

FIRST LANGUAGE DUTCH

Paper 0503/02
Reading and Directed writing

General comments

It was very encouraging to see that overall understanding of the two texts was good. Most candidates responded appropriately to the themes of the two texts: the experiences of people at school in the present and in the past. Candidates could also relate to the third question, where they were asked to give their own ideas on the differences between education in the past and present in either a short narrative or argumentative mini-essay.

Only a few candidates failed to answer all the questions. Many candidates used their time well to write a plan or a rough draft for their answers, indicating that they had been well prepared in the techniques of comparing two texts and producing an essay.

The quality and accuracy of the language used in the answers varied greatly, from examples of virtually error-free essays to others which displayed basic errors, such as incorrect past tenses and problems with Dutch word order.

Most candidates adhered to the word-count recommendation for all questions but some wrote answers that were too short.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Content

Generally, this question was well answered. Most candidates understood that they had to write about the differences and the similarities between the two texts. The majority had a clear understanding of the experiences of previous generations at school. Better candidates tended to divide their answer into two paragraphs, along the lines of differences and similarities, and then selected details from both texts accordingly. Several points (out of a possible 12) had to be made in order to gain content marks. Candidates should be reminded of the need to cover a variety of different points and to avoid commenting at length on just one of two points. Some approaches resulted in answers which overlapped with their answer to **Question 3** where they asked to give their opinions about education in the past and present. Candidates should, therefore, be reminded to read questions carefully and not give their own opinion unless asked.

Most candidates knew how to write and structure their answer and end it with an appropriate conclusion. Candidates should be reminded that it is essential that they use their own words and avoid lifting entire phrases or sentences from the original texts, a common occurrence in this question.

Language

There was much evidence of the candidates' command of Dutch in this question, and good candidates were often quite successful in re-wording material from the texts. The most common spelling mistakes were *mischien* for *misschien*, *bijde* for *beide*, *word* when *wordt* should have been written and *allinea* for *alinea*. Another common mistake was the incorrect choice of definite article for several nouns like *citaat*.

On the whole, candidates should pay more attention to punctuation; this important skill tended to get overlooked.

Question 2

Content

All candidates were able to relate to the task. Most agreed with the given statement using convincing arguments. The most successful candidates read the question carefully and explained in detail what they thought about *de regelmaat van de schoolgang*. Some candidates felt that they were perhaps too young to be able to give their opinion but they did not shirk from the task. A few candidates received a relatively low mark for content because they focussed their answer on making a single point rather than making several points, limiting the range of their response.

Language

Most candidates used a wide range of appropriate sentences structures and linked paragraphs well. Some candidates repeated the mistakes they made in **Question 1** (incorrect spelling, incorrect past tenses, etc.).

Question 3

Content

This question proved to be quite accessible to candidates as they could all relate to the question and had a choice of how to answer. Most candidates concluded that they were all glad to live in the 21st century!

Language

In general, candidates used a full range of appropriate vocabulary and stylistic devices, showing a clear sense of audience.

FIRST LANGUAGE DUTCH

Paper 0503/03
Continuous Writing

General comments

Overall the candidates performed well on this paper. No topics proved particularly easy or difficult. All nine topics were chosen.

All candidates seemed to find a title which appealed to them from the wide range available and all were able to write relevant, often interesting essays. The most popular titles were the letter of application to participate on a survival trip and the narrative on what it would be like to be in a tornado.

Better answers were characterized by skill in sustaining ideas and arguments and in particular the ability to argue cogently when responding to argumentative topics.

The overall quality of the language was quite consistent; the majority of essays were written in generally accurate Dutch with only occasional minor errors, and were well structured. Most candidates made sure they included an introduction and a conclusion to their essay. The vocabulary used was sufficiently wide and appropriate to the context. There was a sizeable number of essays, however, which showed frequent and persistent grammatical and spelling errors. Although these were usually structured in paragraphs, links between them were sometimes absent or inappropriate and a conclusion was occasionally missing. The weakest scripts showed many serious mistakes of various kinds principally to do with syntax, especially Dutch word order. The use of the various past tenses in Dutch was sometimes inaccurate.