

# FIRST LANGUAGE DUTCH

Paper 0503/01

Reading

## General comments

Overall, candidates performed very well; they showed they were able to answer most comprehension questions and summarized and analyzed the differences and similarities between the two texts generally to good effect.

All candidates completed all the questions and most had enough time to write a plan for their answer to **Question 2**, indicating that they had been well prepared to write a comparative summary.

The accuracy and quality of the language used was generally high. Nevertheless, it is important that candidates use their own words as required by the rubric, as they cannot be rewarded for language copied from the texts.

Some candidates found **Questions 1 (c), (g) and (h)** challenging. A very small number of candidates misunderstood **Question 2**, thinking it was a creative writing task. Unfortunately they could not be awarded any marks for their story.

Most errors occurred in the spelling (e.g. *het betekend*) and use of verbs. Common spelling mistakes were *allebij*, *bijde*, *interessant* and *verschilende*.

## **Question 1**

- (a) Quite a lot of candidates described the river Tarn by lifting lines 4 and 5 from the text. A good answer would have been for example: *De Tarn is een wilde en schone rivier die luid tussen de rotsen doorstroomt.*
- (b) Most candidates could explain why the writer was only able to brake with one hand. Some candidates did not use their own words and lifted the answer from the text for which they could not receive credit.
- (c) Most candidates were able to explain the meaning of the phrase *het kokende wegdek*, while a few thought, incorrectly, that it described a certain kind of asphalt.
- (d) The candidates came up with quite a few correct alternative answers outside the marking scheme which were awarded with 1 mark. An example is: *...omdat ze niet wil dat hij gaat wielrennen.*
- (e) Answers were generally relevant to the question. Most candidates referred to the experiences of the professional cyclists.
- (f) Correct answers referred to the *déjà vu* experienced by the writer.
- (g) Most candidates offered a description of events in their own words, as required. Some came up with good descriptions such as: *'Hij lag op het wegdek, maar durfde zijn hand niet op zijn hoofd te leggen, omdat hij bang was dat het vol met bloed zou komen te zitten. Zijn rechterarm kon hij niet bewegen, want dan deden zijn spieren pijn. Hij kon uiteindelijk maar met grote moeite opstaan.'*
- (h) Candidates were required to explain three phrases. Almost every candidate was able to explain the meaning of the title, e.g. *'Je zorgt er zelf voor dat je in de problemen komt'*. The second phrase posed more problems and needed a wider vocabulary to clarify. Most candidates explained that the glucose tablets gave extra energy in the third phrase, which earned them one mark. However,

most missed out on the second mark on offer as they forgot or were unable to explain the language used in the phrase and thereby establish how it linked with the concept of extra

- (i) This question was generally well answered. Only a few candidates did not differentiate between *humoristisch* and *levendig* in their answers. Some candidates merely quoted a couple of sentences from the text for their answer and lost out on marks. They would have gained more marks had they couched (short) examples from the text in their own language to support their observations, e.g. 'Wat de tekst *humoristisch* maakt, is bijvoorbeeld het gebruik van een *eufemisme 'ketchup' in plaats van bloed.*' Such an answer shows a clear and confident command of the language.

## Question 2

Ten different points had to be made in order to gain full marks for content. While some candidates made obvious and superficial observations in list-format, many others analyzed the texts in more depth, which was reflected in marks awarded for language and style.

Most candidates were able to summarize the main differences and correspondences between the two texts in terms of style and content, showing that they were well-prepared for a task of this type. A large number of candidates came up with several points that were not listed in the mark scheme but that were relevant to the task and therefore credited. Examples include: '*Beide schrijvers schrijven de verhalen in chronologische volgorde*', and '*In de eerste tekst is er sprake van dialoog, maar in de tweede tekst wordt niet gesproken*.' The better candidates were able to display a mature writing style by embedding examples from the text in their own language and showed that they were able to articulate complex ideas. The best of these structured their answer to good effect, using apposite phrases to introduce, link and conclude their findings, e.g. *ten eerste, vervolgens, tot slot*. One example of an excellent synoptic conclusion was: '*We kunnen dus concluderen dat de overeenkomsten hoofdzakelijk bij de inhoud liggen en de verschillen in de stijl te merken zijn.*' Several candidates gained credit for paragraphing their summary effectively.

Only a couple of candidates misunderstood the question and wrote a creative story instead of a summary. It is recommended that candidates read the questions carefully to ensure that their answers are fully relevant to the task set.

# FIRST LANGUAGE DUTCH

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Paper 0503/02

Writing

## General comments

The level of ability of the majority of the candidates was impressive. Most candidates knew how to write an effective and interesting essay in both sections of the exam. All candidates kept to the rubric and wrote two compositions, one from each section.

