

FIRST LANGUAGE RUSSIAN

Paper 0516/01
Reading

Key message

To do well in this paper, candidates should pay careful attention to the wording of each question and construct their answers solely on the basis of the texts.

In **Part 1**, candidates had to give short, straightforward answers to the questions, generally without lengthy comments, using their own words, where required.

In **Part 2**, candidates had to produce a summary in the format of a *comparative essay* extracting relevant information from both texts and avoiding retelling the texts or merely presenting citations.

General comments

Texts A and B were connected by the common theme of the Role of Scientists. The overall quality of the responses was good, with a slight increase in the number of very high marks awarded.

Comments on specific questions

Part 1

The majority of candidates gave responses of appropriate length and managed to avoid lifting from the text when their own wording was required. There was a strong correlation between the number of marks allocated to a question and the length of the response. Candidates were also able to respond appropriately to questions requiring interpretation of idiomatic expressions. Only the strongest candidates were confident when responding to questions asking for identification and naming of linguistic devices.

- (a) The majority of candidates made a brilliant start by converting the adjective *львиная* into the noun *лее*.
- (b) Almost all candidates answered this question correctly.
- (c) The majority of candidates were credited with at least one mark for naming either of the two characteristics of the machine, i.e. its extraordinary power allowing it to make unusually deep wells and the possibility of unlimited access to precious metals. Successful candidates based their responses on the statements given by the required character.
- (d) The key to success in answering this question was to pick up the professor's *first* reaction, i.e. doubt (or scepticism), which was done by many candidates.
- (e) (i) The majority of candidates had no difficulties in giving the correct answer – 'to make fuel for the machine'.
(ii) The majority of candidates described the relationship correctly as 'mistrust'. The fact that Garin did not show his machine to his business partner, as some candidates answered, was only an example of that.
- (f) The strongest candidates were awarded two marks as they were able to state Tyklinsky's injuries and also explain, without lifting from the text, why he got them, i.e. because of his attempt to secretly see Garin's machine.

(g) This question was challenging for many candidates. Weaker candidates stated Garin's general goals in life. Stronger candidates noticed that the question asked them to explain what Garin tried to achieve in the particular situation, when demonstrating his machine to the girl.

Successful candidates answered with Garin's attempt to explain how his machine worked, his description of its incredible power and possibilities for its owner, and, finally, his desire to charm/win the girl. Any renditions of these ideas were accepted.

(h) The majority of candidates had no difficulty in giving the correct answer: 'eye-witnessing the machine to kill eight people'.

(i) (i) and (ii) This question proved to be the most challenging one in this year's examination.

Both parts of the question, though related to each other, were assessed independently, i.e. the candidates were awarded if they either identified and named a linguistic device correctly, or gave correct example(s).

The expected stylistic device to be identified in that passage was a *contrast* – either between the idyllic peaceful life and the possible destructions caused by Garin's machine, or between the innocence of cavemen and cruelty and consumerism of contemporary people.

However, examiners accepted other linguistic devices found by candidates in that particular passage, i.e. metaphors, comparisons, epithets or hyperboles, providing correct examples of these were given.

(j) Candidates were awarded two marks if they paid attention to the wording of the question. They needed to find two instances of the description of the *setting* in the whole text, i.e. 'a cellar in the unpopulated house' and 'the window with drawn curtains'.

(k) (i) To be successful, candidates had to describe the position of a man on his *four* limbs.

(ii) Candidates needed to compare Zoya's benefits with the ones paid to God.

Language

The quality of language produced in **Question 1** was generally good. Top marks were awarded to those candidates who produced more complex structures with correct punctuation, a wider range of vocabulary and avoided lifting from the text where the citation was not required.

Question 2

Content

Candidates needed to compare the scientists' actions and speech from *both* texts. Overall, candidates were able to present a lot of relevant content in their responses.

