

May 2014 subject reports

Latin

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 16	17 - 33	34 - 45	46 - 54	55 - 65	66 - 74	75 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 13	14 - 27	28 - 36	37 - 50	51 - 63	64 - 77	78 - 100

Higher level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 17	18 - 22	23 - 26	27 - 30

Standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 11	12 - 15	16 - 19	20 - 23	24 - 30

The range and suitability of the work submitted

There aren't many novelties to announce for the individual study. The task has been exactly the same for five years, and students still produce a variety of work of very different quality. There have been pieces of work of outstanding academic standard, and others that can be improved a lot. Next year will be the last one of the current syllabus, and we hope that teachers will read this report carefully in order to help their students. Even with the present specifications, a lot can still be done in this regard.

On the basis of the moderators' observations, I would like to begin this report with some recommendations to teachers.

First, the Individual Study is meant to be an individual, creative task. Students should be prepared for it, be given advice and guidance and be provided with the necessary resources. They should not be forced to fit their original research into a pre-set template. The IB Learner Profile mentions curiosity, independent learning, critical thinking and creativity, and if these are meant to be more than empty words, teachers should encourage students to pursue their original line of enquiry rather than follow rigid frames set by the school. Of course no student has been, or will ever be, penalized for presenting a research dossier identical in format with those of his or her classmates, as long as the work is their own. Simply, this is not the spirit of the IB.

The second remark is about marking. Ideally, no change should be made to the teacher's marking. In practice, a few teachers appeared to be on the strict side, but many more were overly lenient. It should be remembered that biased marking (in both ways) can be detrimental to students; in first place because the sample moderated will affect all students; and secondly, because the marking of IA is a vital component in setting the final grade boundaries. There are teachers who do not seem to be very familiar with the marking criteria, and teachers who seem to consistently and deliberately over-grade their students. Some teachers have awarded full marks to research dossiers that exceeded by far the word limit, in which the original texts and the translations did not match, or in which the "original" text consisted of a back-version from the English into Latin. On the other hand, schools that adopt the excellent practice of internal second marking have very seldom had their marks changed.

The third remark is about the use of footnotes, which must not be a loophole to elude the constraint of the word limit. There have been dossiers in which the text of footnotes almost equalled that of annotations. These dossiers may have been penalized if essential information was put in the footnotes, which moderators are not required to read if they are used as a surrogate for annotations. The purpose of footnotes is just to provide references and translations where necessary.

Finally, teachers are always welcome to annotate their students' IA, not only to shed light on the research process and help the moderator understand the difficulties encountered by the student, but also to make clear the rationale behind the awarding of marks.

As for the quality of the work, students should be able to obtain reasonably good marks just by sticking to the formal requirements of the syllabus and following a clear and coherent line of thought. We need again to stress the importance of thoroughly reading the classical

languages guide section devoted to the Individual Study, in both the 'Syllabus' and the 'Assessment' sections. Pieces of work that do not comply with the stated requirements can hardly be expected to score high marks, and it is therefore highly advisable that students can access the guide at all times during their research.

As in past years, the research dossier was by far the favourite option. It is certainly the "safest" option, which is one of the reasons why it was decided to make it the only available option in the next curriculum.

Fewer students attempted the oral presentation, and we can here just repeat the same remarks as for last year. An oral presentation is a demanding task that only well-prepared and motivated students should attempt, but still some centres wrongly regarded this as an "easy option" suitable for weaker candidates. Of course the reading of Latin is a fascinating and rewarding task, and students with a good preparation in this regard should absolutely not be discouraged from attempting it. Students with a special interest might also consider taking part in the reading competitions that regularly take place in many countries.

The composition was even less popular: rightly so perhaps, given the fact that this is a difficult option that only very advanced students and with a specific preparation should attempt. That said, the minority of students given a specific preparation in this fascinating task scored altogether well, thus demonstrating the practical viability of the option.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Research dossier

Criterion A (Quality of ideas) is about the selection of topic and sources. As always, the best dossiers were those focussed on a specific topic, whereas titles like "The Roman army" or "The role of women in ancient Rome" failed to provide students with a clear focal point and a solid framework for their research. Some students did not seem to be clearly aware of the fact that "Roman" is a very broad term that covers more than a millennium of history spread over the whole Mediterranean world and most of modern Europe. Titles circumscribing the research to e.g. "the archaic period", "the Roman Republic", "the end of the Republic", "the early Principate" or "the third century CE" allow more focussed and detailed analysis of the chosen sources.

