Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2023

Pearson Edexcel GCSE

Portuguese (1PG0)

Paper 2F/2H: Speaking

Please note that this is a combined report for papers 2F and 2H

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Overview of the Examination

The Portuguese GCSE speaking assessment makes up 25% of the overall grade.

The speaking assessment at both tiers consists of three parts:

1) A role play with 5 prompts, worth a maximum of 10 marks.
2) A picture-based task with 5 prompts, worth a maximum of 24 marks.
3) A conversation covering topics from two different themes, worth a maximum of 36 marks.

At both tiers there are 10 role plays and 10 picture cards. Candidates nominate the first theme for the conversation, and their role play and picture card are then allocated according to a sequencing grid provided in the teacher booklet.

Candidates have 12 minutes to prepare the role play and picture-based task in examination conditions, and can make notes on one side of A4 paper during this time. They bring these notes into the examination with them.

The Foundation role plays have one unprepared question, marked on the candidate's card with an exclamation mark ('**!**'), and the final prompt, marked with a question mark ('**?**'), requires the candidate to formulate a relevant question.

The Higher role plays have one unprepared question, marked on the candidate's card with an exclamation mark ('**!**'), which is always in the past tense, and the final two prompts, marked with a question mark ('**?**'), require the candidate to formulate relevant questions.

For the picture-based tasks, at both tiers:

- the first prompt requires a description of the photo
- the second prompt asks for an opinion
- the third prompt asks the candidate to talk about the past
- the fourth prompt asks the candidate to talk about the future
- the fifth prompt asks for an opinion. At Higher tier, this prompt is unprepared and the candidate's card only shows '**!**'.

The candidate's notes are collected by the teacher-examiner before moving on to the conversation.

For the conversation, candidates may choose to introduce their first topic for up to one minute, but there is no obligation to do so. The examiner then follows this up with questions from the same topic area or general theme, before switching to one of the themes allocated by the sequencing grid. At Foundation, a total of 1:45 to 2:15 should be spent on each theme; at Higher, a total of 2:30 to 3 minutes should be spent on each theme.

Notes on the 2023 Portuguese Speaking Paper

- **Role play**

The role play tasks worked very well, with the vast majority of candidates able to enter into their roles and score highly. Many candidates did not pay enough attention to their stimulus cards, meaning they did not base their own questions on the prompts given, or they simply replied 'No' when prompted 'Do you have a question?' There were very few examples of teachers changing the script – doing so invalidates the candidate's response.

There were many candidates who gave longer answers than necessary for this task. Each prompt is worth two marks and is marked for communication only, so just a short statement is required, such as 'My favourite subject is Spanish because it's useful.'

- **Picture-based task**

Most candidates scored well and had planned thoroughly during the 12 minutes' preparation time. The most common problem was candidates not knowing they needed to develop their answers; a number of candidates described the photo in great detail but then gave minimal answers to every other question. Most teachers knew to use the follow-up prompts when needed, though it is worth remembering that this is not necessary if the candidate has already given a full response. There were some instances of teachers going off-script - candidates can only gain marks for answering the scripted questions. A handful of teachers lost track of the bullet points and omitted one of the five tasks.

- **Conversation**

Most teachers put their candidates at ease, using a friendly tone of voice and speaking clearly. The most successful candidates were usually those who had prepared a speech and whose teachers engaged them in a spontaneous conversation. Many teachers used a list of generic questions, limiting their candidates' chances of scoring full marks for Interaction & Spontaneity. Instead, teachers should listen to what the candidate has to say and ask follow-up questions. Likewise, there were many teachers who asked closed, simple questions rather than inviting their candidates to give a developed answer and use different tenses. Some candidates did not seem to know that they should be developing their responses, so were happy to say the minimum. This happened most often when the candidate had chosen theme 1, with basic conversations about family biographical details and personal descriptions taking up much of the time, and was also an issue with theme 2 with some candidates. Timing was sometimes an issue: the two themes should be covered equally and within the time limits mentioned above; spending too long on the first conversation often meant running out of time to give sufficient attention to the second theme.

- **Administration**

We heard lots of assured performances from the examiners themselves, and are grateful to them for conducting the exams so well. It is important that teachers re-familiarise themselves with the conduct of the examination every year and follow the instructions for introducing the candidates on the recording. There were occasional problems with microphone quality or background noise, and some centres used stimulus cards from the wrong tier. Finally, many centres did not submit the Candidate Speaking Assessment Record Form, making it harder to mark their exams.

Advice for Teachers Conducting the Examination

- **Administration**

It is compulsory to use the sequencing grid when allocating stimulus cards and the final conversation theme. This avoids the same theme being covered twice during the exam.

The choice of theme for the second half of the conversation is to be made by the examiner, without consulting the candidate, and should not be announced before beginning the exam.

- **Role play**

The role play has no time limit. Only very short answers are required: usually one clause is enough, but an answer of only one word cannot score more than one mark.

Please remember to introduce the role play with the script provided.

It is compulsory to use the script provided when asking questions, so as to ensure fairness between centres. Deviating from the script might see the candidate's answer ignored.

You may give any prompt a total of three times without the candidate losing marks. However, if the candidate has already given an answer, you cannot ask the same question again, even if you consider their answer to be incorrect or insufficient.

- **Picture-based task**

The picture-based task has no time limit. Candidates are expected to give developed responses; answers of four clauses are enough to count as 'developed'.

It is compulsory to use the script provided when asking questions, so as to ensure fairness between centres. Deviating from the script might see the candidate's answer ignored.

The teacher script includes the options to ask 'Why?' or 'Anything else?' when applicable. These should only be used when needed.

- **Conversation**

The conversation must adhere to the time limits set out above, and both themes should be covered equally within the time. If either conversation is too short, this will affect the mark for Communication and Content.

If the first conversation is a monologue without questions and answers, then the mark for Interaction and Spontaneity is capped at 6/12. The same is true if the whole of the conversation time is only spent on one theme. The teacher should step in if the candidate's speech passes 1 minute.

There is no need to cover all of the topics from the given theme within the conversation. For example, a conversation on theme 2 could focus entirely on holidays.

There is no need to build up the complexity of questions from a low base. If you know your candidate can use complex language comfortably, ask them a question that will allow them to do so. Top marks go to candidates who answer questions spontaneously, give and justify thoughts and opinions, and refer to past, present and future events.

Advice for Candidates Preparing for Portuguese GCSE Speaking

- **Role play**

Remember you are in a role play – you can make up an answer rather than trying to tell the truth.

Each prompt is only worth 2 marks, so most of the time one phrase is enough to score full marks. If you are asked for an 'opinion + reason', one sentence with two clauses is all you need.

Focus on a clear, accurate answer, and don't add unnecessary detail. If you give a correct answer but then add something unclear or incorrect, you may lose marks.

You may ask for a question to be repeated and there is no penalty for doing so. Your teacher is allowed to ask any question up to three times, but they are not allowed to change the wording.

- **Picture-based task**

To score full marks, all of your answers should be developed. If you give four separate details for each answer, you can consider your answer developed. For example, to describe the photo you might say how many people there are, where they are, what they are doing and what they are wearing. If possible, use a different verb for each detail.

You may ask for a question to be repeated and there is no penalty for doing so. Your teacher is allowed to ask any question up to three times, but they are not allowed to change the wording.

- **Conversation**

In the conversation you need to develop answers independently, give and justify thoughts and opinions, and refer to past, present and future events.

You have the option to speak for up to one minute on your chosen theme. Use this as an opportunity to show that you can do some of the things mentioned in the previous bullet point.