The most successful candidates were those who avoided merely retelling the events or including their own speculations. They analysed the main characters, illustrating their points with relevant evidence from the texts to make their statements more convincing. Any citations need to be quoted directly from the texts rather than merely mentioned as line numbers. Some strong candidates, while still focusing mainly on the characters of Garin and Legasov, also included other characters. This was acceptable. In the best responses, candidates avoided repetition of answers already given for **Question 1**.

Candidates are advised to be careful in monitoring the length of their response as examiners cannot consider material in excess of the word limit.

Style, Organisation and Language

Candidates used either simultaneous or consecutive format for comparing the two texts. Both were appropriate. Some candidates wrote a plan, which was not considered in the marking, but may have helped them to structure their responses. Some stronger candidates achieved higher S&O marks by using proper paragraphing.

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A great number of candidates demonstrated quite a good level of linguistic competence. They produced rather complex syntax and a wide range of vocabulary, including various connectives and time markers. In order to do even better, they could demonstrate their knowledge of figurative language as well.

Spelling was generally good, but some weaker candidates could have paid more attention to punctuation.

FIRST LANGUAGE RUSSIAN

Paper 0516/02

Writing

Key messages

To do well on this paper, essays should be accurate, use a wide range of vocabulary and structures, be well organised and coherent, with well-developed ideas.

In **Section 1** discussion should be logical, consistent and may require complex arguments. In **Section 2** the Descriptive tasks need well-developed ideas and images, using vivid details. The Narrative tasks require a gripping opening, careful development and a well-thought-out ending.

General comments

Candidates should choose the essay titles best suited to their knowledge and powers of expression, and allocate their time equally between the two pieces of work. Writing out the task title and underlining key words helps candidates focus on the question being asked and avoid writing irrelevant material. Before writing the essay, candidates should spend time planning their essay to avoid repetition and achieve a logical structure.

Most candidates wrote 350–500 words for each composition and the compositions were divided up into paragraphs. Careful, logical argument focusing on the main points can result in an excellent answer without excessive length; very short answers affected their overall result for the paper. The best candidates carefully constructed their writing to ensure clarity of expression and fluency of style. They used a wide range of vocabulary that was clear and which conveyed exact meaning.

In Discussion/Argument many excellent responses contained well-developed paragraphs without repetition, supported by the use of appropriate connectives, with detailed, clearly structured, sequenced arguments on either side of the debate. They kept the title in their mind throughout their writing, using the beginning or the end of each paragraph to state how the content of this paragraph supported their arguments. Candidates should avoid informal or colloquial style in the essays; they also need to avoid describing personal matters but focus on the specific question asked.

Many successful responses in Description created some wonderful, imaginative, often heart-rending scenes, focusing attention on details, which reflected the emotions of the narrator. Some candidates needed to emphasise description rather than narrative.

Many excellent stories in Narrative were well structured, with a gripping beginning, a middle with key events of a plot, including characters and climax, and, importantly, an interesting ending. Others needed to plan their stories carefully, using straightforward narratives, character development and an effective ending.

The majority of candidates wrote in fluent, correct Russian; handled syntax and lexis very well; used appropriate, consistent, complex sentences, which were varied and sophisticated, with ambitious vocabulary.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Discussion and Argument

Candidates should carefully plan their essays to avoid repetition, long, irrelevant explanations and examples from their own experience and the experience of their relatives and friends. Discussion should include facts, reasons, explanations and some examples.

- (a) This was the most popular essay title. The best responses showed consistent analysis, a clear and sometimes sophisticated style, logical, relevant, complex arguments, linkage between the paragraphs and sequenced sentences within paragraphs.

The pro- statements argued that wild animals are in a safe environment managed by trained staff who can ensure the animals are looked after and can produce offspring; there are examples of successes in this respect, such as with pandas, which have been protected. People can see wild, beautiful, exotic animals; people can see how animals live and behave; animals have good living conditions in zoos with food and water; animals live as close to the natural habitat as possible; they have no chance of survival without the zoo.

