

# FIRST LANGUAGE RUSSIAN

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Paper 0516/02

Reading and Directed Writing

## Comments on specific questions

### *Part 1*

#### **Question 1**

Many candidates performed well in the short summaries/comparison exercise, producing a coherent piece of writing in their own words and concentrating on the most relevant points. A number of candidates displayed a lack of skill in précis writing by giving an over-long version of the passages, copying whole sentences from the texts, stating their opinion of the texts or expressing their personal reflections on the issues raised in the texts. A few candidates failed to compare the passages despite the instructions explicitly requesting them to do so.

#### **Question 2**

Many candidates displayed considerable flair in this exercise, trying to bring the story to its logical conclusion, conveying the emotional state of the protagonist and employing stylistically appropriate language. The weaker answers consisted of sentences copied directly from the text. A few candidates had not taken into account the 19<sup>th</sup> century setting of the text and therefore introduced inappropriate attributes of modern lifestyle, modern behaviour and colloquial expressions.

### *Part 2*

#### **Question 3**

The response to this exercise was often imaginative and good use was made of the stimulus article. The best candidates demonstrated awareness of appropriate style, with the text of the promotional advertisement written in their own words and with a consistently relevant use of detail. A number of candidates copied phrases from the stimulus article despite the instructions requesting them not to do so.

Paper 0516/03

Continuous Writing

## General comments

All questions were attempted except for **Question 4**. The most popular were **Questions 7** and **8**. Many candidates displayed a good grasp of idiom and grammar and were able to put together a competently structured piece of writing with well-linked and developed ideas. In story writing, however, only a few candidates managed to demonstrate skilful handling of the narrative, effective use of descriptive devices and awareness of appropriate style. The essays in the top range were of high quality: sophisticated, with content, structure, range of vocabulary, style and grammatical accuracy sustained at a high level. The problems with the essays that were not in the top range were as follows:

- Failure to address the title adequately. Some candidates were unable to go beyond personal or specific examples, or were unable to discuss the broader implications in response to titles which introduced a broad theme.
- Inadequate structure. Some essays lacked an introduction and/or conclusion and therefore ideas and statements appeared to be introduced at random.

- Lack of a clearly defined plot in story writing. Candidates did not develop the story beyond a rudimentary plot.
- Style. Limited range of vocabulary, basic syntactical structures, lack of sensitivity to register (i.e. frequent use of colloquialisms).
- Grammatical mistakes. Various (including some basic errors, i.e. wrong prepositions and cases), but the most persistent mistake was incorrect use of the gerund.
- Punctuation. Absence of commas in complex sentences with subordinate clauses, in sentences with gerund and participle constructions, in compound sentences, in sentences with parenthetical words.
- Spelling. Faulty spelling marred a proportion of the essays.

A number of candidates produced work which was clearly derived from practised answers to questions from papers set in previous years. Candidates should be advised that those who merely reproduce 'prepared' essays, irrespective of the question or context, are unable to gain much credit.