Generally, the writing was legible, but in quite a few instances candidates would have benefited from an essay plan before starting to write. Such a plan helps candidates not only with the structure of their essay, but also allows them to manage their time more effectively. Due to lack of planning some candidates became rather lost in their own essays, limiting flow and making comprehension on the part of the reader difficult. It clearly shows when a candidate has practised writing essays and knows how to tackle the tasks. Both compositions should be at least 350 words and again a plan and practise can help to achieve this.

As explained in the syllabus, candidates are awarded two sets of marks for each of their compositions; the first one is for style and accuracy and the second, depending on the type of task, for argumentative, descriptive or narrative content. Most candidates wrote effective and grammatically correct compositions. However, quite a large number of candidates had problems with a few simple Dutch spelling rules, which, while they did not in most cases impede communication, could easily be avoided and would have led to a higher mark for style and accuracy. For instance, the correct conjugation of verbs in the first, second and third person singular, especially of verbs with stems ending in *d* was a problem, both in present and past tenses. In addition, the correct forms of straightforward irregular verbs were quite often forgotten. It should also be remembered that in Dutch compound nouns are usually written as one word where some other languages write them as two separate words, e.g. *woordkeuze*.

Centres should remind candidates that they write their essays in an appropriate style. The argumentative/discursive task in **Deel 1** requires an introduction, discussion and conclusion. In terms of style candidates writing an argumentative essay should avoid colloquialisms and aim for a more formal style and vocabulary. They should also endeavour to develop their argument in a logical fashion in such a way that each stage in the argument is linked to and follows on from the preceding one. Sentences within paragraphs have to be soundly sequenced.

**Deel 2** tests different linguistic skills and is more creative in emphasis. Candidates have to choose between a descriptive and a narrative task, but both tasks demand a different approach.

For the descriptive task the candidate has to attempt to capture well-developed ideas and images and describe atmospheres and impressions with a range of details. So, a description along the lines of *'Het vakantiegevoel is een gevoel van vrijheid, een gevoel dat je ineens veel meer kan'* is more evocative and much more relevant to the task than *'in de vakantie zit ik graag met mijn vrienden op het strand'*. It is therefore very important to bear in mind that the focus in these compositions should be on description and not on story telling; *'In de zomer zindert de lucht van de anticipatie'* is a better start to a descriptive essay than *'Iedere vakantie ga ik weg met mijn familie en dat vinden we allemaal erg fijn.'*

In order to complete the narrative task successfully, there should be a fair degree of complexity and sophistication in the story. Narrative devices such as sub-texts, flashbacks and time lapses are examples of techniques which can be used to raise a story beyond a straightforward level. The different sections of the story should be carefully balanced and the climax carefully managed. The sentence sequences should be arranged to produce effects such as the building up of tension or creation of a sudden turn of events. A straight story which is held together only on the basis of linking phrases as *(en) toen* and *(en) daarna* will very likely not gain high marks for style.

**Discussie en betoog**

A small majority of candidates chose to write about women being allowed to play in previously men's football leagues. While most arguments were soundly constructed, some candidates were distracted by general issues of equality between men and women in other areas of life, to the extent that the essays were no longer relevant to the issue of equality in football.

A few of the candidates who chose to write about the qualities of a good teacher focussed too much on their own classroom experiences, good and/or bad, without addressing the wider question. This significantly weakened their argument. A formal tone is essential for an objective assessment of an argumentative topic.

Both 'shopping in or out of town' and 'subsidies for budding artists' were not chosen as often as the other two topics. Some candidates had not fully understood the question, while others wrote essays that were too informal in tone and style or repetitive in content.

**Beschrijving of verhaal**

Many candidates chose to describe *het vakantiegevoel*. Many descriptions were detailed, lively and well thought through. However, some candidates started to tell what their favourite holiday had been which turned their essay into a narrative in contravention of the task. Descriptions of the qualities of a best friend were tackled in various, often unexpected ways, with mixed success. Again, an approach that is too personal often has a negative influence on the content as well as the style of an essay.

The narrative task '*Het verborgen leven van mevrouw Jansen*' was chosen more often than the South Pole story. Although many good narratives were produced candidates have to be careful to sustain the story line in such a way that the dramatic climax does not come too early as this would make it harder to reach the minimum required word length. Many grandmothers were heroes or villains in the Second World War and all of them did some very exciting things. Writing a gripping story about an adventure in the South Pole was difficult for a small number of candidates who had chosen this topic even if, as in some stories, polar bears had migrated south to make the stories more eventful! In such cases, careful planning would have helped a great deal with managing the content more effectively.