



## External Assessment Report 2013

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

## Interpretation

Candidates were particularly impressive in their performance this year. Many engaged fully with the prescribed texts and provided articulate, detailed, and precise responses. Candidates seem to have been presented at the right level, and those at the lower end of Credit level gained top-end General marks. Questions requiring analysis of literary style/technique provided the clearest differentiation between General and Credit candidates. English and spelling were of a high standard and some candidates' knowledge of literary terms was also impressive.

## Translation

Candidates performed well in this element. Their use of English, spelling and punctuation was good. Candidates did not give up on the paper, even when they encountered problems, which is to be commended. Some started poorly but picked up marks later on and still managed to achieve satisfactory results. Several showed good attempts to translate according to English idiom.

## Investigation

As usual, there was a mixture of familiar topics (eg gladiators, the army, fashion, slavery) along with the more obscure topics eg Messalina, Augustus, Roman propaganda, Cult of Isis and Farming. However, this year there was a significant minority of candidates whose investigations seemed to be very scholarly, but they failed to engage with the topic, making little or no attempt to offer opinion, evaluation or comparison, which resulted in loss of marks. All investigations had been typed.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

### Interpretation

- ◆ 'F' questions 4 and 5 on Martial were particularly well done.
- ◆ 'G' question 1d) produced some very imaginative answers and candidates were keen to give their views on Androclus's former master's reaction.
- ◆ 'G' question 9 on the sparrow was well done, as candidates do seem to enjoy writing about animals.
- ◆ 'G' question 5a) and b) on Ovid often resulted in the candidates getting full marks.
- ◆ 'C' question 3b) on Catullus and his emotions was very well done, and marks were awarded for development of points.
- ◆ 'C' question 4 on Martial had candidates thinking hard and engaging with the text very successfully.

### Translation

- ◆ The 'F' passage was well done by all who sat it.
- ◆ The 'G' passage had some direct speech which can be challenging but candidates managed it very well.

- ◆ The 'C' passage had a complicated storyline which candidates managed to follow very well.
- ◆ The pluperfect verbs in the 'C' passage *audiverant* (line 11) and *promiserat* (line 12) were well done.

## Areas which candidates found demanding

### Interpretation

- ◆ 'F' questions 1, 2 and 3 caused some confusion and elicited vague responses. Possibly candidates did not always recognise which Catullus poem was which.
- ◆ 'G' question 2a) was challenging, but any paraphrasing of the text was accepted by the markers.
- ◆ 'C' question 2a) had candidates confused over the morning, midday and afternoon shows.
- ◆ 'C' question 2b) was well done by only a small minority. Candidates could identify examples of skilful use of language, but few could explain why the reader might have been impressed.

### Translation

- ◆ In the 'G' passage, there was confusion over *habeo* and *habito*.
- ◆ In the 'G' passage, the plurals *artes* and *verba* were often not spotted.
- ◆ In the 'C' passage, there was confusion over *se* and *si*; *mora* and *minor*; *mora* and *mors*; *habeo* and *habito*; and *discere* and *dicere*.
- ◆ In the 'C' passage, three perfect passives in a row in lines 3 and 4 were found to be difficult for some candidates, but because of 'repeated error', these candidates were not penalised if they lost the thread of the story at this point.
- ◆ In the 'C' passage, some found *a quo* (line 2) and *nullo modo* (lines 6–7) very tricky.

### Investigation

- ◆ Candidates choosing biographical subjects found comparison difficult and in many cases it appeared forced.
- ◆ Over-reliance on American websites resulted in some candidates comparing Roman topics with American eg the Roman class system with the modern American; Roman schools with American schools. Although candidates did get the marks for comparison, it is disappointing that they did not make comparisons with their own experiences.
- ◆ Some candidates had only used websites and no books at all, which, although acceptable, did result in their investigations being reliant on some weaker sources.
- ◆ Primary sources inserted at random without any comment could not get full marks.
- ◆ Candidates who listed (overlong) bibliographies of books which they had clearly not used, could not get full marks.
- ◆ Lack of proof-reading by some candidates resulted in some strange mis-spellings eg 'Vigyl' (Virgil), 'Gaivi Grucus' (Gaius Gracchus), 'Orator Franto' (Cornelius Fronto?), 'died' (dyed) and 'roam' (Rome).

## **Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates**

- ◆ Candidates need to be familiar with the content of specific line references, to answer the questions on prescribed texts which expect detailed knowledge of particular lines. They should not stray beyond the line references in their responses.
- ◆ The English sections of the prescribed texts need to be as thoroughly prepared as the Latin sections.
- ◆ When answering questions on the prescribed texts, candidates should show they understand the meaning of any Latin they write down.
- ◆ Candidates need to use the word-lists carefully and try to locate each word accurately. If the meaning does not seem to fit, they should re-check the word-list, rather than trying to make the wrong meaning fit.

**Statistical information: update on Courses**

**STANDARD GRADE**

<b>Number of resulted entries in 2012</b>	411
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<b>Number of resulted entries in 2013</b>	352
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**Statistical Information: Performance of candidates**

**Distribution of overall awards**

Grade 1	74.1%
Grade 2	18.2%
Grade 3	5.7%
Grade 4	1.7%
Grade 5	0.0%
Grade 6	0.0%
Grade 7	0.0%
No award	0.3%

**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	26	18	13	32	24	17	33	23	10
T	25	17	12	26	17	10	27	18	25

## 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.