



Course report 2023

National 5 Latin

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. You should read the report in conjunction with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

The statistics in the report were compiled before any appeals were completed.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2022: 414

Number of resulted entries in 2023: 338

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

A	Number of candidates	319	Percentage	94.4	Cumulative percentage	94.4	Minimum mark required	70
B	Number of candidates	9	Percentage	2.7	Cumulative percentage	97	Minimum mark required	60
C	Number of candidates	6	Percentage	1.8	Cumulative percentage	98.8	Minimum mark required	50
D	Number of candidates	3	Percentage	0.9	Cumulative percentage	99.7	Minimum mark required	40
No award	Number of candidates	1	Percentage	0.3	Cumulative percentage	100	Minimum mark required	N/A

Please note that rounding has not been applied to these statistics.

You can read the general commentary on grade boundaries in the appendix.

In this report:

- ◆ 'most' means greater than 70%
- ◆ 'many' means 50% to 69%
- ◆ 'some' means 25% to 49%
- ◆ 'a few' means less than 25%

You can find more statistical reports on the [statistics and information](#) page of SQA's website.

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Question paper 1: Literary appreciation

This year, candidates were required to select and answer questions on one author, rather than two. The complete range of skills could still be demonstrated by all candidates through their responses to questions on one prescribed text only.

The question paper was of the same standard as in previous years. The questions performed as expected and were accessible to all candidates. The full course content was covered in the paper, and all skills were sampled in every section. The different sections were of comparable standard.

The most popular authors were Catullus, Ovid and Pliny. No candidate chose to answer the questions on Cicero.

Most candidates appeared to have completed the paper in the allocated time. Most candidates expressed themselves well and provided answers that showed a very good knowledge of the text.

Most candidates read the questions carefully and gave appropriate responses, with some responses being particularly strong. The wide range of different types of questions allowed most candidates to show real engagement with the text they had studied.

All candidates had plenty of opportunity to gain credit for their learning.

There were no adjustments made to the grade boundaries for this paper.

Question paper 2: translating

The translating passage called 'A Fake Doctor Gets Rich' was adapted from Pliny's Letters 2.20.

Candidates were expected to deal with the following accident and syntax:

- ◆ tenses — present, future, imperfect, perfect, infinitive, present participle, perfect participle
- ◆ singular and plural nouns and verbs
- ◆ irregular verb 'to be'
- ◆ result clauses with the subjunctive
- ◆ indirect statement, indirect question, direct speech, direct command
- ◆ imbedded clauses
- ◆ balanced phrases
- ◆ positive and superlative adjectives
- ◆ all five cases
- ◆ pronouns

Most candidates appeared to approach the task positively and to aim for a coherent story with reasonable attention to detail. Few candidates omitted to translate any block.

Most candidates had prepared and presented their responses well.

There were no adjustments made to the grade boundaries for this paper.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper 1: Literary appreciation

Most candidates had prepared well and answered to the best of their ability. Answers were often very good. All candidates completed the paper. Many responses were creative and interesting. Some responses were unexpected but still valid and very much welcomed. All answers were marked positively.

Time management was good, as was the ability to match the length of the response to the number of marks available. Few candidates omitted any questions.

Many candidates followed the line references accurately.

Section 1 — Catullus

- ◆ question 1(b): Many candidates produced full answers for this language technique question about repetition.
- ◆ question 2(a): Most candidates got full marks for this question about Catullus' jealousy.
- ◆ question 3(b): To gain full marks, candidates needed to refer to both images of wind and water and most did this well.
- ◆ question 4: This was a challenging question about what this short poem was actually saying. Many candidates did well to analyse the conflict expressed in the poem and to discuss specific word choice: *nescio*, *excrucior*. Candidates could gain all four marks by discussing skilful use of language, if valid.
- ◆ question 6(a): Many candidates gave lively and personal answers to this question about the tone of the party invitation, showing real engagement with the poem.
- ◆ question 7: This culture question about Roman parties was very well done. Most candidates referred to both poems as asked and gained the full four marks.

Section 2 — Ovid

- ◆ question 9(a): Most candidates answered this question well and had plenty to discuss about Daedalus' problems.
- ◆ question 10: There was excellent thoughtful discussion on the wings' design and materials.
- ◆ question 11: Many candidates answered this question about Icarus' helpfulness particularly well.
- ◆ question 12: This question required the candidates to focus on Daedalus' worries, rather than on what Daedalus says to Icarus, and most candidates did this.
- ◆ question 14: Some candidates gave very good answers which were full of insight when discussing the level of Daedalus' skills.
- ◆ question 15: Most candidates gained full marks by mentioning both Talus and Icarus in their responses about why the goddess saved one of them but not the other. There was also good discussion on Daedalus' arrogance (*hubris*).