Many students still gave secondary instead of primary sources, and some teachers still gave to these totally inappropriate dossiers high marks. Also, some dossiers with titles such as "influence of X on modern literature/visual arts, etc" did not consider the fact that only the ancient sources count as primary sources. Nor did they always make clear the connection between the secondary source and the suggested classical source; the simple fact that two "objects" (text or material) share a "topic" does not constitute "influence". If students want to study the influence of classical antiquity on the modern world they can certainly do it, but they must be well aware of the fact that the dossier will be assessed in classical languages and not, say, English or History of Modern Art. If in doubt, going for just classical sources is certainly the safest course.

Criterion B (Knowledge and understanding) is about the quality of the annotations. Although the individual study task is about the student's personal response to the sources, meaningful annotations were invariably those that showed a critical approach by setting the sources in their historical, cultural, political, etc contexts. Some students gave a detailed analysis of small number of sources while others went for the broader picture through a more summary analysis of a greater number of sources. Both choices are valid, within the recommended number of sources. Teachers are encouraged to warn students against simple paraphrase or repetition of a source, and remind students that analysis always seeks to present an idea or conclusion that is something apart from the source(s), though related. For example, a picture of a man eating from a plate containing beef, potatoes and carrots should not be annotated as "This picture shows a man eating" but as "The man is eating meat and vegetables, therefore man is an omnivore". This approach will lend itself to establishing premises from which conclusions can be drawn.

Criterion C (Coherence and clarity of argument) is about the organization of the annotations. Broad titles almost always made the organizing of a coherent argument impossible since the annotations were not related to the research question and therefore tended to lack in focus. Weaker dossiers did not display a clear link between their sources and their argument. The strongest dossiers presented analysis of individual sources or a small group of sources that in turn supported a larger argument made through the entire dossier.

Oral presentation

Criterion A (Quality of ideas) is about the appropriateness of reading for the chosen passage. The length of readings varied widely from little more than 10 lines (far too short) to 150 lines (a little too long). Most candidates chose hexameter poetry, thus avoiding the hidden difficulties of reading the only apparently easier prose. Few students achieved the extremely rewarding task of finding a balance between rigorous metrical reading and emotional expression and interpretation, but in these few instances the results were of a very high standard.

Criterion B (Knowledge and understanding) is about the accuracy of pronunciation and commentary. Here too some excellent performances, but many candidates struggled with technical issues such as giving a "correct" and consistent pronunciation, keeping the natural accent of the word rather than stressing the meter, differentiating short and long vowels, coping with enjambments, elisions, diaereses, caesurae and so on. Other common errors included the mispronunciation of "anglicized" vowels and a range of single and double consonants, as well as of consonant clusters. Not all candidates' reading reflected the observations they made on interpretation in their commentary.

Criterion C (Coherence and clarity of argument) is about the commentary. The commentaries were generally well written and often displayed awareness of a range of literary and stylistic devices, although not all gave a precise rationale for their reading, explaining, for example, the choice of pronunciation, the nature of accentuation, caesurae, diaereses, elisions, figures of speech, etc.

Composition

Criterion A (Quality of ideas) is about the appropriateness of composition for the chosen author. One of the first difficulties encountered by the candidates was the choice of a suitable piece of literature to be translated. Good compositions invariably arose from sensible choices, whereas the original text of many weaker compositions was by and large too difficult. A good translation cannot be expected of a text so intricate as to be hardly understandable even in the original language!

Criterion B (Knowledge and understanding) is about the linguistic accuracy and commentary. There were a few excellent compositions, whereas others clearly showed the lack of training in what is a very specific task. The difficulties here mostly arise from not fully understanding the specific nature of Latin syntax and how its complex syntactic structures, rather than single words, have to be translated into another language. Especially important in this regard is sensitivity to idiom, for which students will likely need to cross-reference a proper (full) dictionary with ancient sources cited in the *lemmata*. The least successful compositions avoided syntax and idiom that were clearly called for in the source.

Criterion C (Coherence and clarity of argument) is about the commentary. As above, some commentaries focused on explaining the choice of words, particularly for neologisms, instead of analyzing the syntactical structure of both the original and the translation, and commenting on how the translation fitted the style of the chosen author.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

It is vital for candidates to be made clearly aware of the nature of the individual study task, and a copy of the classical languages guide should always be available in the classroom to both students and teachers.

