

FIRST LANGUAGE DUTCH

Paper 0503/01

Reading

Key message

To do well in this paper candidates should:

- take care to read the question carefully in Part 1, taking into account the number of marks available
- use their own words as far as possible in order to gain higher marks for Language
- produce a structured response in Part 2, making each point briefly, rather than expanding on each point

General comments

Both texts of this year's exam were understood well by the majority of the candidates. All candidates completed both questions.

Although the quality of language was generally quite high, it is important that candidates are reminded to use their own words throughout the paper to show that they have understood the texts and the tasks. Word-for-word copying from the texts without attempting to tailor responses to specific questions will have a negative influence on a candidate's performance, particularly on marks awarded for Language. Candidates are therefore urged to read widely and to practise using the words and stylistic range they acquire to enable them to answer questions in their own words with confidence. Some candidates used too many words from the original text, obscuring whether or not they had actually understood the meaning. It is therefore important that candidates acquire a vocabulary and stylistic range varied enough to enable them to answer questions in their own words.

This year, many more candidates started their response to **Question 2** with a writing plan, which proved to be helpful to them when writing a targeted response to the question.

Language was generally accurate, although there were still a number of persistent errors, especially with verb formation.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This part of the exam was generally done well. Candidates are reminded that some questions have to be answered with reference to the text as a whole, not just a small part of it. Candidates are also encouraged to use their own words and make sure they explain the meaning of words and parts of the texts.

- (a) This question was answered well by most candidates.
- (b) The question required precise reading, as the author explained that *upcycling* at first seems a good idea, until you look into it more closely. The majority of the candidates did not have any problems with this question.
- (c) This question was answered well by most candidates, but weaker candidates simply lifted the words *inspirerend* en *creatief* directly from the text.
- (d) Most candidates did well on this question, although few candidates explained precisely what the problem was with the raw materials (*grondstoffen*).

- (e) Many candidates struggled with the fact that we use too many products. The majority addressed the second part of the question well, demonstrating their understanding of the fact that we use up resources for the wrong products.
- (f) Again, only part of the answer was given by most candidates. The fact that it was more profitable to recycle *en masse* was spotted by many candidates, but the fact that we actually make products that we need in this way was only picked up by some.
- (g) Some candidates answered this question very well and in their own words. Some answers were lifted from the original text and it was not always clear if those candidates had understood the meaning of *flutcycling*. It is worth reminding candidates of techniques which can help them to deduce the meaning of an unfamiliar word or idiom from the context in which it is used.
- (h) This question about '*de waardevermeerdering zit in het hoofd van de koper*' was done very well by candidates who clearly understood the text. A few candidates confused *de koper* here with the 'copper' mentioned in another part of the text.
- (i) A few candidates managed to explain very well in their own words what the environmental issue is for people in the fashion branch. Weaker candidates who did not seem to understand the issue copied the answer straight from the text without explaining the problem.
- (j) For some candidates this was a difficult question as well, but most did pick up on the fact that we start thinking about the value of waste/rubbish.
- (k) This question was done well by the majority of the candidates.

Question 2

Most candidates wrote good summaries which focused on the demands of the question. Candidates had to write an essay on recycling or waste in which they used information from both texts (i.e. by starting off along the lines of: '*In dit opstel wil ik het hebben over zowel de positieve als de negatieve aspecten van het hergebruiken van oude voorwerpen*'). Quite a few candidates had read the task (*schrijf een opstel*) well.

The most successful candidates went through the two texts systematically and made a plan before they started to write their answer. Most candidates attempted to introduce the text with a summary of the topics of both texts (recycling, reusing old products or material) and were able to point out the different styles of recycling as well as the different styles of the texts.

It is important that candidates try to identify 15 similarities and/or differences between the two texts so they may be eligible to be awarded full marks for content. Many candidates discussed the differences of opinion of the two writers, or the fact that the first text had a more opinionated nature than the second text.

Successful candidates talked about the difference in perspective, text type (informative, entertaining) and the audience for whom the text was written. Some candidates discussed the style and language used in both texts, which can be difficult. If candidates are trained to go through the texts systematically, keeping a few pointers in mind, most will be able to define 15 similarities or differences.

Many candidates made effective use of paragraphs in their summaries and were able to formulate a suitable conclusion to their response. The way in which the two authors used language was also explored, often to good effect. Those candidates who were able to sustain the linguistic quality of their summaries by using appropriate conjunctions and other linking devices and by devising a logical structure for their answer, received good marks for style and organisation.

A small number of candidates 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 carefully to ensure their answers are fully relevant.

FIRST LANGUAGE DUTCH

Paper 0503/02

Writing

Key message

To do well on this paper, candidates should:

- write accurately
- use a wide range of vocabulary and structures
- provide a range of well-developed ideas
- ensure their essays are relevant to the chosen topic, well organised and coherent.

