

FIRST LANGUAGE CZECH

Paper 0514/01

Reading

General comments

In the vast majority of cases, candidates performed very well on this revised paper. After close scrutiny, Examiners concluded that none of the candidates suffered any apparent difficulty from the fact that the line numbers for **Questions 1(f), (g) and (h)** were incorrect, perhaps due to the fact that Text 1 was relatively short and the questions were in chronological order. The fact that the candidates performed so well in spite of this error further underlines the quality of this year's work.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

All sub-questions required brief and clear formulations. The required format appeared to be familiar to the candidates from the specimen paper, and therefore did not present any major difficulties. Most answers were formulated accurately and concisely, without too many stylistic difficulties. Moreover, no significant spelling errors occurred.

- (a) The students' answers were mostly correct. Only a small number incorrectly answered that the story takes place in the Stone Age when the question in fact was 'in what season does the story take place?' Candidates are advised to read the questions carefully.
- (b) Candidates had to name all participants in the hunt to earn the mark. Candidates most frequently forgot to include the group of children who also played a role in the hunt (they were yelling).
- (c) A successful answer required nothing more than a brief specification of the fighting tactics, without lengthy description. Most candidates did well.
- (d) Quite a few candidates lost 1 mark here. The young hunter did not hear the warning due to the resounding cries. Any other answer (most frequently indicating that the hunter attempted to kill the bear by himself or that he was caught up in the struggle) was not supported by the text.
- (e) A large number of candidates scored 1 out of 2 available marks, because they did not notice that the old hunter had changed his position as he wanted to see the killing, and not, as some candidates wrote, to help the young hunter.
- (f) Most candidates were able to provide a description of the female bear and her emotional state in the text. Nearly all scored maximum marks for this question.
- (g) All candidates were able to identify correctly the object hidden behind the image of the fiery snake. However, some had difficulties explaining why the author used this specific image. Other candidates were able to work out that this was because the story was narrated from the perspective of the female bear and that, to her, the burning stick waving in the air resembled a moving, fiery snake.
- (h) This question was one of the more challenging ones. Candidates were awarded both marks only for clear and concise answers. More often, though, candidates were awarded 1 mark for answers that were more sketchy, but which pointed in the right direction.

Question 2

Most candidates dealt quite successfully with the two sub-questions. Some had difficulties with formulating answers in an appropriate style. The nature of these types of questions requires a good vocabulary and a solid grasp of the stylistic and syntactical aspects of the language.

- (a) Most candidates had little trouble providing a comparison between both texts along the lines specified in the question.

Impressively, nearly all candidates were able to reproduce all the characteristics of the Neanderthals mentioned in both texts. The main problem was the language in which the answers were presented, which sometimes created confusion for the reader. Some candidates were unable to convey that they were listing the common features of both the texts. Others were able to generalize the retrieved information, but neglected to summarise the main specifics, e.g. they indicated that Text 2 gives a description of the appearance of the Neanderthal, instead of specifically identifying these characteristics.

- (b) Most students succeeded in comparing the two texts from a stylistic point of view. However, some candidates had difficulties formulating and structuring their thoughts. Some repeated themselves, and/or jumped from one piece of information to another without any attempt to forge a connection between their observations. Unfortunately, a small number of candidates expressed subjective views in contravention of the objective analysis they were required to carry out in sentences such as, for example, "I would rather read the second text as I prefer..."

FIRST LANGUAGE CZECH

Paper 0514/02

Writing

General comments

Compositions ranged from excellent to below average in this paper. It was frequently the case that one composition was very good, carefully thought-out and stylistically and compositionally well executed, whilst the second composition was much weaker due to the candidate allocating a shorter amount of time to it. Some candidates on the other hand completed two average compositions with many stylistic, compositional and spelling shortcomings. Only rarely was a candidate able to write two truly good compositions.

It is important that candidates keep to the word limit so that they have time to re-read their work, think about their selection of words, sentence structure and the overall compositional rendering of the text, so that they have time to rectify spelling and grammatical shortcomings. A second reading, or even repeated readings, would alert candidates to the use of unsuitable words or word associations, unfinished complex sentences, inconsistent thoughts, and the use of an incorrect case. The use of an incorrect case (especially when an adjective takes the place of a noun) occurred very frequently, as did missing punctuation. If, in more complex sentences (candidates used these mainly for descriptions and in narration) punctuation is missing, the text can be unintelligible and often takes on a different meaning.

Candidates who did the examination on a computer need to make sure that the text is large enough to read easily and use standard line spacing.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Here, most students chose to write about the slogan '*English in three months*' or '*With honesty you will go the farthest*'.

It was apparent that students had their own experience in these areas and these were subjects close to their hearts, thus they were able to utilize this specific knowledge well and their compositions were often full of interesting ideas.

One of the main shortcomings was the continual repetition of rhetorical questions throughout the text, such as, 'Is it even possible?', 'Why do companies use these advertisements?', 'Do you believe them?', etc. Candidates started paragraphs as well as ended them with these questions – and not only paragraphs but sometimes they started and ended the entire essay with them. More than once an entire essay was put together using many such questions without any answers to the questions being explored. This did not make for a suitable composition.

Question 2

Description and narration are writing styles that students like and allows them to demonstrate their creativity, inventiveness and imagination, as well as show their ability to work with the language in a literary way. Candidates chose either 'A line of cars in a traffic jam' or 'a holiday story'.

When candidates are writing a literary composition they could consider what kind of effect they want to evoke in the reader. Is it tension or fear they want him/her to feel? This is important if they want to convey the atmosphere, mood, person's character, etc. Knowing this they can then choose the language and stylistic devices to fulfill this, such as expressive words, direct speech, internal discourse, flashbacks and punctuation, such as exclamation marks etc.

A good idea expressed in an appropriate way creates a high-quality composition.

A number of candidates, possibly because they are under the pressure of a time limit, resorted to clichés and predictable ways of describing or relating the story, for example, when introducing the story, describing individual characters, or when telling the story itself, most students wrote about holiday experiences that they believe stereotypes – ideal, beautiful, clever children and the expected, general, yet completely uninteresting holiday experience.

Nevertheless, there were also compositions that were imaginative, witty and a delight to read.