



Course report 2025

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 with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

We compiled the statistics in this report before we completed the 2025 appeals process.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2024: 384

Number of resulted entries in 2025: 421

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	343	81.5	81.5	70
B	48	11.4	92.9	60
C	20	4.8	97.6	50
D	7	1.7	99.3	40
No award	3	0.7	100%	Not applicable

We have not applied rounding to these statistics.

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

In this report:

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

You can find statistical reports on the [statistics and information](#) page of our website.

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Question paper 1: literary appreciation

All questions functioned as intended.

When preparing the question paper, we take great care to ensure that each section is equally challenging; has a similar range of different types of questions; contains questions that allow for differentiation; and contains a range of questions on knowledge of the text, Roman culture and Latin literary techniques. Questions are designed to assess the skills of analysis, argument and evaluation.

We did not adjust the grade boundaries for this paper.

Question paper 2: translating

The translating passage, called 'A Tale of Two Mice', was adapted from Horace *Satires* 2.6.

We adapted this passage to ensure candidates had plenty of opportunities to demonstrate their skills in handling a wide range of prescribed accidence and syntax. This provided the required differentiation.

The paper sampled the following accidence and syntax:

- nouns: declensions 1 to 5 (all common case usages)
- positive, comparative and superlative adjectives
- positive adverbs
- pronouns
- possessive adjectives
- regular verbs: present, imperfect, perfect, infinitive, present participle, imperative
- irregular verbs: *sum* (to be), *possum* (to be able), *nolo* (to be unwilling)
- indicative and subjunctive moods
- embedded clauses
- direct speech
- comparison
- ablative absolute
- result clause
- causal clause
- concessive clause

We did not adjust 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 managed their time well.

Most candidates gave responses in each of their two chosen sections equally well.

Most candidates answered every question type and style. Many candidates gave full and detailed answers, showing that they had prepared well and had a good knowledge of the texts.

Unexpected, yet equally valid, responses reflected a high level of candidate engagement with the literature.

Many candidates performed well in the culture questions, giving full and imaginative answers.

Many candidates handled questions that asked, 'in what ways...?' well and gave detailed and well set out responses. Some candidates gave responses that went beyond the marks allocated when discussing literary techniques.

Some candidates gave very innovative and creative responses, and many candidates responded well to questions requiring a personal response.

Candidates performed well in the following questions in each section:

Section 1 — Catullus

- Question 2: many candidates gave a sufficiently developed response to gain the full 4 marks. Some candidates did so by arguing the case for both ‘admiring’ and ‘hating’ the other man.
- Question 3: most candidates discussed the similes of the sand and stars very well.
- Question 5(b): many candidates focused on use of language and content to demonstrate the ways Catullus makes his feelings clear.
- Question 6(b): many candidates showed detailed knowledge of the text to provide strong evidence that Catullus and Fabullus were good friends.

Section 2 — Ovid

- Question 8: most candidates answered this simile question well.
- Question 10(a): most candidates clearly described how Daedalus constructed the wings.
- Question 10(b): most candidates gave creative and imaginative answers when discussing the reasons why Icarus did not help his father, beyond just saying that Icarus wanted to play.
- Question 11: many candidates gave strong responses when discussing whether Daedalus did a good job or not, when preparing his son to fly. Some candidates argued both ways to gain the full 4 marks.
- Question 15: most candidates showed sound knowledge of the family of Daedalus, which they had accurately gleaned from the various parts of the text.

Section 3 — Virgil

- Question 18: most candidates gave full and accurate answers when discussing the ‘clever’ features of the horse, rather than giving a general description of it.

- Question 21: most candidates gave strong responses when discussing the different Trojan reactions to the horse. Many candidates gained the full 4 marks by developing their initial two points.
- Question 23: many candidates gave very good summaries of Laocoon's views. Some candidates gained the full 4 marks by developing two points.

