

FIRST LANGUAGE CZECH

Paper 0514/01

Reading

General comments

The candidates and their tutors are to be congratulated for an outstanding performance: in general candidates responded to questions correctly, and the language, spelling and grammar of the responses were very good.

Some of the candidates whose performance was less than satisfactory have apparently received little or no preparation for the exam. Study of Czech spelling and grammar as well as or looking at past question papers (available on the CIE website) is strongly recommended for candidates intending to sit this exam.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Overall candidates have mastered the entire set of questions in **Part 1** very well. Most of the questions were answered correctly by the majority of candidates, especially **1(a), 1(c), 1(d)**.

In Question **1(g)** candidates were asked to find pairs of contradictory statements and quote them. Even though the assignment of the question explicitly states "pairs", some candidates quoted only three single statements, instead of three pairs of statements.

With regards to the language of the answers, no serious mistakes were made and candidates seemed to be well-prepared in terms of spelling and grammar.

There was only one word which the spelling of which proved to be challenging for a number of candidates to write: "nevyzpytatelný" - "unpredictable".

Question 2 contains two sub-questions.

In the **Question 2(a)** candidates were asked to compare the two texts and find similarities and differences. Most candidates found the right answers, but a number of them struggled to express their ideas in a coherent manner. Sometimes candidates merely re-told both texts separately in their own words which is clearly not what the rubric asks for.

However many of the candidates formulated very accurate and concise answers.

In **Question 2(b)** candidates were asked to comment on each advice from the text. Candidates did not have much trouble with this question and mostly gave very creditable answers. There were only a few candidates who seemed to have difficulty in understanding parts of the story from Text 1 and therefore did not comment on all the advice correctly.



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Paper 0514/02

Writing

General comments

In spite of the challenging task of writing two essays in two hours, this year quite a high number of candidates submitted excellent work which demonstrates their dedication and thorough preparation for the exam. Preparation for the exam is highly recommended so candidates can cope with the demands of the question paper: candidates need to be familiar with correct spelling and grammar and in structure and requirements of essays (argumentative, descriptive and narrative).

The essay topics in this year's question papers were well balanced: all titles were chosen by roughly the same number of candidates, with no predominance of a few popular topics as is sometimes the case. Question 1(d) proved to be the favourite by a small margin.

Candidates found the topics familiar and interesting and they had sufficient arguments and ideas to offer. However, some candidates had difficulty expressing these ideas properly. They sometimes jumped from one idea to another or developed only one idea with a lot of unnecessary detail to the detriment of others. Occasionally passages were incomprehensible to the reader because of widespread stylistic deficiencies.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

This part of the examination asks candidates to argue and reason *for* and *against* an idea or concept, formulate their ideas clearly and briefly, express opinions, view different aspects of the topic, and defend their standpoint in a structured way in an essay form.

Candidates must demonstrate their ability to express themselves by means of a continuous essay and it is recommended that during the preparation time candidates are familiarised with the format and requirements of this form of expression.

Here are the essential elements of a well-structured essay:

- an introduction, which outlines the issue
- the body of the essay (with arguments for and against the issue being debated)
- a conclusion, which summarises the ideas expressed.

With regards to grammar and spelling, it is recommended that the following areas are given more attention during preparation, as they have proved problematic for candidates:

- the use of "y" after an ambiguous consonant,
- subject-predicate agreement – this year there very many mistakes in this area
- cases of nouns and adjectives,
- case and tense of verbs,
- voice links that do not fit into written text (for example – „*je to o tom, že...*”),
- inflection of numbers – mainly of numbers “two”, “both” (for example – *oběma*),
- spelling of uppercase and lowercase letters (for example – *Vánoce, Velikonoce, Boží hod, Česká republika*),
- punctuation in sentences, especially punctuation of embedded subordinate clauses
- use of demonstrative pronouns (*ten, ta, to, tento*, are not used so much in Czech language and their overuse is probably an influence of English)
- non-standard noun endings (for example „*s klukama*”),
- anglicisms (for example: *destinace – cíl, produkt – výrobek*)



Question 1(a)

The hierarchy of my generation's values

Approximately 17 % of candidates chose this topic.

This topic was close to candidates because it is directly related to their age group. Most candidates were surprisingly critical about their generation and its values. The most frequently mentioned values were: enjoying life, possessing technology, personal appearance, successful career.

Question 1(b)

Holidays have lost their meaning in today's society

Approximately 25 % of candidates chose this topic.

Candidates wrote especially about Easter and Christmas but unfortunately some candidates who attempted to explain the meaning of Christmas and past traditions did not have the necessary accurate information about them. It is recommended that candidates chose a topic familiar to them.

Question 1(c)

People shouldn't worry about what they do not have but should enjoy what they do have

Approximately 13 % of candidates chose this topic.

Although many candidates chose this topic, many a number of them struggled with its meaning and often got "entangled" in it. Most candidates disagreed with the quote and almost everyone agreed that today people want to have more and more and that it is right they should.

Question 1(d)

Clothes make the man

Approximately 45 % of candidates chose this topic.

This was a favorite topic with the fashion-conscious young generation. Unfortunately, sometimes candidates lapsed into describing fashion trends or the influence of fashion icons and magazines on the young generation, without developing other aspects of the topic.

Section 2

Candidates are expected to choose one out of the four essay topics provided. The first two topics test candidates' ability to manage the stylistic form of description. The second two topics focus on creative narrative.

It is recommended that candidates preparing for this examination study the formal features of such essays, their structure and stylistic elements.

Question 2(a)

A mysterious owner of a mysterious caste - write a description inspired by the title

In this question candidates were encouraged to use their imagination to the full but also to demonstrate their ability to write a good description of a person and a place. About 26% of candidates chose this topic.

The candidates strived to create interesting and attractive works. Unfortunately they sometimes tried too hard and in their eagerness to be original some candidates created unintelligible paragraphs or descriptions that were nearly impossible to follow or imagine.



Question 2(b)

A journey by train - write a description of a landscape as seen from a moving train

About 21% of candidates chose this topic. Many candidates wrote a very nice description of the landscape passing by outside the window of a train. However, some candidates lost content points by focusing on the wrong bit of the train journey, such as the description of the inside of the train or the story of why the hero was traveling, or on preparation before travelling. Candidates are urged to read the essay titles carefully and follow the instructions in the rubric.

Question 2(c)

A diver's story - write a story about a diver's underwater adventure

About 23% of candidates chose this topic. There were two variations of this topic: either a colourful description of the underwater world or a fantastic adventure of a diver, finding a treasure or fending off a shark. Unfortunately, candidates lost points if they only wrote a description of the underwater world of fish and colourful corals, because their task was to write an interesting story not a description. It is essential to read the title and instructions carefully before starting on the task.

Question 2(d)

A new addition to our family - write a story about what happened when a new member arrived in a family (a baby, a pet, a relative etc.)

About 30% of candidates chose this title and a number of interesting works were produced. However a small number of candidates wrote narratives of everyday happenings about babies and their siblings which did not make for very engaging stories at all.

