



Course Report 2018

Subject	Latin
Level	Higher

This report provides information on the performance of candidates. 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

Summary of the course assessment

Component 1 — question paper: Literary Appreciation

This question paper performed as expected. Feedback from markers and centres suggested that the questions were well balanced across authors and skills. This suggested that candidates who had prepared properly for the assessment had engaged well with the questions and performed to a very high standard. Performance of candidates was consistent across all authors. In the vast majority of cases, candidates displayed a high level of interest and engagement. The grade boundary was set at the notional figure.

Component 2 — question paper: Translating

This question paper performed to national standard and the grade boundary was set at the notional figure. There was a full range of marks achieved, but the majority of candidates scored in the upper ranges, consistent with what appears to be a strong and well-prepared group. The paper was of an appropriate level for Higher and provided sufficient challenge for all candidates.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1 — question paper: Literary Appreciation

The extended-response questions 7, 15, 22, 29 and 35 were particularly well handled, with candidates displaying a high level of confidence and knowledge. The extended-response questions allowed candidates across the ability range to demonstrate not just their knowledge and skills but also their engagement with the texts. The 'culture' questions 6, 10, 16, 23 and 31, were generally handled well, with candidates supplying information from their own knowledge as well as from the text.

Component 2 — question paper: Translating

Overall, candidates performed well in most blocks of the translation, which appeared to be accessible and of an appropriate standard. Most candidates handled tenses, singular and plural nouns and verbs, and the integration of subordinate clauses into a fluent sentence construction. The overall standard of English grammar and style was very good.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1 — question paper: Literary Appreciation

A minority of candidates experienced difficulty in question 19, where their misinterpretation of the word 'dramatic' was too vague. In question 29, the contrast between 'praiseworthy' and 'foolish' was perhaps unsuitable, and the question could have used other words. Some

candidates interpreted the word 'what' in question 31 as applying to the pirates rather than their plunder. A small minority attempted to use prepared responses for the 8 mark questions, where the connection of the prepared response with the question was very weak.

Component 2 — question paper: Translating

It was felt in retrospect, and expressed in feedback from centres, that the glossing of the phrase *in homines* could have been given as a straightforward vocabulary item. A minority of candidates missed the comparative adjective endings in line 9. There was a need for more accuracy in applying noun and adjective endings, in blocks 2, 12 and 17. Occasionally, candidates did not read the wordlist with sufficient care, confusing *venia*, *venenum*, and *veneficium*. The structure of block 7, explaining the reason for the woman's crime, proved challenging to a number of candidates.

Section 3: advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1 — question paper: Literary Appreciation

Overall, candidates were extremely well-prepared and showed confidence and keenness. In the vast majority of cases, candidates were well-prepared for the assessment and familiar with the texts, enabling them to engage creatively and confidently with the question paper. This thoroughness in preparation is to be commended, and can be developed by encouraging debate around the values and literary techniques encountered in the texts.

Some candidates continued to repeat the question in their responses, which although motivated by a desire for clarity, is unnecessary. Centres are recommended to practise the detailed reading of past-paper questions with candidates, in order to ensure that they are clear about the meaning of command words, and are practised in gaining a thorough grasp of the expectations in questions. Prepared responses to 8 mark extended-response questions were occasionally encountered. This approach should be discouraged as it is unlikely that the prepared response will satisfactorily fit with the question being asked.

Component 2 — question paper: Translating

Most candidates were very well prepared for the translating question paper, resulting in strong performances for the majority.

However, some issues would be worth considering in preparing for future assessments:

- ◆ careful use of the wordlist should be encouraged, for example some candidates confused *venia*, *venenum* and *veneficium*
- ◆ checking and recognising comparative adjective forms would have gained additional marks for a number of candidates
- ◆ candidates should recognise that the vocabulary meaning of a word is only one part of the translation process, and that the syntax and accidence form a vital part of it. Very few candidates omitted blocks
- ◆ attention to ensuring that all words and clauses are accounted for is commended. Marks were given for fluent clause linkage where the first clause was a participle, for example in blocks 4 and 15

Grade boundary and statistical information:

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2017	286
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Number of resulted entries in 2018	226
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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	76.1%	76.1%	172	70
B	11.5%	87.6%	26	60
C	7.1%	94.7%	16	50
D	2.2%	96.9%	5	45
No award	3.1%	-	7	-

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 which 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.

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 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.

Grade boundaries from exam 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 exams set by centres. If SQA alters a boundary, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter their boundary in the corresponding practice exam paper.