



External Assessment Report 2010

Subject	Latin
Level	Standard Grade

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

Overall, candidates were very well prepared for the exam. Most displayed a good knowledge of the prescribed text and answered questions confidently, and in some cases quite passionately. Answers clearly demonstrated engagement with the literature, and it was very rare to find a question in the Interpretation papers omitted or partially answered.

In the Translation papers, there were some excellent responses, and nearly all candidates managed to finish the passages. Most candidates produced work of a very high quality for the Investigation element, showing impressive research, effective comparisons and interesting findings. Even weaker candidates had made an effort to meet the criteria, and nearly everyone seemed to have taken personal pride in their reports.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Interpretation

Foundation

Candidates found this to be a fair paper, and they clearly engaged with the texts. Question 5, asking if Ponticus would have been pleased to read poem 12, was a difficult question well done. Candidates found something valid to say for every question, and responded particularly well when asked for views about Catullus and Martial.

General

Question 1, on Gellius, was well answered, with thoughtful views expressed on whether or not Androclus deserved his punishment. Poems 9 and 10, which dealt with Roman pets, also elicited very good answers.

Credit

Many candidates scored highly, with answers showing careful consideration of the wider issues. Question 2, about Seneca's description of the crowd, was challenging but very well done. Question 5, worth five marks and asking candidates to consider three of Catullus' poems, had candidates very keen to show their knowledge and express their views. Question 4, on Martial's attitude to love, had candidates using modern comparisons to good effect. There was a marked improvement this year in the answers on the Ovid passage.

Translation

Foundation

Candidates engaged well with this story of the goats and the shepherd. They managed to handle the challenges of the use of direct speech, and many achieved very high scores.

General

There were some excellent responses. Candidates followed the storyline of the dishonest doctor well, and understood the twist at the end. They also coped with the various grammatical points in the passage.

Credit

Candidates persevered with this challenging passage about Alexander the Great and were, at times, able to recover marks at the end. Indeed, a large number of candidates achieved full marks for the last paragraph. They coped well with the ablative absolute.

Investigation

The standard overall was high. It is gratifying to see some unusual topics particularly well done, eg Roman oratory, care of bees in Roman times, Roman triumphal dress, and an analysis of the prefecture of Sejanus. Some candidates were very skilled at making appropriate comparisons and personal comments.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Interpretation

Foundation

Question 1 (b), about the meaning of 'the big unbroken ruthless sleep', caused difficulties for some candidates. Question 3, about Martial's love life, also had some candidates confused.

General

Question 2 (b), asking for views on who told the better story, Gellius or Augustine, was poorly done. Question 4 (c), asking candidates if they would want a pet dog like Issa, produced very superficial answers, with no references to the text. Question 5 (a), asking for a description of the transformation process as told by Ovid, had candidates answering beyond the line references.

Credit

Question 1, on the content of the Gellius passage, had candidates ignoring the line references. Question 2 (b), asking about the conversation between Seneca and a spectator, caused some confusion, with some candidates not understanding the point Seneca was making.

Translation

Foundation

There were no difficulties identified.

General

Candidates lost marks because they were unable to identify the singular and plural of nouns and the tenses of verbs. Even those who achieved quite high marks made mistakes of this type.

Credit

Some candidates did not know whether “catapult”, in the context used, was a noun or a verb. Others copied out the infinitives straight into their translation, eg *miserunt* = ‘they were to send’, *duxerunt* = ‘they were to lead’. There was some confusion over *milia* and *milites*.

Investigation

Although there were a few notable exceptions, some found that biographical topics continue to prove difficult, particularly in the areas of comparison and evaluation, and most of these were mainly or entirely narrative. Others chose topics that were too wide-ranging, eg ‘Rome — its rise and fall’, or ‘Roman Britain’.

Some candidates did not know how to set out their bibliography, and others were confused between primary and secondary sources. A considerable number of candidates could not produce a report within the 1200-word limit and were penalised for this.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Interpretation

- ◆ Candidates need to restrict their answers to the line references as directed by the question.
- ◆ Candidates must refer to the text in their answer if the question asks for this. Vague generalities will not gain marks.
- ◆ Candidates need to know the content of specific lines, in addition to knowledge of the passages as a whole.
- ◆ Some candidates had problems with understanding the English of the prescribed texts which are studied in Translation, and assistance should be given to them to help with this.

Translation

- ◆ Candidates should be able to identify singular and plural nouns, as well as tenses, correctly.
- ◆ Candidates should not copy out the linking English sections.
- ◆ Candidates should use the punctuation in the Latin passages to guide their English versions.

Investigation

- ◆ Candidates should ensure that the number of words cited is accurate.
- ◆ Centres should be familiar with the Investigation guidelines issued by SQA, as well as the marking scheme to be used by markers.

- ◆ Captions need to be brief; if not, they should be included in the final word count.
- ◆ Centres should encourage candidates to select topics which lend themselves to comparison and personal response. Otherwise, they will be disadvantaged. Topics must not be too wide-ranging.
- ◆ Pictures included merely for decorative purposes should be discouraged. (Pictures used as primary sources are, of course, acceptable.)
- ◆ Candidates increasingly on internet sources. While the internet is a useful source, candidates need to specify which websites they consulted, rather than simply listing 'Google' or 'Wikipedia'.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2009	468
Number of resulted entries in 2010	397

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of overall awards

Grade 1	57.7%
Grade 2	26.7%
Grade 3	9.1%
Grade 4	3.5%
Grade 5	2.0%
Grade 6	0.3%
Grade 7	0.3%
No award	0.5%

Grade boundaries for each assessable element in the subject included in the report

Assessable Element	Credit Max Mark	Grade Boundaries		General Max Mark	Grade Boundaries		Foundation Max Mark	Grade Boundaries	
		1	2		3	4		5	6
I	25	17	12	25	15	12	20	14	10
T	50	36	25	50	32	25	50	34	25