2021 VCE Portuguese written external assessment report

General comments

Students responded well to most sections of the 2021 VCE Portuguese written examination. Some students displayed very good comprehension skills and an ability to identify the required information from the aural and written texts. However, some students were unable to provide complete answers to the questions, identify the main points or present their ideas clearly. It is important that students take notes during both the listening and reading sections as this will assist them in providing accurate answers. Students tended to summarise the information of the aural or reading texts into their answers instead of responding specifically to what was asked. Summarising or translating the information of the texts instead of giving the specific answer that the question requires will, in some cases, mean the response cannot be awarded marks. Taking notes during both the listening and reading sections and carefully reading key words in the questions will assist students in providing correct answers.

As part of their preparation, students should listen to spoken texts from a range of sources as well as from a diversity of Portuguese language speakers to practise their listening and note-taking skills. Students should work on identifying key words in questions in order to select the information needed for their responses. Time-management skills are important; some students appeared to have run out of time in order to complete Section 3 adequately. Students should also familiarise themselves more with the characteristics of specific text types and styles of writing. Finally, they need to focus on language (spelling, grammar and vocabulary) to enhance their writing.

Areas for improvement included:

* feminine and masculine words (e.g. ‘Cara António’ should be ‘Cara Antónia or Caro António’; ‘uma austronauta muito conhecido’ should be ‘um astronauta muto conhecido’; ‘o nosso experiência’ should be ‘a nossa experiência’)
* articles, including agreement and ensuring they are not omitted when required (e.g. ‘o contaminantes’ should be ‘os contaminantes’; ‘uma planeta’ should be ‘um planeta’)
* verb conjugations, including the use of nouns instead of verbs (e.g. ‘você pode contactos’ should be ‘você pode contactar’); use of past instead of present (e.g. ‘um planeta que ficou muito semelhante’ should be ‘um planeta que é muito semelhante’); verb agreement with subject (e.g. ‘Este grupo de voluntários só precisam’ should be ‘Este grupo de voluntários só precisa’); incorrect use of subjunctive (e.g. ‘espero que você querer’ should be ‘espero que você queira’)
* English spelling of Portuguese words (e.g. ‘spectacular’ should be ‘espetacular’; ‘opportunidade’ should be ‘oportunidade’).

Specific information

Note: This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

Section 1: Listening and responding

Students were assessed on how well they understood general and specific aspects of texts by identifying and analysing information and conveying the information accurately and appropriately.

Part A

Text 1

Question 1a.

Any three of:

* because it has nice food
* because it has a coffee shop with delicious ice-creams
* because it has a playground
* because it is by the river.

Question 1b.

* buying a present
* choosing a location for the party
* inviting people

In this question, most students overlooked ‘buying a present’, which was referred to in the first part of the text. Students need to be aware that answers to a question can be spread across the text.

Text 2

Question 2a.

* To celebrate the day Brazil was discovered.
* To inform listeners of the connection between the name of the radio station and the original name of the country.

The majority of students did not identify the second point.

Question 2b.

* listening to Brazilian music
* curiosities about the Brazilian history

The majority of the students answered this question well.

Text 3

Question 3a.

* The client likes to see the fit of the clothes.
* Is interested in knowing about the type of fabric used in the manufacturing.
* Likes suggestions of different looks, according to the occasion.

The majority of students did not identify the response ‘The client likes to see the fit of the clothes’ or were not able to translate ‘caimento da roupa’, which means ‘fit of the clothes’. Many students translated this as ‘how clothes fitted clients’.

Question 3b.

* not living in the moment / not enjoying the moment
* using social media to promote business

Part B

Text 4

Question 4a.

The four aspects that characterise the successful integration of people living abroad are to:

* have good contact with locals
* prepare oneself for lack of infrastructure
* speak the language well
* find a Portuguese community to help.

The majority of students did not identify the four aspects. Some students spoke about the integration of immigrants in general, but they had to focus on what was referred to in the dialogue.

Text 5

Question 5a.

* Portuguese accent
* an unknown computer program
* lots of candidates

The majority of students answered this question well.

Question 5b.

* his experience in Brazil as an office assistant
* his present course of company management

Text 6

Question 6a.

* Metal is removed at the second stage / after pre-treatment stage.
* Glass and plastic are removed at the final/fifth stage.

The majority of responses to this question did not score highly. Instead of giving the removed contaminants as an answer and the stages in which these were removed, a significant number of students simply described the entire composting process.

Question 6b.