The contrary views stated the point that keeping animals in zoos is harmful for them; the animals are forced to live in an unnatural habitat; there is not enough living space in the zoo which often makes animals unhappy and restless. As a result they live under stress and many animals have become extinct. It is also true that some animals do not breed in zoos. Animals which are used for human entertainment purposes deteriorate in their physical growth; sometimes many animals cannot cope with the cages. Moreover, many zoo authorities do not provide the necessary food, proper accommodation and suitable treatment which are all required for the survival and reproduction of animals.

Then followed the conclusion where candidates decided which side of the debate held the most weight for them.

- (b) This was also a popular choice. Many excellent essays were well developed, logical, gave strong complex arguments, demonstrated clear sequencing, linkage and used fluent and accurate language.

The pro- statements argued that as a mode of transport, cycling replaces sitting time spent driving a car with healthy exercise; riding a bike strengthens you physically and mentally with a good muscle workout, using all of the major muscle groups as you pedal. Unlike some other sports, cycling does not require high levels of physical skill; most people know how to ride a bike and, once you learn, you do not forget. It does not pollute; no fuel; it can save time; it saves money over driving a car. Also maintenance is cheap; easy parking; not stuck in traffic; it fits into most places and a bicycle is not heavy. You see more than when driving, by virtue of going slower. You see more than when walking, by virtue of going faster. It's fun and enjoyable; you view the environment freely.

On the other hand, candidates pointed out that using bicycles you are subject to the weather: hot, cold, wet, windy; bicycles have limited baggage capacity; you can not ride long distance, it's fair to say that there is a practical limit to how far you will travel; road obstacles; bicycles are easy to steal; prone to accidents and it takes some time to learn to ride. Motorists can be aggressive towards cyclists, so there is a risk of being shouted at, trash thrown, bumped, etc.

Generally candidates concluded that using the bicycle is without doubt a great option that contributes to saving money, combating pollution and traffic and is recommended as an exercise. That's why it's important to start forming a culture about its use and the changes would bring an impressive look to the city; bikes are more helpful to society than harmful.

- (c) The very best essays were extremely well argued and logically organised, and produced a unique and sophisticated analysis.

Candidates argued that a millionaire can be a hero when they donate money to victims of natural disasters, build villages and running water for people in need; make good medical treatment available; share their wealth with other people; encourage social service in the country, make a trust which will look after the welfare of orphans, help others to live better; provide financial help to the unemployed, etc.

On the other hand, some candidates thought that millionaires could be greedy and selfish; have earned money dishonestly; spend all the money on their whims; pump out oil, destroy forests; their manufacturing pollutes the atmosphere with waste, just to make a profit. They use money against people; exploit people, children; make money at any cost; think that with money they can buy everything; organize corruption and mafia, government bribery.

Candidates should avoid general conversation about cities and countries they visited, stories about the relatives they visited and other irrelevant information.

- (d) The best responses considered all aspects of the question in a relevant way and were supported with careful analysis.

The pro-statements argued that most students work part time to earn money to support their education, to gain a more free and satisfying life regarding finance; some really need money to help their family; use the money they earn to be able to buy according to their own wishes instead of depending on their parents' subsidy; to support their future career. When students work, they can practice theory they learned in class; this not only helps them to remember and comprehend lessons more deeply, but also creates inspiration in studying and know exactly what is important. Working part time brings a lot of confidence, opportunities to learn about responsibility, punctuality, cooperation – skills which are very necessary for working; there is no room for procrastination; this experience will help them in future jobs. They can learn the value of money; realize that it takes a lot of time and effort to make a living, and this experience will enrich them with the confidence to face the vicissitudes of life; make the wiser choices when buying things with the money they earned; money from their sweat.

The arguments against: study is affected by working part time; after working, they can feel tired and lack time to study; they can only think about money; the employer may cheat; there may be inadequate pay, exploitation of child labour.