Section 4 — Pliny

- Question 26(b): most candidates discussed the effect of Pliny's description very well.
- Question 27(b): many candidates gave a wide range of valid suggestions about the importance of Athenodorus being well prepared, showing good engagement with the story.
- Question 28: many candidates focused on use of language and content to discuss the 'spooky' elements of the lines and used a combination of 'yes' and 'no' responses to gain the full 4 marks.
- Question 31(a): many candidates gave excellent answers when discussing the ways Pliny brought this part of the dolphin story to life.
- Question 31(b): most candidates shared plenty of ideas when discussing why the dolphin was trying to get the boy's attention.

Section 5 — Cicero

- Question 33: most candidates answered all three parts to this question about the statue of Hercules well, displaying very good knowledge of the text.
- Question 36: many candidates gave full and detailed answers when discussing the determination of the local people, by referring to use of language and to content.
- Question 37: most candidates gave a good explanation of the joke about Hercules and the boar.
- Question 40: many candidates identified actions of Verres that showed disrespect to Sopater.

Question paper 2: translating

Most candidates attempted all 20 blocks. Omitted blocks seem to have been due to carelessness rather than lack of knowledge. All candidates made it to the end of the passage. Many candidates accurately used the wordlist.

Many candidates coped well with the various grammar constructions and the twists and turns in the narrative. Most candidates managed their time well. Many candidates translated the first and last paragraphs with a high degree of accuracy.

Most candidates recognised the different verb tenses, including the irregular forms of *sum*, *possum* and *nolo*.

Candidates performed well in the following blocks:

- Block 2: many candidates identified the hidden subject of the verb *invitavit* ('he invited').
- Block 3: most candidates handled the balanced phrase *tantum ...quantum...* ('as much as...') accurately.
- Blocks 6 to 9: most candidates coped well with the direct speech.
- Block 9: most candidates translated the imperative *veni* ('come!') correctly.
- Block 14: many candidates spotted the superlative adjective *laetissimus* ('very happy').
- Blocks 18 to 20: most candidates coped well with the direct speech.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper 1: literary appreciation

Some candidates missed out on marks because their responses did not demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the Latin text. Some candidates strayed beyond the line references.

Candidates found the following questions within each section demanding:

Section 1 — Catullus

- Question 1(a): some candidates gave the basic meaning of the Latin words *lux* and *nox* but did not explain their use of imagery in the context of the poem.
- Question 4: a few candidates developed their responses about love and hate fully enough to gain the full 3 marks.
- Questions 5(a) and 5(b): a few candidates gained the full 5 marks for these challenging questions about Catullus' feelings.
- Question 7: some candidates discussed Roman death and burial customs in general terms, rather than restricting their responses to Poem 8, as this culture question required.

Section 2 — Ovid

- Question 12(a): some candidates did not describe the content of the specific line references and discussed the simile about people thinking that Daedalus and Icarus were gods, rather than the bird simile.
- Question 14: some candidates discussed, in general terms, Daedalus and Icarus being helpless, rather than restricting their answers to what the text says.
- Question 16: some candidates missed out on marks by discussing the characters in the story, rather than discussing Crete.

Section 3 — Virgil

- Question 24: since this question was about an English extract, candidates should have responded in their own words. Some candidates copied the English text word for word without answering the question. To gain 3 marks, candidates needed to explain why the Trojans were particularly frightened at this point in the story, not just make a list of frightening things.
- Question 25: some candidates missed out on marks because they wrote about the Greeks in general terms, rather than focusing on how the Greeks behaved, as the question asked.

Section 4 — Pliny

- Question 26(a): a few candidates described the ghost, rather than the house.
- Question 27(a): some candidates strayed beyond the line references when describing Athenodorus' preparations.
- Question 32: some candidates wrote in general terms about Roman attitudes to animals and did not refer to the text.

Section 5 — Cicero

- Question 34: some candidates did not identify what was particularly shocking about this temple attack.
- Question 42: many candidates did not refer to the story when discussing violence in Roman society and instead made generalised statements about violence in any society.

