



Course report 2019

Subject	Latin
Level	National 5

This report provides information on candidates' performance. Teachers, lecturers and assessors may find it useful when preparing candidates for future assessment. The report 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 assessment documents and marking instructions.

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any post-results services.

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Question paper 1: Literary appreciation

Each section, worth 30 marks, included:

- ◆ a range of questions worth a range of marks
- ◆ questions on Roman culture and literary techniques
- ◆ at least twice, questions testing skills of analysis, argument and evaluation
- ◆ discriminating questions designed to stretch the more able candidates
- ◆ sampling of all skills

The different sections were of comparable standard, covering all parts of the course.

An 'A' candidate is expected to give full answers to most of these questions.

A 'C' candidate is expected to gain half the available marks for these questions.

All questions are designed to be accessible to all candidates.

The questions were designed to give candidates the opportunity to display what they have learned and to share their own views.

All authors were attempted, with the most popular being Catullus, Ovid and Pliny. However, there seemed to be more candidates choosing Virgil as an option this year.

Question paper 2: Translating

The passage entitled 'The invention of the panpipes' was adapted from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* I. The question paper sampled a wide range of prescribed accidence and syntax, including:

- ◆ verbs: regular and irregular, present, perfect, imperfect and pluperfect tenses, imperative, present participle and infinitives, indicative and subjunctive moods
- ◆ nouns: all five cases, singular and plural
- ◆ agreement of adjectives
- ◆ superlative adjectives
- ◆ relative pronouns
- ◆ direct speech

There were some embedded clauses, along with challenging word order in some blocks. The storyline would have been unfamiliar to candidates.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas where candidates performed well

Question paper 1: Literary appreciation

Candidates found all parts of the paper accessible and produced wide-ranging and imaginative responses. Many showed excellent engagement with their learning. There was frequent evidence of candidates being enthused by the texts they had been studying, and most were clearly very well prepared.

In the Virgil and Ovid sections, candidates engaged particularly well with the narrative, while in the Catullus and Pliny sections, many were able to give detailed answers to the language questions and were able to identify key literary techniques.

Candidates managed their time well and nearly all of them answered all the questions. They generally answered both of their chosen sections equally well. Some produced highly sophisticated responses.

All questions were marked positively. When candidates took an unexpected approach, if valid, they still gained marks. Many answers showed insight and independent thought.

The culture questions gave candidates a chance to show their wider knowledge, which they clearly enjoyed.

Section 1 — Catullus

Question 1(b): this question elicited a variety of answers reflecting independent thinking, positive engagement and an eagerness to share personal views. References to other poems and/or background knowledge were acceptable, though not required.

Question 2: many candidates were able to achieve 4 marks with close analysis of the contrast between Catullus and ‘that man’.

Question 6: this culture question was very well done, with many responses gaining the full 4 marks. Comparisons with today’s world also gained marks.

Section 2 — Ovid

Question 8: candidates were able to explain how Minos was challenged in very imaginative responses.

Question 13: the responses to this question were particularly wide-ranging and creative.

Question 15(b): candidates attempted this question on Talus in many different ways, depending on the angle from which they chose to approach it. All approaches were equally valid.

Section 3 — Virgil

Question 19: this question on ‘trickery’ and ‘fate’ was well done and candidates gained marks if they spoke about the text in detail or in more general terms.

Question 20: this language question was very well done and showed independent thought.

Section 4 — Pliny

Question 25: some candidates answered this question in general terms, while others identified and analysed literary techniques used. Both approaches were valid and well done.

Question 32: this culture question on Roman leisure and tourism was particularly well answered, with lots of valid observations and comments.

Section 5 — Cicero

Question 34: candidates did well with this question, as they could identify that the keywords in the question were ‘particularly surprising’.

Question 37(a): candidates did as the question asked. They discussed Verres’ character based on what he does, rather than just respond in general terms.

Question 38: clearly candidates were aware of the importance of Gaius Marcellus within the context of this story and some even supplied extra information about him outwith the story.

Question 39: this language question was well done and many responses went beyond the 4 marks available.

Question paper 2: Translating

Nearly all candidates were able to complete the paper in the given time. They followed the story well and, on the whole, accounted for each word in the translation. In most cases, candidates used the English rubric and the wordlist effectively to aid an accurate translation.

The passage tested the most able candidates on the detail of the grammar, while the strong storyline encouraged the less secure translators to do their best to make sense of the narrative.

Several candidates had the confidence to insert some extra features to improve the fluency of a sentence, and there were some very clearly and carefully presented scripts. Also notable was the way in which some candidates successfully picked up the thread of the story after making a mistake or two.

It was reassuring to see very little omission of definite and indefinite articles, which are vital for rendering good English sense.

Many candidates spotted both superlative adjectives *formosissima* and *dulcissimos* in the passage.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Question paper 1: Literary appreciation

Section 1 — Catullus

Question 4: candidates tended to stray beyond the line references given and seemed to lack knowledge of the lines in detail.

Question 5(a) and (b): candidates were keen to identify evidence of the friendship between Catullus and Fabullus, rather than to answer the questions asked.

Question 5(d): some candidates did not appear to be familiar with the command word 'identify'.

