

FIRST LANGUAGE CZECH

Paper 0514/01

Reading

Key comments

- Candidates must read the texts and questions carefully and accurately in order to ensure their answers to comprehension questions are targeted and precise.
- To produce a successful comparison of two texts, candidates need to avoid simply summarising the contents of the two texts separately. They should deal with both texts simultaneously.

General comments

Most candidates seemed well-prepared for this examination. There was an improvement on previous years in terms of the answers to individual questions; these were generally clear, precise, stylistically and linguistically refined and grammatically accurate.

Candidates found **Part 1** more straightforward than **Part 2**. In **Part 2**, many found it easier to find similarities between the two texts than differences.

Candidates' use of language was generally accurate. There were a few common errors, which candidates could avoid to ensure they reach a higher mark for accuracy and do not obscure the meaning of their answer:

- links between nouns and prepositions, for example: *na podzim*, not *v podzim* / *v podzimu*
- missing or wrong diacritics, or wrong letters in the words, which changed the meaning of the word, for example: *srdce bilo* / *srdce bylo*, *unesen* / *unešen*, *ohromen* / *ochromen*
- correct spelling of possessive adjectives, for example: *Přemyslovy obavy* / *Kunhutin strýc*
- use of possessive pronouns, for example: *svůj* / *jeho* – *opustil svoji milenku* / *opustil jeho milenku*
- declension of numerals, for example: *číslovka dvě/obě* – *s oběma texty*, *s dvěma manželkami*
- use of punctuation.

Comments on specific questions

Almost all candidates were successful in **Questions 1(c)** and **1(f)**.

Where candidates found difficulties, the following points could serve as an aid to help future candidates to succeed:

Read the texts and questions carefully and accurately, to avoid a simple misunderstanding caused by reading too quickly. For example, in **Question 1(h)** *Which season does the story take place in?*, successful candidates took care to read the question carefully. Those who were less careful answered *"in the 13th century"*.

Be specific and precise in answers. In response to **Question 1(a)** *Where does the story take place?*, candidates needed to read carefully and find the precise location *Prespurk, in Prespurk's castle, at the bank of river Dunaj or in Hungary*. In **Question 1(d)** *Give two reasons why Přemysl Otakar II married Kunhuta*, candidates often wrote *"because Kunhuta was beautiful"*. Although Kunhuta's beauty is mentioned in the

text, it was not the King's reason for the wedding. More successful candidates read more carefully and extracted the correct information.

Unless the question specifies that the candidate is required to find the information in the text and quote it, candidates usually best demonstrate their understanding of the point required by the question by using their own words in the answer, to transform the information provided in the text.

When quotation from the text is necessary, it should be appropriate and precise. The best candidates extracted only the information that was necessary to answer the question, for example in **Question 1(b)** and **1(g)**. Less successful responses tended to include long verbatim quotes from the text, which did not demonstrate that the candidate knew exactly which piece of information answered the question.

Be clear and precise in answers, so that the Examiner understands what the candidate is saying. Good choice of vocabulary and clear, accurate structures are needed to avoid an imprecise, unclear or vague answer, which cannot be given full marks. In **Questions 1(e)** and **1(j)**, where students were asked to explain linguistic comparisons in their own words, the very best were able to provide complete explanations which unambiguously demonstrated their understanding. Weaker explanations were incomplete, imprecise or unclear.

Answer all parts of the question. If the questions says "*give two (or three) reasons*", candidates must include enough different information to meet this requirement. For example, in **Question 1(g)** *Give three reasons why women were sorry for the King*, the answer: "*because he was sad and because he had sad eyes and because he felt miserable*" cannot be awarded three marks, because all the information given is a paraphrase of the same idea "sadness".

Question 2(a) and 2(b):

These questions, and this must be emphasised, asked candidates to compare both texts and provide the similarities and differences in the content of the two texts.

Candidates need to focus on similarities or differences and compare each point in turn, rather than producing a summary list of content from each text separately. They should not leave the Examiner to infer the similarities and differences.

When comparing the texts for differences, candidates should clearly state which text they are referring to in their answer.

Candidates are not required to draw their own conclusions or hypothesise; no marks can be awarded for information that has not come from the two texts.

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Paper 0514/02

Writing

Key comments

- Candidates should read a wide range of texts regularly, from which they can make notes about aspects of effective argumentative, discursive, descriptive and narrative writing to apply in their own work.
- Candidates should be ambitious in their use of vocabulary, particularly (but not exclusively) in descriptive writing.

General comments

All the questions appealed equally to candidates this year, which is demonstrated by the fact that none of the topics predominated or appeared more frequently than the others.

Questions in **Part 1** concerned reflection, discussion and argument. Some candidates found **Part 1** more challenging than **Part 2**.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1 – Argument and discussion

Candidates produced interesting responses here which were rich in ideas, and in the best cases refined in style and with a well-constructed composition.

The following points could serve as an aid to future candidates. These points are relevant to any question in **Part 1**.

