

LATIN

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-15	16-32	33-43	44-55	56-67	68-79	80-100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-11	12-24	25-32	33-46	47-60	61-73	74-100

The welcome rise in the number of candidates presenting for Latin, especially at the standard level continues. Happily, the number of very unprepared candidates has diminished considerably, though it is still worse than it should be; however, it is heartening to see many schools performing better than in previous years, was sustained. The best candidates continue to be extremely good; the overall effect is that it was necessary to award the whole scale from zero to maximum possible marks. Once again, 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 internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

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

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Once again, the range was most remarkable; the best were truly excellent, the worst very disappointing. As ever, the most important key to success was a wise choice of topic. Those who disappointed thought that they were required to write an essay not a research dossier.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Good candidates performed well on all criteria; poor candidates on few or none.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Do everything possible to encourage sensible choices. Research dossiers, not essays; oral presentation only by those with some declamatory skill; composition only by those with a sound grasp of grammar; verse composition only by those who can scan.

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-5	6-11	12-16	17-22	23-27	28-33	34-40

General comments

This year's candidates performed so like those of previous years 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, in this case unusually helpful, and almost invariably evident that the candidates had little or no understanding of how to use a Latin dictionary. Far too often, candidates were unable 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.'

The supplementary questions were generally answered quite well.

The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

While some performed excellently, many did not. A general disinclination to take advantage of the title and, even more, the translated lead in undid many. They were, consequentially, confused by the accusative + infinitive passages they encountered at the beginning of what they were required to do. There was no excuse for translating 'hunc lumen' as 'this light'.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

The translation is discussed above. Questions 2 and 3 were more generally well done. Question 2 should have helped many more than it did to translate the accusative + infinitive passages.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates should be constantly reminded that nonsense must be wrong. And grammar is a useful tool, not a separate discipline with no implications for translation.

Higher level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-7	8-14	15-16	17-20	21-25	26-29	30-40

General comments

Once again, there was little change from previous years; I quote again from previous reports with slight changes: ‘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. 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.

The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

No part was especially difficult for candidates; many were excellently prepared, many more were not. There was a significant tail that gave the impression that they had not studied the texts at all. However, I have a feeling for which I have no hard evidence that the tail is shorter than in previous years.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

No question attracted a particularly idiosyncratic set of answers except the translation questions which were frequently answered very badly even by those who otherwise were performing well.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates should be encouraged to become as familiar as possible with the texts being studied.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-4	5-9	10-13	14-19	20-24	25-30	31-40

General comments

As was the case in previous years, 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 unable 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.

The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

Many candidates correctly translated every sentence; many more candidates, however, mistranslated or misunderstood all or most of the passage. Many paid no attention to the title and the lead in. No sentence seemed more or less of a problem than any other.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Frequent practice combined with a close analysis of what has been misunderstood and why. I know that in many schools this may be difficult to achieve, but there is no short cut.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-5	6-10	11-13	14-18	19-24	25-29	30-40

General comments

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.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Perhaps the single most important point to instill an understanding that Latin uses word order quite differently from the way English does.