

FIRST LANGUAGE CZECH

Paper 0514/01
Reading

Key messages

- In Question 1 it is essential that candidates read the questions carefully. They should note the precise meaning of the words in the instructions; e.g. quote, explain using your own words, find an expression in the text, give reasons.
- In Question 2 candidates must read both texts carefully and work precisely with the information given.

General comments

Generally, candidates found **Question 1** easier than **Question 2**. In **Question 2**, they managed to find the similarities contained in the two texts, but they were often not able to achieve all 15 marks as they offered repeated information, or they mentioned information that was not related to both texts. Regarding quality of language, performance was good, with evidence of decent spelling and stylistic writing. When preparing for the exam, candidates should focus on practicing declension of the numbers “two”, “both” and subject- verb agreement.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Overall, candidates did not find this text too challenging.

Candidates found the questions concerning linguistic analysis of the text, accurate understanding of the meaning of words and the way the author achieves effects on the readers more difficult. This concerned **Questions 1 (c) (i), 1 (c) (ii), 1 (c) (iii)**.

In these questions, candidates had to work with the language and their task was to define the exact meaning of the used words, or to replace them with synonyms. However, weaker candidates often showed that they did not fully understand them.

Only the best candidates answered **Question 1 (g)** correctly, which focused on archaic vocabulary in the text. Unfortunately, some candidates quoted expressions which are neither archaic nor out of date, but rather commonly used in written communication in modern Czech. Perhaps from the candidates' perspective, the expressions seemed old-fashioned, if they encounter more spoken and colloquial Czech in their everyday life than written, standard Czech. This emphasises the importance of wide reading in preparation for this examination.

Question 1(i) required candidates to understand the context of the whole text. Weaker candidates did not base their answers on the given text, but guessed their answers on the basis of their personal experience, which did not correspond with the text.

Question 2

In this question, candidates were asked to compare specific information from both texts. This is a factual question, there is no need to define similarities or differences in the writers' stylistic devices, language, historical context or origin of the works.

Candidates generally found enough points of information which were included in both of the texts.

In this question, as in **Question 1**, marks are available for language. Candidates need to make time to check their answers thoroughly to avoid the inclusion of errors which detract from the overall standard of their written responses. Attention to spelling and punctuation matters, and should be practised.

FIRST LANGUAGE CZECH

Paper 0514/02
Writing

Key messages

Candidates should concentrate on the following criteria, which are taken into account by Examiners marking the responses:

- The essay should meet the specific requirements of the question.
- Use of language
 - Spelling and morphology
 - Word choice – appropriate language for the given style and theme
 - Precise vocabulary to convey accurate meaning
- Text construction
 - Syntax (sentence and phrase construction)
 - Connections (links between sentences)
 - Techniques for text flow
 - Text coherence – paragraph structure (introduction, body, conclusion)
- The reader's experience
 - Serious spelling mistakes impede the comprehension of the text
 - The structure of the essay should help the reader of the text to understand, not hinder them. For example, paragraphs should not be overloaded with clusters of information, a lack of punctuation or information presented in a confusing way and at random without a logical structure.
- When marking a Narrative piece, the Examiner enters the fictional world created by the writer and accepts it; however, the writer should follow certain rules of orthodoxy and logic; e.g. the sun does not shine at night, chestnuts do not grow on trees in the spring, etc.

General comments

Formulating opinions and thoughts in a coherent and stylistically well composed text is challenging for candidates, particularly for those who are not following a course of study in preparation for this examination. However, some quite extraordinary and high quality writing was seen this year. Weaker responses lacked sophisticated structure and order, intellectual depth and diversity.

The aim of **Section 1** of this examination is to allow candidates to demonstrate that they are able to think the given issue through, to form an opinion and express his or her thoughts grammatically and stylistically. For weaker candidates, responses are often presented as a stream of random thoughts, formulated mostly in the style of spoken language. There was often inappropriate syntax, unfinished sentences and repetition of the same ideas. Opinions were expressed in a confused way, which made the reader's task difficult.

For the different types of writing, there are conventions and norms to follow. Each of these forms has its own principles and expected register of vocabulary. The more the candidate can master stylistic and language skills, the better he or she is able to express more complicated thoughts.

In spelling, candidates are advised to concentrate on these areas:

Enumerated words, endings of nouns and adjectives, using the pronoun "one's", subject-verb agreement and sentence punctuation.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Argumentative / discursive essay

The clear and comprehensible presentation of ideas is fundamental for this type of writing. Before the actual writing of the reflective essay, candidates should make a plan, such as a mental map or outline, and proceed in a certain order, preferably introduction, body and conclusion. Clear graphical distinguishing of paragraphs also helps the reader to orient better in the text. It is advisable to concentrate on a few ideas which relate to the topic, and not include stories from one's own personal life too much.

The most popular question in this Section was the question about life on Facebook.

Section B

Description

A colourful description or portrayal requires the candidate to have a fairly rich vocabulary and sufficient imagination in order to give the reader an idea of the described object or area. Regarding the description of an ideal teacher, most candidates who chose this topic decided to describe his or her outer appearance, clothing, body, hair colour, etc. Stronger candidates completed the description by also including character and personality.

In the question regarding an airport arrivals hall, some candidates strayed from the topic, instead describing the rush at the airport, airline area and aircraft landing, events in the parking lot in front of the airport, waiting for the departure or access to the flights. This then left them with only a small number of words for the description of the arrival airport hall itself.

Narration

Once again, candidates should follow the principles of this genre. The introduction does not need to be long, it just needs to briefly set the scene. In weaker responses, the introduction continued for up to half of the total response, which weakened the impact of the story. Candidates should take care to ensure that their stories, while they may be fantastical, do have a thread of logic that the reader can follow. Plausibility helps, for example making sure that descriptive elements match up (for example, it was not logical to say that in June, we were skiing on Sněžka). Using direct or indirect speech is an appropriate means of narration. However, candidates should learn and apply the rules for writing in direct or indirect speech.