

## LATIN

### Overall grade boundaries

#### Higher level

|                    |      |       |       |       |       |       |        |
|--------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| <b>Grade:</b>      | 1    | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6     | 7      |
| <b>Mark range:</b> | 0-15 | 16-32 | 33-44 | 45-55 | 56-67 | 68-78 | 79-100 |

#### Standard level

|                    |     |       |       |       |       |       |        |
|--------------------|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| <b>Grade:</b>      | 1   | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6     | 7      |
| <b>Mark range:</b> | 0-9 | 10-20 | 21-30 | 31-44 | 45-57 | 58-72 | 73-100 |

### General comments

The welcome rise in the number of candidates presenting for Latin, especially at the standard level was sustained. Unfortunately, it is still true that while the best candidates were as good as ever there were far more weak candidates. The overwhelming problem was in Paper 1, at both standard and higher levels, discussed in greater detail below. Otherwise, there was as ever much evidence of hard work and good teaching. Where candidates stumbled on Paper 2 it was, as often as not, because they did not address the question actually posed. There was, very often, even in the case of otherwise very weak candidates, a welcome ability to scan and, paradoxically, some astonishing ignorance of basic scanning in otherwise strong candidates.

### Higher level paper 1

#### Component grade boundaries

|                    |     |      |       |       |       |       |       |
|--------------------|-----|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Grade:</b>      | 1   | 2    | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6     | 7     |
| <b>Mark range:</b> | 0-5 | 6-11 | 12-15 | 16-20 | 21-25 | 26-30 | 31-40 |

This year's candidates performed so like last year's that, all I can do, is to repeat last year's report: 'This paper attracted a range of responses from almost perfect to total misunderstanding. Where things did go wrong, it was often evident that no attention had been paid to the text and translation provided of the introductory and closing sections, and almost invariably evident that the candidates had little or no understanding of how to use a Latin dictionary. Far too often, candidates were either unable or unwilling to distinguish active from passive, accusative from nominative, singular from plural. I strongly suspect that, in many cases, if candidates were asked to parse a word they would do so correctly, but when they attempt to translate they ignore what parsing should tell them.

The Latin dictionary is not as easy to use as many candidates seemed to think. Far too many candidates, with an apparent complete ignorance of accident, selected the wrong word; of those who selected the correct word very many immediately took the first meaning offered, however unsuitable. More lessons devoted entirely to developing dictionary skills would, I believe, bring quite disproportionate benefits.'

Typical errors included taking the first two words, *Memini quid*, to mean ‘Remember that’, taking the *cuius* in line 9 to be a relative; The construction of *Ingens...perculit* was misunderstood in a wide variety of ways, *ut* in line 14 was taken as introducing a purpose clause. The supplementary questions were generally answered quite well.

## Higher level paper 2

### Component grade boundaries

|                    |     |      |       |       |       |       |       |
|--------------------|-----|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Grade:</b>      | 1   | 2    | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6     | 7     |
| <b>Mark range:</b> | 0-7 | 8-14 | 15-18 | 19-22 | 23-27 | 28-31 | 32-40 |

Once again, there was little change from last year: ‘All sections were attempted but, as before, Virgil, Cicero and ‘Love poetry’ were the most popular. The context questions were generally well done, even by the very weakest candidates. The translation questions attracted both excellent responses and utter disasters, with quite a few candidates not answering the question at all. Scansion fell into three broad categories, perfect accuracy (the majority), gross ignorance about what may or may not be long or short, and silence. The other questions, on the whole, displayed good preparation by the candidates; I was less aware, than I was last year, of candidates who thought that mere paraphrase would suffice. Some candidates wasted time by ignoring the clear indication that only a very brief answer was required.’

The essays (Section B) ranged from excellent to very poor. As always, some gave excellent analyses, some contented themselves with plot rehearsal (usually, but not invariably, accurate) and some said almost nothing. The ‘prepared essay’ on a topic not sought was, again, mercifully absent.