Question paper 2: translating

Many candidates made errors using the wordlist. Some candidates seemed to confuse words with similar spellings, for example *canis* and *cena* ('dog' and 'dinner').

Some candidates did not seem to recognise the difference between verbs and nouns, for example *ceno* (to) eat and *cena* dinner.

Many candidates did not seem to recognise the plural of third declension nouns in the nominative and accusative cases, for example *mures* (mice) and *canes* (dogs).

Some candidates missed out on marks for not identifying singular and plural endings correctly.

Some candidates seemed to recognise the ablative absolute, but only a few candidates linked it to the main verb in the sentence.

Candidates missed out on marks in the following blocks:

- Block 2: for 2 marks, candidates had to translate *cenare* as a verb 'to eat' and not 'for dinner'.
- Block 4: some candidates omitted the verb 'to be' (*erat*) and wrote 'Although poor....'. For 2 marks, candidates had to translate *erat*.
- Block 9: for 2 marks, candidates had to translate *cena* as a noun 'dinner'.
- Block 11: many candidates did not spot *in* + accusative as showing motion towards.
- Block 12: some candidates omitted the adverb *magnifice*.
- Block 14: for 2 marks, candidates had to connect the ablative absolute *omnibus consumptis* to the main clause.
- Block 15: some candidates did not make *strepitus* ('noise') the subject of the sentence.
- Block 16: many candidates did not spot *in* + accusative as showing motion towards.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper 1: literary appreciation

Candidates must be prepared to answer questions on all parts of the prescribed text. They should expect a range of command words and different types of questions, including any number of questions on the use of language and on Roman culture, worth varying marks. Teachers and lecturers should remind candidates of what is required of them for each of the command words.

Teachers and lecturers should encourage candidates to gauge the length of their answer in proportion to the number of marks available.

Candidates will always gain marks for developed points up to the maximum available. For example, they do not need to make three separate points in an answer to a question worth 3 marks. They can give an answer with two points, one of which they develop, to also gain 3 marks. A developed point, however, needs to include something new; it cannot be a reworded version of a point they have already made.

Candidates can answer a combination of 'yes' and 'no' in response to a 'do you agree...?' question stem, where appropriate. This is acceptable and, in response to questions worth a lot of marks, it is good practice.

When answering a question on an English extract, candidates will not gain marks by simply copying out the English translation. They must answer in their own words.

Bullet points are appropriate, as long as candidates expand them sufficiently. Single words are not normally enough to demonstrate knowledge.

Question paper 2: translating

The list of prescribed grammar is available in the National 5 Latin Course Specification on the [Latin subject page](#) of our website. Every year, the translating passage will sample a range of accident and syntax from this list. Any accident or syntax not on this list will be glossed. Candidates will always gain credit for accurately applying grammar rules.

Candidates should check the specific English meaning of any given Latin word using the wordlist. This will ensure that they have the appropriate meaning in the context of the story. There should be time available for doing this. However, if a candidate gives another correct meaning using their own knowledge, that meaning is also acceptable.

Teachers and lecturers should encourage candidates to check that they have not omitted any words from their translation, especially small words that they could easily overlook. Candidates need to ensure that they do not misread the wordlist. Using a ruler when referring to the wordlist can help candidates to avoid errors.

Candidates should read the English title and the English links carefully, as these direct them through the passage and can give helpful clues to the action in the narrative. Candidates do not need to copy out these English links.

Appendix: general commentary on grade boundaries

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

For most National Courses, we aim 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, we hold 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 our 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. We 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.

Every year, we evaluate the performance of our assessments in a fair way, while ensuring standards are maintained so that our qualifications remain credible. To do this, we measure evidence of candidates' knowledge and skills against the national standard.

For full details of the approach, please refer to the [Awarding and Grading for National Courses Policy](#).