* It helps reduce the volume of the landfill sites by 12 per cent / less plastic rubbish bins.
* Reduces the amount of methane gas.

Section 2: Reading and responding

Most students were able to read and understand the specific aspects of the texts, and convey their understanding well by selecting relevant and appropriate information from them. To improve their performance in this section, students should:

* pay more attention to the key words
* read the text and the question carefully and look up unfamiliar words in the dictionary
* make sure they understand the questions before answering them
* give only the information required.

Part A

Students were assessed on how well they understood general and specific aspects of texts (for example, by comparing, contrasting, summarising and/or evaluating) and whether or not they conveyed the information appropriately.

Text 7

Question 7a.

* The hawk's eye technology helps trace the ball's trajectory (through the chip and the camera), thus preventing a mistaken goal from being scored.
* The video assistant referee is a screen on the side of the field that shows the exact moment of a foul and who was involved in misconduct.

Students must have stated that the hawk’s eye technology gives accurate information of the ‘ball' and not the ‘game’.

The majority of students performed well in this question.

Text 8

Question 8a.

* the Renaissance arc-shaped bridge
* the Monastery of S. Goncalo / Medieval Monastery
* art museum
* the Casa da Calçada hotel
* the manor house / mansion

Students need to identify the key words of the questions and answer with the specific information asked, instead of translating or summarising the text.

Part B

Students were assessed on how well they:

* demonstrated an understanding of the stimulus text
* wrote text appropriate and relevant to context, purpose and audience
* structured and sequenced information and ideas
* manipulated language structures and vocabulary in Portuguese.

Text 9

Question 9

Students were required to read a blog entry and, using the information from the text, write a persuasive email to someone they knew who would like to do some volunteering work. They had to persuade their friend that they would be suited to this type of work.

Suggested points students may have included in their response:

* it is a non-profit project near her/him
* the project helps homeless people, which she/he identifies with as once she/he was homeless
* emotional interaction – she/he has lots of love to give
* the project needs volunteers and she/he desires to be one
* she/he has extra time that could be used in favour of those who need help.

Students should practise writing a variety of different text types. Over half of students performed very well in this question. However, the remaining students showed some lack of clarity in expressing their opinion or ideas. More breadth and depth in terms of content was often needed.

Section 3: Writing in Portuguese

Students were assessed on how well they could:

* demonstrate depth of treatment of information, ideas and/or opinions
* write text appropriate and relevant to context, purpose and audience
* structure and sequence information and ideas
* manipulate language structures and vocabulary in Portuguese.

Students were able to choose from a variety of questions. They had the opportunity to write an imaginative story, a personal script of an interview or an evaluative report. Half of the students performed very well. Some students did not write clearly or omitted giving opinions or expressing ideas. In some cases, student responses did not satisfy the requirements of the question topic or the expected text type or kind of writing required. More breadth and depth in terms of content was often needed.

When attempting this section, students should:

* choose a topic they enjoy
* read the question carefully, paying attention to key words and the type of text required
* read each paragraph of their response to make sure that the text flows
* use the dictionary to look up unfamiliar words
* check their spelling
* proofread their work.

Finally, students should check their work to ensure their work has correct tense agreement and tense use, agreement of feminine and masculine between nouns and adjectives, words in Portuguese are correct, articles and prepositions are included and use the plural where appropriate.

Question 10

Suggested points/responses students may include:

* identify your best friend
* describe your trip
* describe what you found in the planet
* describe how you felt there
* describe what you experienced.

This question was chosen by some students. In general, students understood the question and were able to address the task as required. However, some students lacked breadth, depth and creativity in terms of content.

Question 11

Suggested points/responses students may include:

* identify a traditional festivity of a Portuguese-speaking country (e.g. Carnival, Easter, popular Saints’ Days, Christmas or a village traditional festivity such as Romaria)
* describe the festivity
* describe their feeling while attending the festivity
* explain with whom they went there and why.

This question was chosen by few students. Most responses lacked depth and the writing was not always organised as an interview. Some students did not adhere to the requirements of the text type and the style of writing, turning their text into a narrative.

Question 12

Suggested points/responses students may include:

* identify and summarise what it means to have quality of life
* analyse the influence of some behaviours appropriate to a healthy life, such as listening to music, regular exercise, eating well, making friends, exercising faith etc.
* discuss the advantages and concerns of following the health professionals' suggestions.

This question was chosen by many students. However, some responses did not score highly because they lacked depth and the writing was not clear nor were the ideas organised logically throughout. Some students did not evaluate the two advantages of following the health professionals' advice and two concerns they may have had about this advice.