidates who had correctly identified the points from the text required for the correct answers lost marks by copying long phrases or clauses from the text rather than paraphrasing using their own words.

There was also a marked tendency amongst some candidates to repeat most of the words in the question before supplying their answer. Candidates are invited to study the model answers in the mark scheme to see how questions can be answered concisely and effectively.

Section 2

Question 4

This question assessed candidates' ability to paraphrase in Portuguese in order to describe and explain their answers to the comprehension questions.

The question was answered well by candidates who were well prepared and who recognised that, as for **Question 3**, they should avoid 'lifting' entire phrases and that they should attempt to answer concisely in their own words.

In **(a)** most candidates chose the idea of *'gosta de ler'* and *'gosta da natureza'*; very few opted for mentioning the 'blog' and many forgot to mention that it was about Diogo's preferred hobbies. Most mentioned, instead, the fact that he would like to be a scientist in the future.

In **(b)** most candidates answered from Diogo's perspective, and it was expected from them to answer as per the *'crianças que frequentam o Ensino tradicional'* perspective.

In **(c)** most candidates only mentioned how Diogo had felt at nursery; very few mentioned the second detail about Isabel's feelings.

(d) was generally well answered.

Most candidates struggled with **(e)**. Some candidates only referred to one family but did not mention which family it applied to.

Question 5

Candidates were required to write a maximum of 140 words for the summary and the personal response. Almost all candidates kept to the 140-word maximum, with only a small number exceeding this. Similarly, almost all candidates recognised that their response to **part (a)** carried more marks than **part (b)** and divided their words accordingly.

A few candidates seemed to think that the 140 words applied to **part (a)** alone, and this sometimes meant that some, or even all, of their response to **part (b)** could not be considered.

(a)   This question was generally well answered. Candidates who were particularly successful in this part of the paper showed their ability to select information, which was entirely relevant to the summary task, and use their own words skilfully. It was also important not to add too much specific detail in order to keep within the word limit.

(b)   Weaker answers did not provide relevant ideas and were limited to low band marks.

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Paper 9718/03
Essay
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Candidates should:

* answer the question that is being asked and pay attention to the keywords in the questions;
* organise their ideas in clear paragraphs. An essay consists of an introduction, development of ideas and a conclusion. It is important to brainstorm ideas before writing so that these are coherently organised, argued and structured;
* write a detailed, clearly relevant and well-illustrated essay.
* use a wide variety of synonyms to avoid repetition of words. A good essay should show extensive vocabulary and a good sense of idiom;
* use correct grammar, punctuation and spelling. Candidates should also use complex sentence patterns with different conjunctions and a wide variety of verb tenses;
* make sure their handwriting is clear.

General comments

Good responses were relevant to the question and structured in clear paragraphs. They were also detailed, well-illustrated and coherently argued. Many candidates showed a confident use of complex sentences with correct grammar and varied vocabulary. Weaker responses deviated from the question and therefore were limited to low band marks. Candidates should study or revise grammar rules before taking this examination. Essays should show a good grasp of grammar to convey the message clearly.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question was chosen by a large number of candidates. Candidates had to give opinions about the voting age. In general, responses were well developed with insight, creativity and clear points of view. Most of the candidates used a wide variety of vocabulary and a high and consistent level of complex sentence structures.

Question 2

This question was the most popular one. Candidates had to write about mobile apps being a waste of time and an addiction. In general, almost all candidates showed extensive knowledge of the subject using a wide variety of vocabulary and well-structured examples. Good responses included the advantages and disadvantages of using mobile apps and how they can be addictive. Many candidates wrote about how not to be addicted to mobile apps. Weaker responses deviated from the question and focused on mobile phones and technology in general. Those with continuous grammar mistakes were limited to low band marks.

Question 3

Candidates had to write about whether learning to play a musical instrument should be offered in schools free of charge. Some responses were well-written while others had little knowledge of the subject and contained lots of repetition.

