

# FIRST LANGUAGE DUTCH

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<p>Paper 0503/01 Reading</p>
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## Key messages

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.

## General comments

This year's texts were both on the best way for candidates to learn. The first text focused on the science behind learning and the mind-set required for students to be successful. The second text was anecdotal, and told of a father's experience and how he had dealt with his two children needing to study in the year of their final exams. Both texts were understood well by the majority of the candidates. Most candidates had no problems distinguishing between the different styles of the two texts, one a newspaper/magazine article focused on giving background information versus a blog in which the author is mainly concerned with relating his personal experience and his opinions. Many candidates picked up on the fact that, to a large part, the second text sought to amuse its readers. All candidates completed both questions and appeared very well prepared.

The language used by most candidates was of a high quality. Many had put in the effort of rephrasing the information provided in the texts in their own words, rather than lifting straight from the texts. This is good practice, as candidates are not always able to show how much of the text they have actually fully comprehended if they lift. Candidates who rely on lifting run the risk of not being awarded marks as the questions are formulated in such a way as to elicit a response that requires either rephrasing or paraphrasing. Candidates also stand to lose marks for Language when lifting, as they are unable to show they can use language productively. It is therefore essential that candidates practise paraphrasing texts as this will allow them to acquire and develop a varied vocabulary and versatile stylistic range.

As always, it is strongly recommended that candidates read the questions carefully to ensure their answers are fully relevant.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

This part of the exam was generally done well. All candidates managed to answer all of the questions, although not everyone picked up on the humorous tone in parts of the article.

- (a) This question did not cause many problems for most candidates.
- (b) Candidates had to understand the meaning of the word *ambitieux* and understand the slight irony of its use in the text. Many candidates managed very well.
- (c) The gist of what was said by Sanders was rephrased well by most candidates.
- (d) The question asked about the difference between a '*groeimindset*' and a '*vaste mindset*'. Most candidates understood the meaning of the first term, but the meaning of the expression '*vaste mindset*' was incorrectly construed by a small part of the candidature.

- (e) In this question candidates had to clarify what the author was doubtful about. The majority of the candidates did this very well.
- (f) In this question, which was worth three marks, candidates were asked to establish a connection between a *'groeimindset'* and an example of this given in the text. Although not everyone managed to gain full marks, most candidates scored at least one mark. The stronger candidates seemed to have no problems gaining full marks by giving a good explanation in their own words.
- (g) For this question the candidates needed to rephrase a comment made by the Minister of Education and explain the concept behind the phrase *'vaardig, aardig en waardig'*. Most candidates managed well.
- (h) This question was done well by most candidates.
- (i) Candidates experienced few problems with this question.
- (j) This question in particular revealed whether a candidate had really understood what the text was about. Candidates who lifted the answer from the text were unable to score as they had not made it clear (*leg uit*) what the author views were based on the information in the text.
- (k) Candidates had to explain the sentence *'Gewoon denken aan rijk worden, ja!'* in the light of the whole text to gain full marks. Most candidates were able to do so successfully, noticing the author's humorous intent behind the quote from one of the students mentioned in the article.

## Question 2

The summaries this year were done well. A number of candidates managed to obtain full marks for the content of their answer. If candidates are trained to go through the texts systematically, while keeping a few pointers in mind, they should be able to do well.

Candidates who introduced their essay with a summary of the similarities and then continued to compare the texts systematically usually did well, especially those candidates who also brought their summary to a suitable conclusion.

Successful comparisons also touched on the differences in point of view, text type and readership targeted. Some candidates discussed the style and language used in both texts very effectively. Comparing the number of words or paragraphs used in both texts did not gain marks as that did not address the question set.

A number of candidates showed excellent comprehension by establishing that both texts suggested that putting pressure on students is ultimately demotivating and inefficient.

As in previous years, it was good to see that many 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. This, combined with an effective use of paragraphs and a clear conclusion, helps to achieve good marks for style and organisation.

# FIRST LANGUAGE DUTCH

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Paper 0503/02  
Writing

## Key messages

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 level of writing of the majority of candidates was good this year. Most knew how to write an effective and relevant essay on two different topics. Generally, candidates wrote legibly. There were many interesting essays, although some candidates might have benefited from planning their response first to ensure they would not run out of time or stray from the topic. Both compositions should be at least 350 words and, again, planning and practise can help produce essays of the required length.