General comments

The majority of candidates produced impressively well-structured essays, rich in ideas and detail.

The presentation of this year's essays was generally good and most handwriting was legible. Some candidates, however, might have benefited from an essay plan to help them keep their essays more focused, to manage their time more effectively, and to stay within the word limit. Lack of a proper structure made comprehension rather difficult and restricted the flow in the case of some essays. Some of the weaker candidates struggled to write in a style appropriate to the chosen task.

There were some candidates who had problems with simple Dutch spelling rules, which had an adverse effect on their mark for style and accuracy. Common errors included:

- incorrect verb conjugation, for instance: adding a *t* after a verb ending with a *d* in the third person past tense (e.g. '*hadt*' and '*werdt*') and incorrect irregular verb forms
- using *ei* for words spelt with *ij*, and vice versa, e.g. '*beivoorbeeld*' and '*zi*' for *zei*,
- writing words spelt with *oe* with *ui*, and vice versa
- writing compound nouns as two or more separate words instead of one word, e.g. *bus halte*.

Comments on specific questions

Discussion and Argument

The essays in this part of the examination require a solid structure, including an introduction and a conclusion. It is advisable that candidates should attempt to take a considered and well-balanced approach to the topic; they should construct their argument accordingly and discuss points for and against the statements given in the introduction. Argumentative essays should be written in a suitably formal style, and colloquialisms in particular should be avoided. The best discursive essays this year were able to develop a complex argument in a logical fashion, where each stage in the discussion followed on from the preceding one and the sentences within the paragraphs were soundly sequenced.

The first three topics were very popular. Most candidates were against the idea of eating more locally produced food. Although the majority of them saw some advantages in locally grown food and acknowledged that it would help reduce global warming, many candidates also came with economic arguments noting that it would also be unfair on the farmers in other countries as they were just starting to have a better living standard.

The concept that people should be able to live wherever they wanted elicited a number of interesting responses. The best essays were rich in ideas and thought-provoking questions: would this mean that there would be no boundaries?; would this mean that everybody would want to live in rich countries?; what influence would this have on the population in rich countries? The essays were very diverse and many were

interesting to read. Most candidates defended their arguments very well using their own experiences and insights into the topic, and showing a great deal of confidence in presenting their views. Many candidates chose to write about the subject of graffiti and most seemed to know a lot about it. Candidates were able to give the pros and cons of graffiti and to discuss the perspective of older people on graffiti. Many acknowledged and concluded that graffiti is not always a good thing. Stronger responses contained ideas on what would be a good strategy to prevent youths putting their names on places where graffiti is not wanted.

Not many candidates discussed the proposition that more people choose a profession because they want to make money rather than because they like it or because they want to do something worthwhile for society. The view that if you lived in the West it was acceptable to study something which was fun or good for society, but that if a person came from a poor background good job prospects were much more important, was widespread.

Description and Narration

Candidates who choose the descriptive tasks have to attempt to define and develop images and other sense impressions in order to evoke atmospheres and emotions in the reader. The focus in these compositions should therefore be on depiction, not storytelling.

Some exceptionally good descriptive essays were produced this year. In essays on the subject of a birthday some candidates talked about their own personal experience, whilst others described the feelings of other people.

In most cases, essays on the description of the first day of spring followed the suitable approach for this kind of writing. A majority wrote about a warm and pleasant experience, filled with flowers, picnics in the park, birds etc. One or two essays were rather too factual and dry in parts as they focused on events rather than the atmosphere on the day or the feelings spring inspired. A small number of candidates were ill-prepared for a task of this kind and wrote stories, using the chosen title only as a cue from which events unrelated to the topic unfolded.

In the narrative task, both subjects – the special book in the bookshop and how a dream can influence your day – were equally popular.

Narrative essays should seek to provide a complex and sophisticated account of a series of events, and candidates are encouraged to make appropriate use of narrative devices, such as flashbacks and time lapses. To obtain the best marks, the different parts of the story should be effectively sequenced and the climax carefully managed. The sentence sequences should be arranged to produce effects such as the building up of tension or providing a sudden turn of events. In other words, a straight story with only linking words as *'toen, en toen en daarna'* will likely not get full marks. An essay plan might help candidates to keep the climax till later in the story so that they do not feel obliged to find another one just before they stop writing.

Many essays on the special book turned out to be about the person themselves but the twists given by their authors were very interesting. Some candidates were able to build excitement by pacing their story effectively, while others tended to get lost in detail, with their stories either fizzling out towards the end or finishing abruptly.

Many successful essays on how a dream influenced the next day provided inspiration for some chilling stories with cunning twists and well-developed cliff-hangers. Good candidates were able to manage their storylines effectively, before bringing them to a suitable close within the word limit.