



2012

Languages: Portuguese GA 3: Examination

Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Students who performed well on the 2012 Portuguese oral examination were able to understand the assessors' questions and respond with appropriate answers. These students showed a reasonable level of confidence, remaining composed throughout the examination. Some students performed at an outstanding level, while others struggled during the examination.

Students must be aware of the assessment criteria and understand that both sections of the examination are an exchange, not merely question-and-answer sessions. Students should be able to seek clarification from assessors, and express their own ideas and opinions throughout the examination.

Section 1 – Conversation

The most successful students demonstrated quite a good knowledge of the Portuguese language. They were able to communicate using a wide range of vocabulary and interchange between tenses easily. These students were able to express their comments in detail and interacted well with the assessors. On the other hand, weaker students were not as competent in the Portuguese language, struggling often throughout the examination. Their answers were minimal, showing a lack of knowledge of the basics of the Portuguese language. They frequently used English sentence structures and, at times, they were unable to use the correct forms of verbs and gender. At this level, students should know how to converse using basic tenses such as the present, the past and the future. It is also important that all students are prepared for the oral examination and are given opportunities to practice.

Section 2 – Discussion

The choice of topic and sub-topic is very important for the Detailed Study. If students are not interested in the chosen topic it is very hard for them to maintain the Discussion, and express their opinions and ideas. Some students brought an object, such as a photograph, diagram or poster, to support their Discussion; however, many of them found it difficult to talk at length and in detail about their topics.

The sub-topic should suit the linguistic ability and level of the student; it should promote an easy, fluid exchange, and make possible the opportunity to express opinions and ideas.

When discussing the Detailed Study, students should be able to

- discuss and express opinions and ideas
- use the language spontaneously
- maintain the appropriate structures and vocabulary
- use appropriate repair strategies when required
- communicate efficiently, engage in the discussion and refer to the texts studied.

Some students presented excellent work and had prepared their topic very well. As a result, they were able to answer questions with ease. Conversely, there were students who had not prepared the topic well and found it difficult to engage in the Discussion. Some students had memorised their information and, consequently, had difficulty when they were interrupted and asked questions that they were not expecting.

It is important that students practise the skills that are needed for the oral examination, especially the skills for maintaining a conversation. Also, teachers should give students the freedom to choose a topic that they have an interest in, particularly one that they can discuss and give their opinions on.