- ◆ question 16: Most candidates responded very well to this culture question on the role of a Roman father and gained the full four marks.

Section 3 — Virgil

- ◆ question 17(c): Most candidates were familiar with these characters from the Trojan War and could discuss them at some length.
- ◆ question 18(b): This question asked candidates to base their answer on their knowledge of the rest of the story in order to identify episodes which might have been difficult for Aeneas to remember. Most candidates did this very well indeed and gave creative and thoughtful answers.
- ◆ question 21(b) and 22: Most candidates answered these culture questions on priests and gods very well.

Section 4 — Pliny

- ◆ question 23, 24, 25: Most candidates could answer fully about the ghost, the house and its occupants.
- ◆ question 26: Most candidates could answer both parts of this culture question about philosophers and how they worked, well enough for full marks.
- ◆ question 29: When asked whether the dolphin's actions were threatening or playful or both, most candidates argued for both and gave very full answers.

Section 5 — Cicero

No candidate chose to answer this section.

Question paper 2: translating

Most candidates performed well. There were only very few careless omissions. Many candidates took great care to account for every Latin word and showed expertise in handling grammar and syntax sensibly.

A sense of underlying achievement was maintained until the finish which is encouraging to see. Almost every candidate made it through to the end.

Most candidates had plenty of time to check their work and even redraft some parts of the passage.

Many candidates were very strong on their verb tenses.

Most candidates used the wordlist effectively.

Many candidates handled blocks 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 11, 13, 18, 19 and 20 with confidence and care to ensure accuracy or near accuracy.

Block 4: Some candidates translated the accusative and infinitive construction accurately.

Blocks 12, 13, 14: Most candidates translated the direct speech well in these blocks.

Block 12: Some candidates correctly identified the future tense *superabit* correctly.

Block 16: Some candidates applied the proper name *Regulus* correctly rather than copying *Regulo* straight from the text.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper 1: Literary appreciation

Section 1 — Catullus

- ◆ question 2(b): Many candidates found this question on Catullus' exaggeration challenging and did not manage to gain the full two marks.
- ◆ question 5: Few candidates managed to answer this question fully, as many discussed Catullus' feelings but not the feelings of Lesbia, as the question required them to do.
- ◆ question 6(b): Many candidates did not manage to find enough evidence to show that the perfume was special to gain the two marks.

Section 2 — Ovid

- ◆ question 8: Many candidates found it difficult to gain the second mark when discussing the River Maeander.
- ◆ question 9(b): Some candidates found it difficult to gain two marks when discussing what Ovid means about 'changing nature'. To answer the question properly, candidates needed to say or imply that flying is not natural for humans.
- ◆ question 13: Many candidates strayed beyond the line references when answering this question about Daedalus' feelings towards Icarus. Many candidates did not mention the bird simile, discussion of which could have given them more marks.

Section 3 — Virgil

- ◆ question 17(b): When asked to suggest reasons why Aeneas might not want to retell his story, a few candidates simply copied straight from the English text without any attempt to paraphrase or answer in their own words, which prevented them from being awarded the full two marks.
- ◆ question 19: All three parts of this question proved challenging. Many candidates were very vague about the island of Tenedos. The three-mark language question on the repetition of *hic* did not elicit many three-mark responses.
- ◆ question 20: To gain all four marks for this question about the content of Laocoon's speech required detailed knowledge of the text and few managed to give enough information for four marks.

Section 4 — Pliny

- ◆ question 27: Some candidates did not focus on what the question specifically asked, namely to discuss the sounds in the story, and instead retold the story itself. To gain the marks, candidates needed to discuss Pliny's choice of words and why this made the story exciting.
- ◆ question 31(a): Many candidates could not find enough evidence to gain a third mark for this question about the boy and the dolphin not fearing each other.
- ◆ question 31(b): This question about the second dolphin proved challenging for many candidates. Some candidates omitted this question altogether and others seemed confused about the narrative at this point.
- ◆ question 32: Some candidates did not gain marks for this culture question about Roman government officials because they referred to the wrong line references.

Section 5 — Cicero

No candidate chose to answer this section.

Question paper 2: translating

Block 9: Many candidates struggled to decide on the subject of the sentence. In addition, few translated the present participle *aspiciens* correctly, as the subordinate to the main verb *computavit*. This block proved to be the most challenging in the whole passage.