Conclusions included the following thoughts: teenagers working while they are studying is not bad; this is good if you really know how to manage time when you have a careful preparation and choose suitable jobs for your future career; it is a valuable experience for teenagers to have jobs while they are studying because they will learn to be responsible adults; they will have an appreciation of money and they will learn about working with others.

In answering this question, candidates should avoid a long description of their personal issues in biographies of relatives and friends or famous people as this was not relevant to the question.

Section 2

Description and Narrative

- (a) There were many excellent responses that showed well-developed ideas and images, described feelings and thoughts, included appropriate, sophisticated, complex sentences used to achieve a particular effect and were written with accurate language.

The best candidates described the autumn with a lot of appropriate amazing details starting with the introduction, e.g.: it is not difficult to guess why they often say 'golden autumn': the leaves on the green trees are repainted in a variety of shades of gold; now, having pleased the eye with pure golden hues; the leaves suddenly begin to fall off quickly.

Then followed the description of the autumn, e.g.: yellow ochre, greenish brass and pale yellow; the gold fallen leaves rustle underfoot; lindens are dressed in golden attire; the leaves of oaks are slightly yellowish-brown, reminiscent of a slightly tarnished gold; very often maples also turn yellow,

you are surprised at such a fabulous beauty; it seems that you find yourself in a fairy tale, where there are so many bright golden colours around.

Typically, successful applicants compared their feelings with the description of nature, for example: the mood is a little sad from the fact that this beauty is so short-lived; many artists are especially fond of drawing the autumn landscapes; autumn fills me with inspiration of the magnificent landscape which can not leave anyone indifferent; this time of the year makes me feel that I am on the first day of September rushing to school; I have a desire to dig deeper in fallen leaves, to breathe in the smell of autumn; when you see how beautiful the forest is at this time, it would be desirable to freeze time momentarily, so that autumn will always be with me; I like autumn with flocks of birds that rush to the south; sometimes there are not enough words to convey all the autumn beauty, you just stand and stare with bated breath.

Candidates should be aware that this essay should focus on description, not storytelling or just writing about the beginning of the school year in September. The most common mistakes were repetition, lack of clarity, too long or too short length of writing, poor grammar and spelling, punctuation.

- (b) Candidates began their responses in different, engaging ways such as: 'Walking down the busy brick and cobblestone streets of a city, a melody plays in the distance.' 'The eight-meter inflatable Misha, who flew away into the evening sky to the sounds of a touching and slightly sentimental farewell song will forever be remembered.' 'The streets are decorated with colourful flags, garlands, lights, national symbols of the country.' 'First, the cards disappeared, all numbers, then jacks, queens, kings and aces, then the jewelry and objects, the street stand and at the end the magician himself. There was a note in my hands: 'Thanks for the help. Believe in a miracle!'

They gave descriptions of different street performers: street circus with singers, strongmen, clowns, a slim girl juggled with three burning sticks, tightrope walkers; street circus in Turkey with daggers, burning torches, national costumes, wood dog statue, smell; the ancient Slavs went to the field; etc.

The best candidates gave a range of details, for example: the street theatre had to attract the attention of passersby, hold them back in the noise of the city; from here – extravagant noise prologues, orchestra rumble, bright colours, giant dolls; props are enlarged, allegorical, natural, recognizable, etc.

The very best essays were extremely good in the description of feelings, for example: 'Thousands of people hear the music; however, in their busy lives, they ignore it. Occasionally, a person glances over and in either a combination of shock, ignorance or awe they start to make assumptions about the street musician.' 'The cries and laughter fall silent, and the faces become serious.' 'In my head rush the scenes for future paintings'. 'Slow music in the ears, taste of crabs in the mouth, I want to sleep'.

Candidates should be aware that this question asks them to describe a fun street performance and their feelings during attending it; the task can focus on description, not storytelling; candidates should avoid repetition.

