

FIRST LANGUAGE CZECH

Paper 0514/01

Reading

General comments

In general, candidates in this examination achieved very good results. They demonstrated a very good ability to comprehend and analyse texts and were able to express themselves in a precise and clear manner using their own words and observing the rules of correct spelling and punctuation.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Overall, candidates answered the questions correctly and it was evident that the text was targeted at the appropriate level for this candidature.

Question 1(f) was the only one that presented some difficulty to candidates. The given quote was often misinterpreted or was considered without its context and this led to some unsuccessful answers.

In **Questions 1(b)** and **(e)**, the candidates were supposed to find two different explanations and thereby gain two points. Unfortunately, sometimes they only offered one explanation, which they expanded upon, and they forgot to include a second one.

Question 2

The aim of **Question 2** was to compare two assigned texts from two points of view.

In **Question 2(a)** the candidates were supposed to focus on teachers' relations with candidates in a school. In **Question 2(b)**, they were meant to compare and analyse candidates' relations with teachers.

In general, candidates were successful in outlining most aspects of these relationships. Unfortunately, sometimes the answers were reversed and candidates wrote answers that were supposed to be part of **Question 2(a)** into **Question 2(b)** and vice versa.

Some candidates had difficulties with expressing themselves clearly and concisely and/or gave long-winded answers where a single word or phrase would have sufficed. Consequently, although the answers were very frequently adequate in terms of content, many candidates lost language points because of the imprecise, hesitant or vague rendering of this content.

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Paper 0514/02

Writing

General comments

The question paper presented a well-balanced choice of essays mirrored in the fact that candidates chose all topics in an even ratio and no topic stood out as much more popular or unpopular as the rest.

The essays produced by candidates were of good quality and a very decent average prevailed. The subjects were both familiar and interesting to candidates and this helped them include a sufficient amount of arguments and ideas in their work. However, they frequently had difficulty expressing their ideas in an adequate fashion, often jumping from one idea to another or going into unnecessary details, or straying from the topic. Some passages were often incomprehensible to the reader because of widespread stylistic deficiencies.

This type of task enables candidates to show how well they are able to manage stylistic structure, discussions and polemics. Candidates would be well advised to consider the structure of their response carefully, including:

- an introduction, which outlines the issue(s)
- the body of the article, which presents arguments in favour and against the issue(s) discussed
- a conclusion, which summarises the ideas expressed.

With regards to language and spelling, common errors included:

- the use of words spelt with “y” instead of “i” after an ambiguous consonant
- subject-predicate agreement
- wrong cases for nouns and adjectives
- wrong relations between words (for example, “*nemají v tom potřebu*”, “*dosáhli stavu ovlivnění*”)
- incorrect grammatical forms of verbs (for example, “*kdybysme*”),
- punctuation.
- non-standard noun endings (for example, “*s klukama*”) or even anglicisms (for example, “*tábor je dva týdny dlouhý*”).

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Candidates focused on the reasons why it is good to observe this commandment, but they were also able to enumerate a number of reasons why it should be broken.
- (b) This was a very popular theme, which the candidates obviously encounter in everyday life. In this instance, the candidates were able to express arguments for and against recycling domestic waste adequately.
- (c) Once again, this was a very popular theme. In general, candidates focused on the Internet, computers and mobile telephones. Occasionally, cars and technical advances in medicine were also mentioned. Most candidates wrote about their everyday experiences with technology, rarely taking a more general (much less global) perspective.
- (d) Another popular topic. In this instance, candidates wrote about their knowledge of the issue, but they generally limited themselves to describing the life of celebrities featured in tabloid magazines.

Question 2

Topics were also chosen in a balanced manner in this section. The first two topics tested candidates' ability to manage a description. The second two topics focused on creative narrative.

- (a) This popular theme obviously tapped into candidates' own experiences. Unfortunately, many candidates forgot that the assignment asked them to "describe feelings..." and therefore concentrated on narrating the action and activities that took place on the last day of children's camp, paying only scant attention to the description of feelings.
- (b) This topic was slightly less popular. Candidates either described a nocturnal landscape lit by the moon or else they chose a figurative subject for example a landscape destroyed by mining. The aim once again was to "describe" not to "narrate", which is something some candidates unfortunately tended to do. Regrettably, descriptions were often given which were hard for the reader to imagine or which were unrealistic and contained a number of contradictory facts (for example in a moonlit landscape, colours were distinguishable while birds sang and flew around). Candidates are advised to write about facts that are familiar to them and which they know well.
- (c) All of the candidates attempting this task wrote a story about an injury Libor suffered. There was frequent and appropriate use of direct speech and imaginative use of the setting in which the story takes place.
- Unfortunately, the entire story frequently concerned other experiences and characters, and it was often not until the very end that the reader learned of Libor's injury, which should have been the main focus of the response. More successful candidates structured the story so that the entire tale from beginning to end was aimed at the main incident (which was the boy's injury in this instance). This was built up gradually and subsequently brought to a conclusion.
- Less successful candidates (even though they structured their story well with a beginning, middle and end) neglected to use any tension or gradation, producing a tale that was merely informative with very plain language and simple sentences.
- (d) Candidates created interesting stories, which demonstrated their knowledge of books and films with Western themes. Dialogue was worked into the stories in a successful way. Sometimes the details in the story were at odds with the 19th-century time-frame (for example the stories contained telephones, psychiatric institutions, etc.). The idea of anachronism is something candidates were perhaps unaware of.

Candidates should be congratulated for their efforts; they took the reader into consideration with respect to presentation and the work was legible without any unnecessary deletions, insertions or rewrites.

Future candidates should guard against the use of non-standard Czech, which can negatively impact on the standard of their work. They should also be aware of the register of language required; as some phrases used in conversation are not suitable for use in essays of this nature (for example, "*sranda*", "*koukat se*", "*problém je o tom, že...*").