Candidates are awarded two sets of marks for each of their essays; the first mark is for style and accuracy and the second, depending on the type of essay, for the argumentative, descriptive or narrative content. Most candidates wrote effective and grammatically correct compositions. However, there were some who encountered problems implementing simple Dutch spelling rules. Although this did not often impede communication, such problems could easily have been avoided had the essays been checked for errors by the candidates before handing them in. Examples included: *wordt* in third person written without the 't' at the end, and, conversely, past tenses incorrectly written with a 't' after a 'd'; errors in the conjugation of simple irregular verbs; mixing up 'ei' and 'ij' in the spelling of words, such as *bijvoorbeeld* and *zei*; and words with *oe* being written with *ui* and vice versa. Another stumbling block was that Dutch compound words were often written as two separate words, instead of one word.

Candidates should be reminded of the need to write their essays in an appropriate style. The argumentative and discursive essays in *Deel 1* require an introduction and a conclusion. After writing a short and purposeful introduction, candidates should elaborate on the points raised therein and come to an appropriate conclusion at the end. Colloquial language should not be used and candidates should aim for a more formal tone in both style and word choice. The essay should develop logically and each stage in the argument should be properly linked to the next. Sentences within paragraphs should also be appropriately sequenced.

Different linguistic skills are tested in *Deel 2*. Candidates are given the choice between writing a descriptive and a narrative essay. Each task type demands a different approach. For the descriptive task, the candidate is required to present well-developed ideas and images and evoke a detailed sense of atmosphere.

A proper response to the narrative task should strive to be a complex and sophisticated composition in which sub-texts, flashbacks and time lapses are effectively handled. The different sections of the story should be carefully balanced and the climax appropriately managed. Sentences should be effectively arranged in order to produce narrative effects, such as the building up of tension or a sudden turn of events. Relying too much on linking words and phrases, such as *toen*, *en toen* and *en daarna*, inevitably detracts from the quality of the story. An essay plan will help candidates to introduce the narrative climax at an appropriately late point in their story.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### ***Deel 1: Discussie en betoog***

Candidates selected three topics equally, only a few candidates wrote whether 'to do lists' were really art. There were good and interesting argumentative and discursive essays. It was interesting to read what the candidates thought about voting for 16 and 17 year olds. There was no consensus; some candidates thought that they were old enough to vote and knew enough about the electoral system but equally other candidates argued they were far too young and had enough to think about without the stress of having to vote. The essays about emancipation were often passionate, well thought out and though most candidates thought that the world still had a long way to go, a lot of candidates thought that women had achieved quite a bit in some countries. The last topic asked whether it was a good idea to clone your favourite pet or whether it was better to give animals from a shelter a second chance. Most candidates who chose this essay thought it was better to give pets from a shelter a second chance as cloning still had its problems and a good outcome was not guaranteed.

#### ***Deel 2: Beschrijving en verhaal***

This year there were quite a few candidates who chose a descriptive topic and a lot of these essays were exceptionally well written; only a few showed little awareness of what was expected. Getting to the top of a mountain was, in many cases, described so vividly that the achievement was almost palatable. The descriptions of the school playground favourite were sometimes beautiful but it was difficult for some candidates to create an overall picture and not make small stories of what was happening in parts of the playground. The descriptions of leaving the classroom and going into the playground were often beautifully well contrasted with the pupils going back into the school.

Both narrative topics proved to be equally popular. There were some intriguing stories about grandfathers that could not be trusted, quite a few times the Second World War was covered. Some grandfathers dealt in drugs and weapons, but in most stories, they were grandfathers who were well liked. The shipwreck found in low tide produced a lot of stories in a warm climate, often with scuba diving. A lot of treasure, as well as skeletons, were found. Secret agents often played a part. It was impressive to see how well most candidates displayed their knowledge and usage of the Dutch language in these most intriguing stories.

It was a joy to read the interesting and inventive essays the candidates produced. Teachers are to be thanked for helping the candidates produce work of such high calibre.