Block 11: Some candidates omitted the word *diu*.

Block 20: Some candidates omitted the word *iam*.

There was confusion over *tandem* in block 12 and *tamen* in block 18.
There was confusion over *periculum* in block 12 and *praemium* in block 16.

Block 15: Many candidates had problems fitting the ablative absolute into the translation. For two marks, candidates needed to have made a connection between the ablative absolute and the main clause.

Block 9: Many candidates did not manage to translate the pronoun *eam*.

Block 17: Many candidates did not manage to translate the pronoun *ei*.

Block 19: Some missed the superlative adjective *infirmissima*.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper 1: Literary appreciation

Centres are reminded that, from 2024, candidates will once again be required to answer questions on two authors in the Literary Appreciation paper.

Candidates should expect any part of the prescribed text to be sampled.

There will be a range of command words and different types of questions, including questions on language and on culture, worth varying marks.

Answers which stray beyond the line references cannot be given marks.

Bullet points are acceptable, as long as they are sufficiently expanded. Single words alone are not normally enough to demonstrate knowledge.

To maximise the number of marks available for a particular question, candidates can argue both 'yes' and 'no' to a 'Do you agree...?' type question.

Marks can be gained for developing a point already made. It is not essential when answering a three-mark question, for example, for a candidate to give three separate points. An answer with two points, one of which is developed, can be awarded three marks.

If answering questions on sections of the prescribed text which appear in English, candidates need to answer in their own words and not merely copy out the translation given.

There are support materials available on SQA's Understanding Standards website to assist centres and candidates to prepare for the Literary Appreciation paper.

Question paper 2: Translating

Candidates need to be ready to demonstrate their skills in handling a wide range of accidence and syntax. The list of prescribed accidence and syntax is in the course specification, available on SQA's National 5 Latin subject page. Accurate application of accidence and syntax will always gain marks.

Candidates should be encouraged to re-read, and make a final check of, their finished translation to avoid careless omissions. This advice is also valid for single word omissions.

Candidates should practise using wordlists accurately to avoid jumping to the meaning above or below the correct one. Even if candidates know the meaning of a Latin word, it is good practice to refer to the wordlist for the specific meaning in the context of the passage. However, candidates who supply a correct alternative meaning would still gain the mark.

There are support materials available on SQA's Understanding Standards website to assist centres and candidates to prepare for the Translating paper.

Appendix: general commentary on grade boundaries

SQA's main aim when setting grade boundaries is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

For most National Courses, SQA aims to set examinations and other external assessments and create marking instructions that allow:

- ◆ a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional grade C boundary)
- ◆ a well-prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional grade 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 for each course to bring together all the information available (statistical and qualitative) and to make final decisions on grade boundaries based on this information. Members of SQA's Executive Management Team normally chair these meetings.

Principal assessors utilise their subject expertise to evaluate the performance of the assessment and propose suitable grade boundaries based on the full range of evidence. SQA can adjust the grade boundaries as a result of the discussion at these meetings. This allows the pass rate to be unaffected in circumstances where there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more, or less, difficult than usual.

- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more difficult than usual.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been less difficult than usual.
- ◆ Where levels of difficulty 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 on year. This is because the specific questions, and the mix of questions, are different and this has an impact on candidate performance.

This year, a package of support measures was developed to support learners and centres. This included modifications to course assessment, retained from the 2021–22 session. This support was designed to address the ongoing disruption to learning and teaching that young people have experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic while recognising a lessening of the impact of disruption to learning and teaching as a result of the pandemic. The revision support that was available for the 2021–22 session was not offered to learners in 2022–23.

In addition, SQA adopted a sensitive approach to grading for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses, to help ensure fairness for candidates while maintaining

standards. This is in recognition of the fact that those preparing for and sitting exams continue to do so in different circumstances from those who sat exams in 2019 and 2022.

The key difference this year is that decisions about where the grade boundaries have been set have also been influenced, where necessary and where appropriate, by the unique circumstances in 2023 and the ongoing impact the disruption from the pandemic has had on learners. On a course-by-course basis, SQA has determined grade boundaries in a way that is fair to candidates, taking into account how the assessment (exams and coursework) has functioned and the impact of assessment modifications and the removal of revision support.

The grade boundaries used in 2023 relate to the specific experience of this year's cohort and should not be used by centres if these assessments are used in the future for exam preparation.

For full details of the approach please refer to the [National Qualifications 2023 Awarding — Methodology Report](#).