Section 2 — Ovid

Question 9(b): many candidates did not do this question well, with some repeating their answer for question 9(a).

Question 14(b): candidates' responses often strayed beyond the line references, and these responses could not gain marks.

Section 3 — Virgil

Question 17: candidates found it difficult to gain the third mark for this 3-mark question.

Question 22: despite this 3-mark question being on an English extract, many candidates did not manage to gain the third mark because they based most of their answer on text beyond the line references.

Question 23: candidates tended to concentrate more on negative impressions of the Greeks rather than consider any positive traits the Greeks might have displayed in the text.

Question 24: to gain the 4 marks available for this question, candidates needed to pay attention to the command word 'explain'. Some candidates gave a list of four random features, which could not gain 4 marks. They also need to give an explanation for each.

Section 4 — Pliny

Question 26: candidates found it difficult to display their understanding of Roman writing equipment. However, if they said a lamp was writing equipment they could gain a mark because a writer needed light for writing.

Question 27(a) and (b): candidates tended to concentrate on Athenodorus' behaviour in the story rather than interpret these questions in a more general way, which was the intention of these questions.

Question 31: not many candidates gained the full 2 marks for this question because they tended to refer to parts of the later narrative.

Section 5 — Cicero

Question 36(a): there was some confusion about what Verres' men actually did in the temple.

Question 37(a): some candidates could not offer suggestions as to why the Senate gave Sopater no answer, although this was a key part of the narrative and it was in English.

Question 40: although some candidates did manage to gain the full 4 marks, they expressed their responses in negative rather than positive terms. When considering how a Roman governor should have behaved, they tended to reply, for example 'he should not have tied a naked person to a bronze statue', or 'he should not have stolen statues', referring to the Verres story rather than make general comments. However, they still gained the marks.

Question paper 2: Translating

Sometimes similar words in the wordlist confused candidates, for example:

- ◆ *adiuvo, audio, aufugio*
- ◆ *tamen, tandem*
- ◆ *calamus, clamo*
- ◆ *statim, sto*

Candidates sometimes missed singulars and plurals, resulting in a loss of marks. Failure to recognise correct case endings resulted in mistranslation and a confused storyline.

Candidates generally did not spot neuter plurals, for example *verba*, and *labra*.

Some candidates were vague about their knowledge of cases, for example *in + accusative* and *in + ablative*, both of which featured in the passage. Often, candidates did not properly identify these.

Some candidates had problems with the English plural of 'goddess'. Some thought 'goddes' (*sic*) was singular and so the plural had to be 'goddess'. A considerable number of candidates did not know the English word 'reed'.

Blocks 4, 5, 10, 12 and 20 were the most demanding for candidates.

The last sentence in paragraph one (block 8) *ego te valde amo* was sometimes omitted.

Section 3: Preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper 1: Literary appreciation

Centres should ensure candidates:

- ◆ read each question carefully, in order to identify what, in particular, is being asked of them
- ◆ are familiar with the command words
- ◆ expect questions on literary techniques and on Roman culture
- ◆ do not stray beyond the line references given in the questions
- ◆ are aware that although bullet point answers are acceptable, they still need to be expanded — single word bullet point answers are normally not sufficient to demonstrate their knowledge
- ◆ restrict the length of their responses to match the available marks— writing for two pages on a question worth 2 marks is not a good use of time
- ◆ are aware to gain marks in high value questions they can answer both ‘yes’ and ‘no’ and all valid points will gain marks

Question paper 2: Translating

If time allows, centres should encourage candidates to check that they have not omitted any small words.

Candidates need to apply the rules of grammar to the words in the passage, for example:

- ◆ looking at the singular and plural noun endings and check if these match the singular or plural verb endings
- ◆ checking the agreement of adjectives
- ◆ looking out for superlative adjectival endings

Candidates should read the wordlist and English links carefully. The wordlist is not a dictionary, and the English meaning supplied is the appropriate one for the specific context of the word.

Candidates should always supply a subject for every verb, for example *cantabat* ‘he played’, and when they have identified the subject of the sentence they should stick with their decision.

Candidates should not put an active sentence into the passive voice.

Candidates need to be aware that being careful and accurate, and showing application of their knowledge of accidence and syntax will always gain marks.

Grade boundary and statistical information:

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2018	390
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Number of resulted entries in 2019	376
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Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of course awards	Percentage	Cumulative %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum mark				
A	84.6%	84.6%	318	70
B	9.6%	94.1%	36	60
C	2.1%	96.3%	8	50
D	2.9%	99.2%	11	40
No award	0.8%	-	3	-

General commentary on grade boundaries

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.

SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions that allow:

- ◆ a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary)
- ◆ 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.

Therefore, SQA holds a grade boundary meeting every year for each subject at each level to bring 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. Members of the SQA management team chair these meetings. SQA can adjust the grade boundaries as a result of the meetings. This allows the pass rate to be unaffected in circumstances where there is evidence that the question paper has been more, or less, challenging than usual.

- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the question paper is more challenging than usual.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual.
- ◆ Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

Grade boundaries from question papers in the same subject at the same level tend to be marginally different year to year. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for question papers set by centres. If SQA alters a boundary, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter their boundary in the question papers that they set themselves.