



External Assessment Report 2013

Subject(s)	Classical Greek
Level(s)	Intermediate 2 and Higher

The statistics used in this report are pre-appeal.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers/lecturers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published question papers and marking instructions for the examination.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

At Intermediate 2, performances generally were of a good standard, with some very good Translations. In Interpretation, the general quality of responses was satisfactory, though knowledge of the text varied. At Higher, Interpretation was satisfactory, though some candidates did not consider the specific points of the question with enough care.

Some Translations at Higher level were done well, but some candidates did not analyse the structure of the sentences with sufficient care. There were some good responses in individual Interpretation questions, though candidates did not always respond with enough detailed information.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Interpretation

At Intermediate 2, those candidates who had a clear and extensive knowledge of the texts included full and frequent references from the texts to support their answers. They were able to justify their opinions fully.

At Higher level, the Homer scansion question was answered very well and, though there were some good essays in both sections, some candidates generalised overmuch, and gave insufficient supporting evidence.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Translation

At both Intermediate 2 and Higher levels, candidates found the translations demanding. They often did not analyse the structure of the sentences with enough care, resulting in a translation which could not be awarded full points. In particular, the Genitive Absolute construction, and the use of participles and of pronouns were areas which candidates found demanding.

In the extended response answers, candidates often were too general in their answers, and did not give sufficient evidence, or failed to give pros and cons. Some responses, eg in Higher Interpretation Q3a) of Section C, did not address the issue of 'To what extent ...' and this resulted in answers that were dominated by 'only male citizens having the vote'.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Intermediate

Interpretation

Candidates should have full knowledge of the texts. Answers need to be confined to the relevant lines, and to address the issue. The extended response question on Homer being a good storyteller required detailed information about how Homer told the story, not simply a repetition of the content of the story. In both extended responses, the use of quotations and references is required to show that the candidates can justify their opinions. Candidates must be able to identify the simile in question correctly.

Translation

Candidates need to use the word-list more carefully, and to consider the implications for accurate translation of the information given about a word. While exact replication of the Greek sentence structure is not essential in the English version, the translation must read well, and sentences need to make sense as complete sentences.

Higher

Interpretation

Candidates must consider the exact point of the question asked carefully: this is of particular consequence if there are two similar sections in Homer, since the escape plan has two parts (the use of the Cyclops's staff and the use of the rams) — candidates should ensure that they are discussing the correct part of the text.

In all answers, candidates should review the whole section as detailed in the question: the reason for stating relevant lines is to focus candidates' attention to the amount of detail required in the answer. Candidates should also note the number of marks available for an answer: vague and generalised answers will not receive full marks.

Translation

Candidates should attempt to produce a fluent and well-structured translation. While it is not necessary to replicate the Greek sentence structure, the English version must make sense as a piece of English: analysis of the use, for example, of participles will serve as a good starting point for the English version, and if candidates wish to restructure thereafter, they must ensure that the English reads fluently and makes coherent sense.

**Statistical information: update on Courses
Intermediate 2**

Number of resulted entries in 2012	15
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Number of resulted entries in 2013	17
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Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark 60				
A	70.6%	70.6%	12	42
B	29.4%	100.0%	5	36
C	0.0%	100.0%	0	30
D	0.0%	100.0%	0	27
No award	0.0%	100.0%	0	-

**Statistical information: update on Courses
Higher**

Number of resulted entries in 2012	8
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Number of resulted entries in 2013	8
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Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark 150				
A	50.0%	50.0%	4	105
B	25.0%	75.0%	2	90
C	25.0%	100.0%	2	75
D	0.0%	100.0%	0	67
No award	0.0%	100.0%	0	-

General commentary on grade boundaries

- ◆ While SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional A boundary), it is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.
- ◆ Each year, SQA therefore holds a grade boundary meeting for each subject at each level where it brings together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The Principal Assessor and SQA Qualifications Manager meet with the relevant SQA Business Manager and Statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. The meetings are chaired by members of the management team at SQA.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.
- ◆ An exam paper at a particular level in a subject in one year tends to have a marginally different set of grade boundaries from exam papers in that subject at that level in other years. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. If SQA has already altered a boundary in a particular year in, say, Higher Chemistry, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter boundaries in their prelim exam in Higher Chemistry. The two are not that closely related, as they do not contain identical questions.
- ◆ SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.