- For the Research dossier (which is not an essay, but written annotations on a selection of primary sources), candidates need first and foremost to appreciate the difference between primary and secondary sources. Sources not from classical antiquity, as well as modern reconstructions or digital enhancements of ancient sites, are not primary sources. Please remember that a collection of secondary sources, however interesting, cannot score more than 2 marks (“The sources selected are not appropriate”) under criterion A.
- Teachers must also ensure that students frame their research question appropriately: selecting a narrower historic time frame or a more specific area goes a long way into helping candidates to make a detailed, effective analysis. Also, titles such as “A comparison between modern xxx and Roman xxx” should only be approved insofar as they enable the analysis of a sufficient number of ancient primary sources. At any rate, students should always give a discernible rationale for the choice of sources (remembering that a random Google search is not a discernible rationale).
- Students should also check the authenticity of their sources and give appropriate

acknowledgement, especially of visual sources, which should be referenced with title, date, technique, dimensions (for a painting) and location of the artefact. “Statue from the Parthenon” is not enough if standard academic referencing would require “Theseus. 5th century BCE marble relief from the Parthenon. London, British Museum”. Standard referencing system must be used in both footnotes and bibliography. Ancient texts must be quoted with author, title, book and line or chapter as appropriate, not with the URL from where it was retrieved. So: “Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.154”, not “www.thelatinlibrary.com, etc” Translations too must always be acknowledged (no one of us would like to publish a translation and not be quoted in the bibliography).

- For the oral presentation, students should consult standard reference works for both the basic and sophisticated rules of classical Latin pronunciation. They should ensure that their written commentary is directly related to the reading rather than a general précis of some of the key features of the passages chosen.
- In order to produce a satisfactory composition, students should be given a specific training, which is not always possible given the time constrictions for the teaching of Latin in many schools. It should be remembered that it is not easy to write a fluent, correct piece of Latin prose or poetry without having practiced this skill as a task separate from the more common “passive” learning. Only students comfortable and competent in the range of syntactical structures likely to be encountered in any appropriate source text should consider the composition option.
- Teachers might annotate their students’ work to facilitate the moderation process and to make clear the reasons behind the awarding of marks. Highlighting good and bad points of students’ work can only lead to a higher consistency and reliability of marking and, ultimately, to a fair setting of grade boundaries.
- Finally, all teachers are warmly invited to access the Online Curriculum Centre (OCC) website for advice and support if in doubt about the choice of an option or a title.

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 33	34 - 66	67 - 78	79 - 96	97 - 114	115 - 132	133 - 175

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The paper was considered by most teachers to be of adequate level. As always, each author presents a set of unique problems to the student, but in a predictable range. As usual, the majority of candidates chose to translate Ovid. No sensible difference in performance depending on the choice of text was noted in any range.

Candidate performance against each criterion

As a rule, Paper 1 is a component with which many students struggle. Literary analysis, understanding and appreciation of the text is one of the main aims of the study of a classical language, but there is little doubt that this can only be achieved through a solid training in grammar and translation.

Cicero: students had issues with the counterfactual conditional, even if the rule against penalizing for consequential errors helped in this regard, and with the *cum* clauses that followed. The middle section was generally well handled. The final period proved a challenge for students, depending on the extent to which key structures (complementary infinitive with *posse*, the internal antecedent *maleficium*) were correctly recognised and analysed.

As is in other years, identification of word types is critical - the liability of trusting the dictionary to offer the best translation as the first possibility was compounded by the tendency to switch an adjective to a noun or a noun to a verb. In general, there were students who achieved a reasonable level of comprehension of the passage, but did not keep track of the syntactic structures or were not very precise in their translations. Single words or whole passages were also often omitted.

Training students to look for the inevitable parallels, antitheses and other common structural elements in Ciceronian prose (often marked by particular words or logical/narrative connectors) can only help them as they negotiate the argument of a passage or a complex period. A firm grasp of the clause types (including conditionals) suggested on the OCC is prerequisite to success.

Ovid: the first few lines were well done in general, while the more technical description of tuning and playing the instrument posed some problems of vocabulary. Even so, many students were able to navigate this portion of the passage by focusing as much on the grammatical structures as on the dictionary. Students who went astray seemed focused on vocabulary only, and often formed conclusions not supported by the syntax. The idiom *opus est* + ablative was difficult for most, as was the period after *inventum est*. Agreement and word type is key to managing passages like this one, especially with interlocking word order (e.g. *percusso mendacibus aere pennis*); less successful students tended to grasp for meaning only, without building the translation around obvious syntax (there was switching for example between verbs and nouns). Even a rudimentary application of scansion would have made a great deal of difference for many. As usual with Ovid, to use singular for plural and vice versa is certainly acceptable, but unless a literal translation renders a passage insensible it will be better under the current markscheme for students to translate number from the Latin

as closely as possible. Translation of the historic present should be consistent, whether the present or the past tense of the English is used.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Even if the current positive model of marking awards one point for the correct translation of any term, students should be reminded that translations of single terms must be adequate for their context: far from being a mere mechanical exercise, students should look for all possible meanings in the dictionary, not just the first one, and remember that the English translation should always aim at being logical and fluent. Teachers who don't already do that could allocate some extra time to practicing dictionary skills, constantly reminding students that their aim should always be producing a fluent, logical and meaningful English version. The best and most effective preparation is simply to have students practice in test conditions as often as possible.

