

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, find an expression in the text, give characteristic features, replace with synonyms.
- In **Question 2** candidates must read both texts carefully and work precisely with the information given and summarise it in a continuous text.

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. The quality of language used was generally quite good, with evidence of accurate spelling and stylistic writing.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Questions 1(k) and **(l)** proved to be the easiest questions and were correctly answered by most candidates.

Questions 1(a) (i) and **(ii)** required candidates to understand the difference between the purpose of the project and the reason for its launch. Stronger candidates did see the difference and provided correct answers. Weaker candidates gave similar or identical answers to both questions.

Questions 1(b), (c), (d), (f) and **(j)** could have been successfully answered by a single word or a brief phrase, however more ambitious candidates incorporated their answers into full sentences with appropriate punctuation.

Questions 1(c) and **(g)** required particularly close reading of the text to be able to extract the correct information. The answer to **Question 1(g)** could be found directly in the text, as long as the candidates read carefully enough.

In general, candidates found the questions concerning linguistic analysis of the text, accurate understanding of the meaning of words and figurative expressions more difficult. For example, in **Questions 1(e)** and **1(h)**, candidates were given phrases or had to quote phrases containing figurative language and explain them in their own words.

Question 2

In this question, candidates were asked to compare both texts, identify and summarise information which was the same in both texts. Most candidates found enough points of relevant information. In some cases candidates misread the question and focused on the differences rather than similarities. It was important to keep to the requirements of the question, and not to compare the style, language or origin of the texts.

Language marks

In both questions, marks are available for language. Candidates need to allocate time to check their answers thoroughly to avoid the inclusion of errors which detract from the overall standard of their written responses.

Attention should be given to spelling and grammatical features, such as subject-verb agreement, especially in plural of masculine animate and neuter words; capital letters at the beginning of sentences and geographical names; the use of verbs and prepositions with correct cases; reflexive constructions, etc. Candidates should also take care with punctuation, especially in multiple nominal phrases, inserted clauses and adverbial phrases.

When preparing for **Question 2**, candidates should also be confident with the declension of “two” and “both”.

FIRST LANGUAGE CZECH

Paper 0514/02
Writing

Key messages

Candidates should take notice of the following points, which are taken into account by Examiners when 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 and paragraph structure (introduction, body, conclusion)
- The reader's experience
 - Serious spelling mistakes impede 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 contain clear information, appropriate punctuation and be constructed in a logical way.
- With narrative responses, 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 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, form an opinion and express his or her thoughts grammatically and stylistically. Candidates should learn to present their thoughts logically. Stronger responses contained appropriate syntax, finished sentences and no repetition of ideas. Opinions were expressed in a clear way, which made the reader's task easy. 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 and grammar candidates are advised to concentrate on these areas:

Enumerated words, endings of nouns and adjectives, using the pronoun "one's", subject-verb agreement, sentence punctuation and capital letters at the beginning of sentences and geographical names.

In terms of vocabulary, many candidates showed their ability to choose appropriate and accurate language. In some cases, however, strong influences of the English language were evident, e.g. in phrases such as “budu pozdě”, “vystoupit z komfortní zóny”, “socializovat se”, “chyť mě za oko”, etc. These are direct translations of English phrases “I will be late”, “step out of the comfort zone”, “to socialise”, “it catches my eye” and have not been established in the Czech language. Candidates are advised to avoid such anglicisms as they do not sound Czech, detract from the continuity of the text and distract the reader.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Argumentative/discursive essay

A clear and comprehensible presentation of ideas is fundamental for this type of writing. Before beginning to write the response, candidates should make a plan, for example a mind map or outline, and proceed in a logical order, preferably introduction – body – 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.

This was particularly relevant for **Question 1(b)** about studying abroad. This was by far the most popular question as many candidates could use their own experience. Stronger candidates managed to present well developed arguments for and against whilst using their experience purely as illustration rather than as the focus of the whole essay.

Question 1(c) about tattoos and piercing and **Question 1(d)** about gender stereotypes were less popular but elicited some strong opinions.

Question 1(a), about organic products, required certain knowledge and was chosen by candidates who showed genuine interest in the subject.

Section B

Description

A colourful description requires the candidate to have a rich vocabulary and sufficient imagination in order to give the reader an idea of the described object or area.

In **Question 2(a)**, a description of a wedding, most candidates focused on the outer appearance of the bride, the groom, the guests and the venue. Stronger candidates managed to evoke the whole atmosphere of the wedding, sometimes with a quirky twist.

Question 2(b), a description of a rainforest, really stimulated the candidates' imagination. Stronger responses depicted the dramatic and complex atmosphere of a rainforest utilising all the senses.

Narration

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 **Question 2c**, an episode from a TV series, some candidates used nearly half of their word count allocation to describe the series before getting to the narration of the episode itself. This approach was not successful. 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.

In **Question 2(d)**, many candidates produced powerful stories about events that changed their lives. It was important to stay in the genre of narrative and not stray into the area of a reflective essay.

One of the effective means of narration is the use of direct or indirect speech. Stronger responses included this without over-using it. The best candidates were able to apply the rules for writing in direct or indirect speech.