- (c) Many candidates were able to produce content that had some originality, created tension, produced effects to engage a reader's attention, and provided necessary and appropriate details.

The sequencing of sentences provided clarity and engaged the reader in the events and atmosphere of the stories: 'There was a hot summer day. An orange sun hung forever over the beach. The beach was packed with holidaymakers. I was dozing off.' 'The world needs empathetic citizens and good communicators who can collaborate in a global environment. Our campaign will be the perfect platform for candidates to develop these skills. I hope we will succeed.' 'The house lights went out, it became dark and scary, but the boy found a way out: he knew he had to make his way to the garage.'

Candidates provided some convincing necessary details, for example: along the edge of the onshore waves a fragile female figure rushing waving her arms frantically and begging for help; though he had no formal training, the little boy did not hesitate before diving.

This example shows how candidates were able to invent details and events that could captivate the reader's attention: 'May 5, 2072. Alyosha found something incredible! It all started with the fact that

he was digging a big hole in the field and found sticks on which was written a USB flash drive. Then he dug out something else and quickly ran home.'

Most of the candidates managed to clearly identify the climax of their stories, for example: the head disappeared, then literally for a second appeared above the surface until it disappeared altogether; a month later, all the villagers had gadgets that Peter had made almost from waste; a friend took me to his area and showed me tons of plastic, from which all life on the coast perished, all sea animals and birds, and I understood what to do now; it turned out that he had been working on the bunker project for several years, anticipating that that I would be needed soon.

There were a lot of interesting endings to the essays, for example: 'Grandma said that long ago they called them BOOKS. Villagers started to read again.'

- (d) This was the most popular essay title in this section, and gave a wide range of performance from candidates.

The places and times were all different: country Lilliput; sunny Monday in Issyk-Kul; 16 October 1943, Leningrad; steamer 'Santa Clara' from America; biblical times, Judaea; St. Petersburg, the return of the warship 'Motherland'; river Don; cruise liner 'Crimea' in the Black Sea; London, shipyard, launching a new ship; ship sailing the Atlantic.

The best essays started the story with an intriguing beginning: 'On the shore everyone was expecting a holiday in the country Lilliput in honor of the 100th anniversary of the liberation from Griffingrad. 'In complete silence majestic ships with scarlet sails approach the shore.' 'We were waiting for the ship, which would take them away from an uninhabited island.'

Then they continued the story: 'But the griffins came again. They wanted to subdue the whole world.' 'No signs of trouble. The sea was calm, dolphins jumped up in the water and down again. Suddenly, a strong wind blew and a storm began, so strong, that nobody had seen before.' 'There are more and more Lanterns landing on the shore. And now the whole shore was lit with dots.' 'A crowd of young people met us. On this island, people do not age.'

The very best answers represented the characters through detail: 'The Sea was calm unlike those gathered on the shore.' 'The statue captured the gaze, strong-willed chin, decisive turn of the head.' 'It could be expected that the old experienced sea-wolf would be the captain of the battle ship. On the deck came a young man of a modest appearance. He quietly introduced himself: Sergei Ivanovich Lvov.', etc.

Candidates provided some convincing necessary details, for example: 'In the air hung despair like a heavy mist.' 'His (dolphin) skin was as smooth as satin, his powerful body was obedient to the owner.' 'The captain noticed a black spot on the laboratory assistant's coat, but did not attach any importance to this.'

Most of the candidates managed clearly to identify the climax to their stories, for example: 'I could barely stand on his back and the thought that this was the end clearly stood in my head.' 'From the dense fog floats the ghost ship.'

The climax was often the end of the story: 'Time froze. The sharp sword passed through the terrible griffin. It was the end. Black griffins fluttered and flew away forever.' 'I walked past St. Isaac's Cathedral. The city was asleep, not afraid of anyone. Calm and harmony. I'm going abroad, but I will remember and miss everything.'