As all teachers surely know, next year the current markscheme will be used for the last time, and from May 2016 will be replaced by a new one in which the translation is going to be assessed in its basic sense units according to the two criteria of "meaning" and "grammar and vocabulary". It will certainly be more difficult to gain marks with word-by-word translations that make little sense altogether. Teachers might well consider starting to mark their students' work with the new assessment instrument. It will certainly help them to produce better translations that can score highly also with the current markscheme.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 24	25 - 48	49 - 58	59 - 69	70 - 79	80 - 90	91 - 105

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The paper was considered by most teachers to be of adequate level. As always, each author presents a set of unique problems to the student, but in a predictable range. As in the case of HL, the majority of candidates chose to translate Ovid. No sensible difference in performance depending on the choice of text was noted in any range.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Cicero: the most consistent problems arose with the conditional clauses. Some students seemed focused on providing vocabulary rather than translation; others focused on producing

an elegant translation, but left words out. It is very difficult to find the balance, but students should be encouraged to build sentences around easily known structures (e.g. *a quo*). Maintaining consistency in translation of words that agree is essential, as is identification of word type. Aside from these points, as often with Cicero at SL, students who make the attempt and keep their wits about them tend to do quite well.

Ovid: the text proved difficult in the middle (*cernes ... ferro*) where students had difficulty identifying key syntax. Agreement and word identification (e.g. *ferro* as noun, not verb) is key to managing Ovid, and a rudimentary application of scansion can help a great deal (e.g. in the phrase *ex aere*, the word is *aes*, *aeris*, not *aër*, *aëris*); the usefulness of scansion for paper 1 Ovid (a skill which is required for many authors in P2) cannot be overstated. Recognizing tense and mood depends on correct identification of the conjugation to which a verb belongs – some students seemed more interested in the meaning of a verb and should be cautioned to note key syntax issues. Most problematic for lower and middle achieving students was the final phrase that required students to note tenses carefully and to recognize the *ne* clause at the end.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

The recommendations for SL paper 1 are essentially the same as those for HL paper 1. It goes without saying, perhaps, that some knowledge of the stories in the *Metamorphoses* can only benefit students as they struggle with a relatively short text that must necessarily be a smaller part of a larger narrative excerpt. Every effort is taken in the description and the “momentum translation” to give students enough information to get their bearings.

See above for the introduction of the new markscheme from May 2016.

Higher level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 6	7 - 13	14 - 20	21 - 23	24 - 27	28 - 30	31 - 44

The range and suitability of the work submitted

As usual, the great majority of students chose the combination of Elegiac/Lyric and Epic, followed by Historiography and Pliny. Not many have chosen Lucretius. Marks were evenly spread across all bands.

As a whole, paper 2 seemed to show a deeper engagement with the text than paper 1. This is fine insofar as students are able to approach critically classical texts and formulate a personal

answer in their own words, but it should be remembered that the skills needed to translate a text still represent the core competence in the learning of a classical language, and is also assessed in paper 2.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Good and excellent answers were given to all kinds of questions. In what follows, some of the problems more commonly encountered by students will be highlighted.

Scansion questions were, on the whole, quite good. The markscheme was clear about marking only for the quantity of the syllables, so there were no formal requirements for the indication of feet, elisions, etc. Even so, and even if the problem had already been pointed out in previous reports, some candidates still chose to give the scansion as a list of “SSDS, etc.,” which was arguably a source of many errors – if nothing else because it makes the indication of elisions impossible. It should be considered a normal request to show the division into syllables with the quantity on top of each vocalic element.

Some questions asked for the explanation of geographical references. Although the question seemed to be quite straightforward, many students failed to give an acceptable explanation of *Gnosia* and *Cecropiae* in Catullus. In the same poem, some students did not realise the fact that the *Idaeos montes* are the mountains of Crete.

Style questions: technical terms such as synchysis, tautology, chiasmus, metonymy, were often misunderstood or not substantiated. Since technical terms are not usually asked for, it is much better to explain how the figure of speech works rather than give a wrong technical term. Hyperbaton is a difficult concept to apply to Latin poetry, and many answers showed little awareness of how free the word order of Latin poetry can naturally be. The same can be said for enjambment, golden line, “word picture”, etc. This was often the case in both Horace and Vergil.

