

# FIRST LANGUAGE DUTCH

Paper 0503/01

Reading

## General comments

In general, candidates responded well to the texts and tasks set in this year's paper. All candidates completed both questions and most had enough time to write a plan for their response to **Question 2**, showing they were well prepared to write a comparative summary.

On the whole, the quality of language was high. However, it is important that candidates use their own words, as asked for, in **Question 1**, as they cannot be rewarded for copying from the text. It is important that candidates acquire a vocabulary and stylistic range varied enough to enable them to answer questions in their own words.

A few candidates misunderstood **Question 2** and wrote a general summary that bore little relation to the specific requirements of the task.

Although language was generally accurate, there were a number of persistent errors, especially in verb formation. Common spelling mistakes included 'waneer', 'allebij', 'bijde', 'betekend' and 'mischien'.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

- (a) A few candidates described the girl by lifting '*niet onaardig gezicht maar rouwige nagels*' from the text, without attempting a description in their own words.
- (b) Most candidates were able to explain why nobody wanted to sit next to the writer. Some candidates thought that the other passengers did not like the writer, an observation which was not based on the text.
- (c) Nearly all candidates understood why the writer thought he had missed his station.
- (d) Most candidates had no difficulty explaining the phrase '*bewasemde ramen*'. Some candidates, however, thought the phrase meant that the windows were clean.
- (e) Most answers were able to explain that the writer felt uncomfortable in his seat. Better candidates also mentioned that the posture he was forced to adopt caused the writer to be in pain.
- (f) Most candidates were able to identify three problems in their own words. A few, however, lifted the whole text in which the problems were mentioned without manipulating the language to show they had understood the task. No marks could be awarded for such answers.
- (g) This question tested candidates' ability to describe words and phrases from the text in their own words. A few candidates struggled with the first phrase, answering the suit in question could only be worn in May. Some candidates explained (iii) by writing the opposite to what would have been a correct answer; i.e. they wrote that the seat was occupied instead of available.
- (h) Most candidates were able to provide an interesting and relevant explanation for the ending of the story.

- (i) Most candidates could describe in their own words how the emotions of the writer changed throughout the story and offered good observations, such as: *'De schrijver voelt zich eerst vertrouwd in de trein, maar daarna schrikt hij, omdat hij niet weet waar hij is. Later begint hij eenzaam te voelen, omdat hij de enige wakkere passagier blijkt te zijn'*. Some candidates had difficulties with the question and described the writer's actions, rather than his emotions. One candidate thought that he became irritated, but this does not arise from the text.

## Question 2

The quality of the summaries this year showed significant improvement compared with previous sessions.

The task focused on the theme of silence and the (changing) emotions of the protagonists, as described in both texts.

Most candidates knew how to write an apt introductory sentence, such as *'Zowel tekst 1 als tekst 2 hebben hetzelfde thema, maar het zijn de gevoelens van de schrijvers en hun ervaringen met de stilte in de trein die verschillen'*. In addition, such candidates were able to sustain the quality of their summaries by using appropriate conjunctions and other linking devices, and by devising a logical structure for their answer. Many candidates made effective use of paragraphs in their summaries and were able to formulate a suitable conclusion to their response.

Only a small group of candidates misunderstood the question and wrote a general summary, which failed to address the points the question asked them to focus on. It is strongly recommended that candidates read the questions more carefully in future, to ensure their answers are fully relevant.

# FIRST LANGUAGE DUTCH

Paper 0503/02

Writing

## General comments

All candidates observed the rubric and wrote two compositions. The level of writing of the majority of the candidates was impressive. Most candidates knew how to write an effective essay on two different topics.

Generally, handwriting was legible and most essays were well-presented. In quite a few cases, however, some candidates would have benefited from an essay plan to help them use their time more economically and maintain relevance. Both compositions should be between 350-500 words, and a plan will help to achieve this target. Due to the lack of proper planning, candidates who didn't devise a plan often lost their way halfway through, which made comprehension difficult and limited the flow of their writing.

Most candidates wrote grammatically correct compositions. However, some candidates had problems with simple Dutch spelling rules, which, while they often did not impede communication, could have been easily avoided. There were many cases where candidates would have received a higher mark for style and accuracy if they had taken the time to review their work. Linguistic errors often included the incorrect conjugation of third person singular verb forms in the present tense. On occasion, even frequently used irregular verb forms were given incorrectly. There also still appears to be some confusion about whether certain words are spelled with *ei* or *ij*, even in the case of commonly used words, such as '*bijvoorbeeld*' and '*eigen*'. Finally, candidates should be reminded that compound nouns such as *dorpsbewoner* are written as one word in Dutch.

## Comments on specific questions

### *Discussie en betoog*

Essays should be presented in a style appropriate to a particular task. When writing argumentative essays, candidates should avoid using colloquialisms and aim for a more formal style. They should also seek to establish a coherent argument, in which each sentence and paragraph is properly linked; to achieve this, argumentative/discursive essays require an introduction, discussion and conclusion. The discussion, which takes up the middle part of the essay, should focus on providing a solid foundation for a particular point of view and/or give a balanced view of the arguments for and against a particular stance. In practice, some candidates wrote introductions which were too long and often blurred into the discussions they were only supposed to lead up to. Most of these candidates also neglected to write a proper conclusion.

Unfortunately, a small number of candidates who chose globalisation as their topic confused it with global warming, which meant that their essays were largely irrelevant.

Most candidates thought that pop idols and pop groups have a significant impact on today's youth. Many discussed the good, as well as the bad, influences such role models are generally said to have. However, some candidates only wrote about the impact of their chosen idol(s) on an individual level. Such candidates would have fared better had they expanded their discussion beyond personal experience.

Candidates who chose to write on the minimum driving age often argued it should not be the same as the minimum drinking age, mainly to prevent drink driving among young people. Many candidates also thought that at 18 was a more responsible age than 17, leading them to conclude that 18 was the right age to learn to drive.

A large number of candidates who chose to write about computers only discussed how they used their PCs at home. Such candidates neglected to place the use of information technology in a wider context. Consequently, they produced essays that were rather narrow in focus.

**Beschrijving of verhaal**

The descriptive and narrative tasks in this section demand a different approach from each other. In a descriptive essay, candidates should develop ideas, impressions, images and atmospheres in a detailed manner; candidates who write a story in response to a descriptive task invariably score low marks.

The description of the walk in the storm was often handled very well, with carefully chosen phrases describing the elements and the atmosphere they created.

Many candidates chose to describe the arrivals hall at an airport, although some changed it into a departure lounge. The majority of descriptions were detailed and well considered. However, some candidates opted to discuss what they liked about arriving and/or departing, or wrote a narrative based on personal experience. Such responses were insufficiently relevant to the task.

The narrative task calls for a composition which employs sub-texts, flashbacks and other story-telling devices. The different sections of the story should balance each other out and the climax needs to be carefully managed. Sentences and paragraphs should be carefully arranged in order to produce narrative effects; stories which rely too much on rather pedestrian linking devices such as *toen* and *daarna* are therefore unlikely to gain access to high marks.

The topic on a new family arriving in the neighbourhood proved to be very popular. Some candidates cleverly used flashbacks and subtle twists, which often made their stories pleasurable to read. Although many good narratives were produced, candidates are advised to ensure they manage the storyline in such a way that the dramatic climax does not arrive too early. An early climax often makes it considerably harder for candidates to reach the minimum number of words required.

Only a small group of candidates chose the last topic, 'My life as a butcher's dog'.