## Standard level paper 1

### Component grade boundaries

|                    |     |     |       |       |       |       |       |
|--------------------|-----|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Grade:</b>      | 1   | 2   | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6     | 7     |
| <b>Mark range:</b> | 0-4 | 5-9 | 10-13 | 14-19 | 20-23 | 24-30 | 31-40 |

As was the case last year, this paper attracted a range of responses from almost perfect to total misunderstanding. Where things did go wrong, it was again often evident that no attention had been paid either to the text or to the translation of the introductory and closing sections, and almost invariably evident that the candidates had little or no understanding of how to use a Latin dictionary. Far too often, candidates were either unable or unwilling to distinguish active from passive, accusative from nominative, singular from plural. I strongly suspect that, in many cases, if candidates were asked to parse a word they would do so correctly, but when they attempt to translate they ignore what parsing should tell them.

The Latin dictionary is not as easy to use as many candidates seemed to think. Far too many candidates, with an apparent complete ignorance of accident, selected the wrong word; of those who selected the correct word very many immediately took the first meaning offered, however unsuitable. More lessons devoted entirely to developing dictionary skills would, I believe, bring quite disproportionate benefits, as would a thorough learning of the basic irregular verbs.

Typical errors included taking *madidas* and *rore* to be in agreement with one another, misunderstanding *latus* in a number of ways, far too few saw that *freto surgente* and *fero* and *saxo* were ablatives of comparison after *saevior* and *durior*; faced by *et spe...amante* many simply panicked.

## Standard level paper 2

### Component grade boundaries

|                    |     |      |       |       |       |       |       |
|--------------------|-----|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Grade:</b>      | 1   | 2    | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6     | 7     |
| <b>Mark range:</b> | 0-5 | 6-11 | 12-17 | 18-25 | 26-34 | 35-42 | 43-60 |

There were far fewer very weak responses to this paper than to Paper 1; many candidates had clearly been well prepared for this paper. No error was sufficiently common to merit special mention.

Once again, Virgil was by far the most popular topic followed by Cicero and ‘Love Poetry’. Some candidates fell down badly on translation and/or scansion; others were very good; some did not even attempt some of the translation and scansion questions.

The essays (Section B) ranged from excellent to very poor. As always, some gave excellent analyses, some contented themselves with plot rehearsal (usually, but not invariably, accurate) and some said almost nothing. The ‘prepared essay’ on a topic not sought was, again, mercifully absent.

## Internal assessment (higher level)

### Component grade boundaries

|                    |     |     |      |       |       |       |       |
|--------------------|-----|-----|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Grade:</b>      | 1   | 2   | 3    | 4     | 5     | 6     | 7     |
| <b>Mark range:</b> | 0-3 | 4-7 | 8-11 | 12-13 | 14-15 | 16-17 | 18-20 |

This was a very encouraging session. Although option A was by far the most popular, all three Options were attempted by at least one candidate.

In the case of Option A, where candidates understood that they were asked to produce a ‘research dossier’ they performed well. Those who thought that what was sought was merely a conventional essay by another name fared much less well.

The ideal response started with a research topic, a question (explicit or clearly implicit) which required an answer.

The statement of the question should be followed by a brief discussion on what evidence was available, and how best to use it with, if appropriate, some indication of its reliability.

Next should come examples of evidence, each example followed by a brief account of what contribution the evidence makes to answering the question.

Candidates chafe at the word limit, but that is part of the exercise. The candidate is not expected to solve the problem, only to explain how best a solution would be arrived at. Depending on the nature

of the question and the evidence available, the candidate's opinion may become obvious but that is an outcome which candidate's should seek neither to achieve nor to avoid.

Option B is very difficult to do well unless the candidate is fearless in front of the microphone. On the other hand, for the right candidate, it can be very rewarding. The technical analysis and the performance itself will teach candidates so much about why classical literature still maintains its appeal.

Option C should be attempted only by candidates with a secure knowledge of syntax and accentuation and, in the case of aspirants to verse composition, quantity and metre. It was gratifying to encounter candidates who could indeed take full advantage of this very attractive option; it was sad to see other candidates whose ignorance of the basic technical requirements was cruelly exposed by their submission.