When details from the Latin text are asked for, students should be careful to give the words that are really relevant, avoiding the use of ellipses when this can lead to ambiguities. When the answer and the Latin text provided did not match, no marks could be awarded. This happened for example in Tacitus when *milibus* and *equitibus* were translated as “legions” and “horses”. Also, students must absolutely avoid mixing Latin and English in answers such as “Cassius wished to keep his *integrum* so that the *res publica* would value his opinion”, which is neither understandable Latin nor acceptable English, and cannot therefore be awarded any marks.

While Pliny was generally well handled, Lucretius proved to be more of a challenge. Lucretius’ work is sublime and it is a pity that relatively few students have the chance to do it, but if teachers decide to offer this option, they should be aware that it requires a philosophical and very analytical approach, as well as a good understanding of the working of Latin poetry.

Translations were usually of a very good level, with students performing decisively better with prepared rather than unseen passages.

The 8-mark style question represents a big portion of the paper and students generally answered these very well, with some answers displaying an astonishing level of knowledge and insight into the text. The markscheme in this kind of questions has become more detailed in the last years, and students seem to know what to expect and how to answer the question. The best answers were true analysis of the text with a clearly discernible argument behind it (“Horace’s poem supports the theme of virtuous achievements as shown by”, etc. or “Tacitus’ method and narrative technique are clearly exemplified by”, etc. At the other end of the spectrum, some answers gave just descriptions or summaries of the passage without any stylistic analysis, or mere list of words or expressions without explanation. In any case, answers to style questions must make clear that the context is taken into account. An answer like ‘alliteration of x sound’ is not enough if an example is not given. Answers should also explain the way the stylistic device adds to the richness of the text. A good example might be the didactic language of Lucretius and his use of similes to make difficult philosophical points more accessible to his readers.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Focus on the required passages, but also let students read the rest of the texts (all Catullus, a good selection of Horace, the whole *Aeneid*, etc.) in translation. It is good practice to encourage students to be able, if necessary, to support their answers with quotations *from* the passages as well as to present answers *about* the passages. For the former, students must have an appropriate level of linguistic competency; for the latter, students need only know things about the required passages. It is, perhaps, a subtle difference but an important one nevertheless.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 17	18 - 24	25 - 32	33 - 45

The range and suitability of the work submitted

As all teachers know, there was a very unfortunate slip in the setting of a Tacitus question not from the prescribed reading list. Schools have been contacted and all necessary measures were taken to ensure a fair assessment of students affected. I offer my sincere apologies for that.

As for the students’ work, most of the remarks for Higher Level apply equally well to Standard Level.

The vast majority of candidates chose Elegiac/Lyric and Epic, with very few venturing into the relatively less comfortable lands of the other genres. Marks appeared to be homogeneous across all represented genres, even if it must be said that students who chose Lucretius appeared to be perhaps less at ease with the kind of problems posed by this author. This is not to discourage students from studying Lucretius, on the contrary but to encourage them to approach the text with a more philosophically-oriented mind.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Questions must be read carefully and pondered over, but in Catullus some students took the addressee of the poem to be the first person mentioned (*illē*) instead of Lesbia.

In Horace, the question about *Dacus* and *Aethiops* proved to be unexpectedly difficult, with perhaps the majority of candidates making some reference to an allegedly powerful fleet of the Dacians. It should be clear that whenever there are mythical, geographical or historical references in the text, students are likely to be asked to explain them.

Quotations of the Latin text in Vergil were sometimes imprecise, and no marks were awarded to answers such as “Aeneas is wearing a cloak (*Tyrioque ardebat murice*)” without mention of *laena*, the only indispensable word. Similarly, in the second Vergil passage, some answers wrongly gave “black herbs (*herbae nigri*)” as one of the items.

Some students were misled in the second passage of Pliny by questions that required a deeper knowledge of the historical context (death of Domitian, etc.). As always, supplementary reading can help students a lot in this regard.

Lucretius proved to be, on the whole, a difficult option for Standard Level students.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

As for Higher Level, focus on the required passages, but also let students read as much as possible of the texts in translation.

As a final remark, the teachers’ comments were very useful and have been much appreciated – the only regret is that there were too few of them. Also, and perhaps especially, critical comments can provide excellent feedback to paper setters and examiners, and teachers should be assured that they are all taken in the utmost consideration. It is hoped that in the next years many more teachers will submit their feedback using the G2 forms. These, together with the predicted grades, are essential to the grade awarding process and can have a very positive impact on the setting of the papers and the managing of the exams as a whole.