When constructing a response, the introduction, body and conclusion should correspond with each other. If a concept or issue is mentioned in the introduction, it should be developed in the body of the response and referred to in the conclusion, in a sort of conceptual arc. In **Question 1(a)** *He who despises money is fool vs. money damages a person's character*, weaker candidates mentioned these two concepts in the introduction, but then in the body of the response did not explain them, instead writing about things they can buy for money and why they need money.

In **Question 1(b)** *A dog is man's best friend, but is man also a dog's best friend?*, weaker candidates limited their response to listing the pet's needs, rather than tackling the polemic in the question. The very best responses made sure to deal with the argument provided in the question in a focused and sustained way.

Avoid starting a paragraph with a conjunction unless absolutely necessary. Better responses were characterised by a richness of lexis.

If using rhetorical questions, make sure to try to find an answer to them in the response.

In discursive essays, it is a good idea to consider the positive and negative aspects and a variety of viewpoints from which the specific issue can be considered. The best responses were not limited to a single point of view.

Re-read the question frequently while writing the response; do not depart from the topic, go into unnecessary detail, or lapse into personal experience in this stylistic composition. For example in **Questions 1(c)** and **1(d)**, less successful responses contained too much personal experience – how they travel to school by car,

travel abroad, what their teachers are like, what kind of punishment they use etc. It is good to give some examples but it is necessary to generalize and draw conclusions as well.

Present ideas in compact units, do not jump from one idea to another and then return to the original idea. Avoid repeating what has already been said. Think about the compositional structure of the essay and present individual ideas in compact paragraphs or sections.

Formulate ideas precisely so that the reader understands them immediately and without ambiguity. Candidates should always read through their response at the end to make sure that it is easily comprehensible.

Section 2 – Narration and description

Candidates needed to choose one of four topics, two of which were intended for description and two for narration.

In the descriptive tasks, the very best responses contained colourful, expressive language. Weaker candidates played it safe with more straightforward and mundane language. Candidates should not be afraid to use more colourful language, adjectives, poetic attributes or figurative terms in their descriptions.

The following points could serve as an aid to future candidates:

Description:

In **Question 2(a)** *Description of an ideal detective*, candidates needed to describe a specific person, using a descriptive style. They should not produce a summary of a range of detectives.

In **Question 2(b)** *Description of a seaside town over the course of a day*, candidates needed to focus on the visual, not produce a narrative of their own holiday. When describing the scene, mention could be made of the beach and the sea, but it must be directly related to the town. The very best responses remembered the requirement to describe the changes over the course of the day. Weaker candidates tended to forget this aspect, and would have benefitted from regular re-reading of the question to help them to stay on track.

Narration:

In **Questions 2(c)** and **2(d)**, some responses were a simple and unambitious narration of an everyday sequence of events. In order to do better, candidates need to focus on grabbing the reader's attention from the beginning, and keeping the story exciting to maintain that interest.

Candidates should use narrative techniques such as direct speech, internal monologues, short sentences and a build up of tension and suspense.

To prepare for the narrative section of the examination, candidates should read plenty of fictional literature for inspiration, and make notes of the linguistic and compositional tools used in them.

Sections 1 and 2 – Use of Language

When candidates are learning to produce stylistic compositions, they would be well advised to practice the following aspects of spelling and grammar, so that they avoid unnecessary mistakes:

- spelling of “hard”, “soft” (use of “y” and “i” in Czech) and possessive adjectives, for example *Petrovi kamarádi, vidím Petrovy kamarády, nový přítel, noví přátelé, soví houkání*
- the rules for writing capital and small letters, for example *dějepis, listopad, Spojené státy americké, Praha, pražský*
- forms of the verb “to be”, for example *my jsme, my bychom, vy byste*
- the use of “y” after an ambiguous consonant, for example *třpytivý, blyštivý*
- subject-predicate agreement, for example *auta jezdila, zvířata by se měla, děti se staraly, klidná centra*

- avoiding wrong cases for nouns and adjectives, for example *s penězi, z chvílí, z lázní*
- avoiding incorrect declension, especially in instrumental case, for example *s ženami, s kluky, se psy, s děly*
- avoiding wrong relations between words, for example be careful about the difference between *strach z učitelů / strach učitelů*
- the use of groups of consonants (mně, mě), for example *vzpomněl, uměl, domněnka, ke mně*
- punctuation in sentences, especially in embedded clauses
- avoiding the use of English punctuation rules in Czech, for example *čárka za slovy nicméně, zaprvé se v češtině nepoužívá*
- remembering bars and hooks above the letters
- avoiding using incorrect word forms, for example differences between meaning of words *doléhat / spoléhat, vyplavené / plovoucí, bezmilostný / nemilosrdný, úsporný / spořivý*
- being careful about using so called “Facebook” language such as *profil, status*
- being selective in the use of verbal nouns, for example *pracování je snadné namísto pracovat je snadné, nebo vycvičování / výcvik*
- spelling of the word “výjimka”