

# FIRST LANGUAGE DUTCH

Paper 0503/01

Reading

## General comments

Candidates responded well to the theme of the two texts: debt and the pattern of spending amongst youngsters. They were able to relate to the topic and most could contrast the points of view in **Question 2**.

All candidates attempted to answer both questions. Most candidates wrote an outline for their answer to **Question 2**, indicating that they had been well prepared to deal with a question of this type. As this was the first session for the revised syllabus, this was a commendable achievement.

The accuracy and quality of the language used in both answers varied from examples of nearly error-free writing to answers where the misspelling of basic words such as *misschien* and *word(t)* and the incorrect spelling and/or conjugation of regular and irregular verbs occurred with obtrusive frequency.

Several candidates wrote lengthy replies to **Question 2** and did not observe the word limit, which meant they often did not have the time to review their response. Other than that, it is absolutely crucial that candidates use their own words in their answers as they risk losing out on marks if they copy their answers from the text.

## Comments on specific questions

Overall, the candidates performed quite well. Most were able to summarise the opinions of the two texts in **Question 2** without too many problems.

### **Question 1:**

- (a) *Op de kleintjes letten* was sometimes interpreted as 'to baby-sit'. It actually means 'to be careful with one's money (even when paying small amounts)'.
- (b) Most candidates had no problem answering this question.
- (c) This question was answered correctly by most candidates.
- (d) A good answer had to explain that, according to the article, young people tend to spend their money on luxury, even unnecessary things. Some candidates lifted lines 19 and 20 and did not use their own words to explain the implication behind these lines. Such candidates could, therefore, not score any marks.
- (e) Good answers were those where candidates made a clear comparison between the attitudes towards borrowing money of girls and boys. Several candidates answered this question globally, i.e. regardless of gender, and were therefore unable to gain credit.
- (f) The expression *geld naar inkomen uitgeven* was sometimes found to be challenging, especially for the weaker candidates.
- (g) While this question was not particularly difficult, some candidates lifted whole phrases from the text in order to answer the question. Some candidates did not seem to understand the expression *in het gedrang*.
- (h) This question was generally well answered. Only a few candidates did not understand the vicious circle of borrowing and spending money.

- (i) This question was also answered very well.
- (j) This question was quite straightforward, although some candidates resorted to lifting phrases from lines 43 to 46.
- (k) The words *verontrustend* and *terdege* were a challenge for most candidates. Only a few candidates knew what the last word meant.
- (l) Candidates who fully understood the expression *een gat in de hand [hebben]* and were able to explain the metaphor gained full marks. Most candidates explained this expression by only saying that the expression was applicable to the text or that it simply meant spending money, both of which were wrong.

## Question 2

Good answers were characterised by good expression in a recognisable, summary style. A large number of candidates came up with several valid points that were not listed in the mark scheme and were therefore accredited.

Instead of summarising the opinions expressed in both texts, some candidates wrote only about the opinions expressed in Text 2.

# FIRST LANGUAGE DUTCH

Paper 0503/02

Writing

## General comments

The writing ability of the majority of the candidates was impressive. Most candidates had a good idea of how to write a comprehensible essay. There were no rubric infringements: all candidates wrote two compositions, one from each section.

Generally, the writing was legible. However, candidates should be reminded that they need to make an essay plan before starting to write, as this will allow them to produce a well-structured essay and use their time economically. Both compositions should be at least 350 words in length, and, again, a plan will help to achieve this.

Candidates are awarded two separate marks for each of the two compositions they write, the first one is for style and accuracy and the second, depending on the type of essay, on the argumentative, descriptive or narrative content.

Most candidates wrote generally intelligible and grammatically correct compositions. However, quite a few candidates had problems with simple Dutch spelling rules, which did not always impede communication but could have easily been avoided and would have led to a higher mark for style and accuracy. A notorious example is the incorrect conjugation of the verb *worden* in the present tense singular. At times, even the correct forms of simple irregular verbs were forgotten.

Candidates should be reminded that they write in an appropriate style. The argumentative and discursive tasks of **Section 1** require an introduction and a conclusion. Starting work with a sentence "*Nou daar ben ik het dus eigenlijk effe helemaal niet mee eens*" does not set the right tone for an argumentative essay at IGCSE Level. Candidates should endeavour to develop a logical and at times complex argument where each stage is linked to and follows on logically from the preceding one. The sentences within paragraphs have to be soundly sequenced. Therefore, off-the-cuff sentences like '*nou we het hier toch over hebben moet ik je toch nog even zeggen dat ik het ook een stom idee vind dat ...*' should be avoided.

**Section 2** tests different linguistic skills from those in the preceding section. Here, candidates choose between descriptive and narrative tasks. Both types of tasks demand a different approach.

In a descriptive task the candidate has to attempt to describe atmospheres and images, giving a range of details. '*Het meer glanst als een spiegel in de vroege winterzon*' is arguably more lively and therefore more apposite than '*het meer bevriest vaak in de winter*'. The focus in these compositions should be on description and not on story-telling. In fact, story-telling should be avoided as it will almost always detract from the description, as the one moves at a different pace from the other. In addition, a sentence like: '*Als het zomer is ga ik altijd zeilen omdat dat mijn lievelingssport is*' will often lead to a candidate listing reasons why they like to go sailing rather than set up a description of a day on the waves.

In order to score high marks on the narrative task the composition should display a sound and sophisticated narrative structure which may contain devices such as flashbacks and time lapses. The different sections of the story should be balanced and the climax should be carefully managed. The sentence sequences should be arranged to produce effects such as the building up of tension or providing a sudden turn of events.

## Discussie en betoog

The topic chosen by most candidates was about '*afschaffing van school vakanties*'. The arguments against included thoughts about learning about other things in life than are taught in school, the necessity of a well-earned rest after a year of hard work at school and the need to earn money. Arguments in favour often made reference to the fact that holidays create time to forget what has been learned, loss of valuable teaching time and the problem of boredom.

The topics of voting rights for under-eighteens and the benefit of winning sport matches for the country were chosen by quite a few candidates, whereas organ donation was only chosen by a small number. Good marks were given to candidates who wrote a well-structured essay with well-thought-out ideas.

### **Beschrijving of verhaal**

Many candidates chose to describe their favourite season. Often, the descriptions were colourful, and the impressions gathered from all senses were often successfully used to paint a beautiful picture. When the candidates tried to write about their season of choice by telling a story their description inevitably lost out as the narrative took up nearly all the space. Candidates should be reminded that they should either opt for a description or a narrative, i.e. they should not conflate the two types of task. The choking atmosphere and mania of the inner-city rush hour were depicted very evocatively by several candidates. Such candidates would often use interesting examples derived from their international experiences.

Topic **2(c)** was the most popular narrative topic. Most candidates wrote a murder mystery. Although many good narratives were produced, candidates have to be careful to keep their composure and not come up with the main part of the story after only a hundred words so that the rest of the story becomes an anti-climax. Not many candidates attempted the story about 'Mijn grote familie'.

### **Conclusion**

In most cases the candidates performed well and it was impressive to see how well most managed to demonstrate their knowledge and use of the Dutch language. It was a joy to read all the interesting essays and inventive stories candidates produced. Examiner would like to thank all the teachers who put in the effort to help the candidates to produce work of this calibre.