Question 4

This question was also popular. Candidates had to write about the disadvantages of attending extracurricular activities. Stronger responses showed extensive knowledge of the subject and they were well-structured and well-argued with supporting examples. Candidates used a wide variety of vocabulary and finished their essays with excellent conclusions.

Question 5

Very few candidates chose this question. Candidates had to write about whether the discovery of new drugs would be the best way to treat diseases. Responses with irrelevant content were limited to low band marks. Candidates need to understand the question before writing about it so that they do not digress from the topic.

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Paper 9718/04
Texts

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Key messages

* Candidates must answer three questions on three different texts: they need to answer one question from *section 1*, one question from *section 2* and one other as long as it is not from the same text as the previous questions.

* Candidates are expected to use their own language, show their ability to organise material, demonstrate close attention to detail of passages, have a good insight when discussing characters and be sensitive to the language and to the author's intentions.

* 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. To be able to show some literary techniques would also be a bonus. Candidates should refer to the question using quotes where possible (without page numbers).

General comments

Most candidates coped well with the questions. There were some candidates who were not familiar with the structure of the paper and answered two questions on the same text. Candidates are reminded to read the instructions carefully and follow the rubric.

This year the most popular questions were **Question 1**, **Question 2(a)** and **Question 5(a)**. The best responses addressed the specific question asked, considered all aspects of the question in a relevant way and avoided repetition. Some candidates were able to demonstrate that they had read the texts. They needed to address the questions fully in order to achieve higher marks. Weaker answers included general statements about the topics addressed on the questions, and they were limited to low band marks.

In terms of quality of language, there were less grammar mistakes this year. Some candidates translated words or expressions from English into Portuguese and some of them were not correct. Centres could help their candidates to improve by providing extra practice on verb tenses when studying the texts in class. Candidates could also improve by practising how to link ideas and should write on a variety of topics for them to get used to different structures.

There were some candidates whose responses were difficult to read. Candidates should always make an effort to write legibly and make sure their handwriting is clear.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Miguel Torga: *Novos Contos da Montanha*

(a)   This was a very popular question. The best responses addressed the question beyond recounting what the characters did that day. They also provided some interpretation of the meaning of their behaviour. Weaker answers were not able to explain the reason why the event was so important for the family and there was some repetition on **(i)** and **(ii)**.

(b)   This was the most popular question. The majority of candidates were able to refer to at least three of the different stories in the book, and one that nearly every candidate described was *O Alma-Grande*. Some candidates just described the story and they needed to include the reasons why religion played such an important role to achieve higher marks.

Question 2

Agustina Bessa-Luís*: A Sibila*

(a)   The most successful candidates not only retold the story but interpreted the meaning behind the objects and actions of the characters. Candidates included relevant illustration and presented their point of view connecting the different parts of the story. Some candidates responded well the second part of the **Question (ii)** describing Francisco Teixeira and how his behaviour affected his family. They needed to develop the first part of the **Question (i)** to achieve higher marks.

(b)   The small number of candidates who answered this question focused their response mainly on Quina. There was a lot more to say about other characters too.

Question 3

Nélida Piñon: *Livro das Horas*

(a)   Few candidates did not know much about these journeys nor about the impact Piñon's family had on her life.

(b)   The very small number of candidates who answered this question could not justify or illustrate their answers.

Question 4

Clarice Lispector: *A Hora da Estrela*

(a)   In general candidates described Macabéa's life and were able to point out aspects of Olímpico's behaviour that made him a bad choice for Macabéa. Weaker responses included general statements about relationships.

(b)   Most candidates who chose this question were able to retell the story. The best responses addressed the question fully and provided examples of the different connections between the story and the title.

Question 5

Manuel Lopes: *Os Flagelados do Vento Leste*

(a)   In general candidates were able to address the question providing relevant information. Weaker responses did not illustrate their points of view.

(b)   Weaker responses focused on a general overview of the story without providing relevant details.

Question 6

Pepetela: *A Geração da Utopia*

(a)   There were some reasonable answers. Candidates were able to retell the story, illustrate their ideas and make connections with the following chapters.

(b)   There were too few responses to this question to make meaningful comment.