



External Assessment Report 2010

Subject	Classical Greek
Level	Intermediate 2, 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, it was evident that some candidates did not know the prescribed text in sufficient detail to gain the marks available. At Higher, Interpretation was well done, with Translation less well done. There were some good responses in individual Interpretation questions.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Intermediate 2 Translation was of a good standard, showing good grasp of Greek and some fluency in English. In Intermediate 2 Interpretation, there was good appreciation of the Cyclops episode. At Higher, the scansion question was well done in both Homer and Sophocles, and there were some good answers in the Homer.

Areas which candidates found demanding

There were no significant areas which candidates seemed to find demanding: good knowledge of the prescribed text and of the prescribed grammar was evident at both levels. In Intermediate 2 Interpretation, some candidates were vague on the details and strayed beyond the stated lines. Some candidates were not able to justify their opinions with sufficient clarity.

In Higher Interpretation, some candidates were not able, in Section C, Question 4 (b), to justify whether they did/did not think that human beings have changed very much in 2,500 years: there ought to have been some, even simple, statements to justify their opinion of human beings in Thucydides' time, and in our own time. Likewise, in Section B, Question 4 (a), candidates did not always realise that the question demanded more than a character sketch of Oedipus in order to score highly.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Intermediate 2 Interpretation

Centres should ensure that candidates are prepared to justify their opinions and to focus on the particular wording of the extended response question: general essays with insufficient details and justification are unlikely to score highly.

Intermediate 2 Translation

Centres should emphasise continued care with singular/plural distinction and with how to handle longer sentences. It should also be noted that good basic English sentence structure (for example, expressing a verb without a personal pronoun as a subject) is expected to allow for understanding of the essential idea.

Higher Interpretation

Candidates should ensure that they consider only the lines as stated in the question. Candidates should ensure that they consider the exact wording of the essay question, and should be careful that their essay does not become a generalised set of statements which are not of direct relevance to the question. While there may be scope to include some statement of a general nature, candidates should always relate these to the exact question being answered.

Higher Translation

Candidates should have sufficient knowledge of endings, tenses and persons to allow for good translation. In Plato, familiarity with indirect statements is often an important aspect of the type of passage set. Candidates should ensure that they are careful with singular/plural and with persons of the verbs. Continued care with the use of the word list is important. Candidates should also ensure that all words are translated, as omission of (apparently) insignificant words can lead to mistranslation and misunderstanding of the passage.

In Higher Greek Translation, a passage of Thucydides and a passage of Plato are set for translation: this reflects the choice of Interpretation author; while there is no constraint on candidates' choice of translation passage, it would be more likely that candidates translate the author with whose style they have become familiar through the Interpretation element. Such a choice is more likely to lead to success in translation, especially as there are particular aspects of the Plato which candidates must have experienced in order to be successful in translation.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Higher

Number of resulted entries in 2009	7
Number of resulted entries in 2010	5

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	20.0%	20.0%	1	105
B	60.0%	80.0%	3	90
C	20.0%	100.0%	1	75
D	0.0%	100.0%	0	67
No award	0.0%	100.0%	0	—

Statistical information: update on Courses

Intermediate 2

Number of resulted entries in 2009	6
Number of resulted entries in 2010	12

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	66.7%	66.7%	8	42
B	16.7%	83.3%	2	36
C	16.7%	100.0%	2	30
D	0.0%	100.0%	0	27
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, therefore, SQA 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 Head of Service 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.