



Course Report 2015

Subject	Latin
Level	National 5

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any Post Results Services.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers, lecturers and assessors 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 assessment and marking instructions for the examination.

Section 1: Comments on the Assessment

Component 1: Question paper – Literary Appreciation

Candidates are required to choose any two sections from five (Catullus, Ovid, Virgil, Pliny Cicero) and answer questions on these prescribed authors. Both the questions and the answers are in English. Each section is worth 15 marks, and this component is worth 30 marks in total, which gives equal weighting with Component 2. The allotted time is one hour.

In each section, questions assess the same skills: identifying and explaining main ideas and themes, identifying and explaining literary techniques, communicating appropriate critical responses, and identifying and explaining aspects of Roman culture.

Component 2: Question paper – Translating

Candidates are required to translate a passage of Latin of approximately 120 words into English, with the support of a specific word-list. The passage can be taken from any Latin prose author. This component is worth 30 marks and the allotted time is one hour.

For marking purposes, every passage is divided into fifteen blocks and each block is worth 2 marks. If candidates translate the block correctly or almost correctly, they are awarded two marks for the block. If they translate only the essential idea correctly, they are awarded one mark. If they do not translate the essential idea, they get 0 marks.

A block review is also used at the marking stage. This means that '+1' is available, if it is felt that a candidate deserves more than 0 for a specific block, even if he/she has not translated the essential idea correctly; '-1' is also available, if a candidate has translated the essential idea, but it makes no sense within the context and it is clear that the candidate has not been following the sense of the block.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Component 1: Question Paper – Literary Appreciation

The overall performance was very good, with the great majority scoring over half marks. Candidates had been well prepared by centres, and they clearly enjoyed responding to the wide range of questions, often developing answers well beyond the marks available. Some responses were particularly passionate and heartfelt.

It was not uncommon to find candidates with sophisticated knowledge of Roman culture, politics and religion, and some very articulate answers were given in response to the culture questions.

Most were able to combine their knowledge of the texts, Roman culture and their own views successfully.

All five sections were attempted, with Catullus, Pliny and Ovid proving the most popular.

Component 2: Question Paper – Translating

The vast majority of candidates coped well with this year's passage, 'The Unhappy Comedian'. They grasped the sense of most of the story, and wrote sensible and fluent responses. They applied the word-list properly and, with the exception of only one candidate, they all completed the passage within the allotted time of one hour.

The spread of marks suggests that the level of challenge in this paper was well pitched.

The deponent verbs in the passage should have been glossed in the word-list, as candidates are not required to know these at this level. However, most candidates had no problem translating them and for the few who did find it difficult, they were not penalised at the marking stage, so no-one was disadvantaged.

Section 3: Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: Question paper – Literary Appreciation

Section 1 – Catullus

Q3: There were good, imaginative answers to this question explaining the special relationship between Catullus and Fabullus.

Section 2 – Ovid

Q5: This question was answered well with many articulate answers on the making of the wings, discussing Daedalus' creativity and how his standard of workmanship matched nature.

Q6: Most candidates covered all three details well.

Q8: This culture question on the Roman sense of right and wrong was very well done. Candidates wrote at length on various aspects of wrong doing within the whole myth. Some also gave imaginative answers about *hubris*.

Section 3 – Virgil

Q9: This question was answered well.

Q11 (b): Candidates made good attempts at a tricky question and although the response needed development for the second mark, many did this successfully.

Q13: The culture question elicited excellent responses, including impressive awareness of the Roman political situation, Augustus, Roman propaganda and Roman religion.

Section 4 – Pliny

Q17: This question provoked a lot of passionate answers, with some candidates supporting animal rights, while others argued that economic considerations were more important.

Section 5 – Cicero

Q18, 19 and 20 were all well handled, with fully developed responses.

Q22: This culture question on Roman statues was also very well done, with candidates giving lots of ideas on this aspect of Roman culture.

Component 2: Question paper – Translating

An encouraging number of candidates produced flawless versions, in which tenses, verb-endings, superlative adjectives and singular/plural forms were carefully observed. There was evidence in many versions of close attention to the detail of grammar.

Ablative absolutes were also well done.

Section 4: Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Question paper – Literary Appreciation

Section 1 – Catullus

Q1(b): Many candidates discussed positive feelings instead of negative, missing the point of the question and the poem.

Q2(a): Responses were in general too simplistic and/or too rambling. Most found it difficult to get the second mark.

Q4: Although asked to consider Roman attitudes to women, many ignored ‘attitudes’ and instead wrote in general terms about Roman women.

Section 2 – Ovid

Q7(a) Many did not manage to get the second mark, as they did not develop their answers beyond a simple statement.

Section 3 – Virgil

Q10: There was some confusion over Tenedos and its part in the overall story.

Q12: Some candidates strayed beyond the specified lines in their responses.

Section 4 – Pliny

Q14: Although the question dealt with the ghost’s arrival, some candidates included irrelevant details about the ghost’s physical appearance.

Q15: Some discussed Roman burials and funerals, although the question asked about Roman beliefs concerning ghosts and the supernatural.

Q16(b): Some candidates were confused over the interactions between the boy and the dolphin, while others strayed beyond the specified lines.

There seemed to be a tendency for candidates who answered this section to be stronger on one of the two stories, rather than be equally familiar with both.

Section 5 - Cicero

In this section none of the questions caused candidates any difficulty.

Component 2: Question paper — Translating

Some candidates had problems with the pronouns *ille*, *ei* and *eum*, and the verbs *ibat* and *appropinquante*.

There was a tendency to add superfluous words eg 'would' and 'could' for no reason, as well as omitting other words.

There was also some evidence of candidates doing too much changing and re-drafting and, as a result, initial correct translations were subsequently written wrongly. While it is wise to re-draft the piece once it has been finished, to do so twice may move the candidate's piece too far away from the original.

Blocks 12 – 14 tested a number of candidates, even some of the stronger ones. In Block 12, many had Roscius persuading the doctor, instead of the other way round. Block 13 (*'ille Roscius iocosus est'*) had many candidates wrongly using the vocative eg 'That's funny, Roscius' instead of 'That Roscius is funny'. In Block 14, Roscius had to be in the third person, in order to achieve the full 2 marks.

If the grammar of the 'punch line' in the final paragraph was not understood, then the joke contained in the passage was missed, but this only affected the two blocks before the final block.

In the word-list, there was confusion over the English meaning 'in style' for the Latin word *magnifice*.

Section 5: Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Component 1: Question paper – Literary Appreciation

Candidates need to know the details within specific lines, as well as whole themes, and should not stray beyond the line references in each question. They should provide answers to match the number of marks available.

If they quote Latin, they normally also need to show knowledge of what the Latin means, either with a direct translation or a paraphrase of it. (The only exception would be in a response which asked for references to particular literary techniques.)

Component 2: Question paper – Translating

Candidates who type their responses would find it helpful if they used a slightly bigger font than they normally would.

Candidates should be expected to handle the prescribed grammar and syntax, including tenses, irregular verbs and pronouns.

Candidates should take advantage of any spare time to check that no superfluous words have been added, nor that any Latin words have been omitted.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	347
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Number of resulted entries in 2015	454
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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	91.2%	91.2%	414	42
B	6.4%	97.6%	29	36
C	2.0%	99.6%	9	30
D	0.0%	99.6%	0	27
No award	0.4%	-	2	-

The Course assessment functioned as intended, therefore no adjustment to grade boundaries was required.