

May 2015 subject reports

Latin

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 16	17 – 34	35 – 46	47 – 55	56 – 66	67 – 76	77 – 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 13	14 – 27	28 – 34	35 – 49	50 – 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

This being the last year of the old curriculum, I would like to draw the teachers' attention to the changes introduced by the new curriculum, as well as remarking on the quality of the work submitted.

The most obvious change is the dropping of the oral and composition options. Some teachers were understandably disappointed by the decision, but I must highlight the very pragmatic nature of this step, exclusively driven by the demands of a fair assessment. This year again, too many candidates were not properly prepared for these two challenging tasks, and were clearly put at disadvantage for a fault that was perhaps not entirely their own. That said, I do hope that not having this as an assessment option will not prevent teachers from making their students practice consistent and well-informed pronunciation as well as some writing in Latin. Without being expressively read aloud, Latin will be but a dead language, and we all know the huge benefits of attempting some Latin writing even when the main aim is "just" the understanding of original texts.

The first change in the research dossier will be a slight reduction of the number of suggested sources, together with an increase in the word limit. Then, the title will need to be in the form of a research question. Finally, criterion C will be more specific about the logical progression of the argument. While the nature of the task will not be substantially altered, these changes should allow candidates to focus more on the specificity of the chosen topic and consider annotations in the context of a coherent argument.

As for the work submitted, many observations from previous years need to be repeated, with remarks addressing both the work itself and the teachers' role.

In first place, ideally teachers' marking should not require changes, but in practice this is not always the case. It should be remembered that biased marking (in both ways) can be detrimental to candidates; firstly, because the moderated sample will affect all candidates, and secondly because the marking of the internal assessment 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 the word limit by far, or whose original texts and translations did not match, or works that were essays rather than a collection of annotated sources, or dossiers which had no primary sources, or in which the "original" text consisted of a back-version from the English into Latin (again!). On the other

hand, schools that adopt the excellent practice of internal standardization have very seldom had their marks changed.

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

As for the work itself, a consistent discriminator is the quality of referencing. This is not an idle academic exercise, but a sure indicator that candidates understand the precise nature of this task. Pieces of work with good, consistent and precise referencing almost invariably scored top marks – and vice versa.

Satisfactory referencing also shows understanding of what constitutes a good source. Odd as it may sound, there were still some dossiers that made use of secondary instead of primary sources. Some dossiers also – typically the ones about the influence of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* – could hardly be considered research dossiers in classical languages. It should be clear that, even if some comparison with later periods is acceptable and also desirable, the focus must be on the classical world, otherwise they should be classified as dossiers on modern painting, on Elizabethan literature, on baroque sculpture and so on.

Finally, it is important to highlight once more the use of footnotes: their use must not be a loophole to elude the constraints of the word limit. There have been dossiers in which the text of footnotes almost equalled (or exceeded!) that of annotations. These dossiers are likely to have been penalised if essential information was put in the footnotes, as moderators are not required to read them, especially if they are used as a surrogate for annotations. The purpose of footnotes is just to provide references and translation where necessary, and the instructions to moderators are going to be extremely strict from next session.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Research dossier

Criterion A (Quality of ideas) is about the selection of topic and sources. The rubric of the new guide makes the connection between research question and choice of sources more clear, so it will be vital to avoid broad titles such as “The Roman army” or “Roman medicine” that clearly cannot be satisfactorily dealt with in the set word limit. The best dossiers always made clear the chronological, geographical, cultural, literary etc. context already in the title.

Criterion B (Knowledge and understanding) is about the quality of the annotations. The new guide explicitly stresses the importance of the connection between research question and choice of sources, but the critical approach of the analysis, i.e. setting the sources in their context and showing understanding of the different value, e.g., of a piece of pottery and some lines of Juvenal in assessing the housing conditions in ancient Rome, is the standard discriminator, especially at HL, for the higher grades. Simple descriptions never score very high marks.

Criterion C (Coherence and clarity of argument) is about the organization of the annotations. Some teachers have interpreted this as a judgement only about the formal qualities of the dossier (good writing, layout, general appearance), so the new formulation in the new guide is a most welcome development that will make clear how this criterion is mostly about the logical progression of the argument. As for this year, the principal culprit in low-scoring dossiers was the choice of broad, poorly focused titles.

Oral presentation

Although the option is no longer offered in the new curriculum, errors such as the mispronunciation of anglicised vowels should be avoided while teaching candidates how to read Latin. Consistent, if not “correct”, pronunciation, should be aimed at, and the rules of accentuation and differentiation between long and short vowels should be taught for both prose and poetry. Enjambments, elisions, diacreses and caesurae should be taken into account, and rendered adequately in order to support the emotional mood of the text.

Many candidates had clearly not been prepared for this, but some outstanding presentations showed how rewarding this task can be. Hopefully this will still be part of the standard classroom teaching.

Composition

With a few happy exceptions, the quality of Latin composition was far from outstanding or even satisfactory, and in many cases it was really difficult to follow the logic of the Latin syntax. Writing Latin can be done since the very first stages of learning but it needs to be done systematically. Good mastering of basic grammar is essential, but at a more advanced stage the use of specific resources is recommended. Not few candidates went for overambitious options, choosing far too complex English passages as a starting point.

Recommendations and guidance 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 candidates 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. In the new curriculum a collection of mostly secondary sources, however interesting, cannot score more than two marks (“Few of the selected sources are relevant”) under criterion A – in the best case.

Teachers must also ensure that candidates frame their research question appropriately: selecting a narrower historic time frame or a more specific area goes a long way in helping candidates make a detailed, effective analysis. Moreover, 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, candidates should always give a

discernible rationale for the choice of sources (remembering that a random Google search is not a discernible rationale).

Candidates 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 when 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 (none of us would like to publish a translation and not be quoted in the bibliography).

Teachers may 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 candidates’ 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 kindly invited to access the Online Curriculum Centre (OCC) website for advice and support if in doubt about the choice of a title.

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 35	36 - 71	72 – 83	84 – 102	103 – 121	122 – 140	141 - 175

General comments

All teachers will be well aware that the marking of paper one will undergo a substantial change from May 2016. The fragmentary model now in use will be replaced by a more comprehensive one, where the stress is on the translation not of single words but of sense units. Inevitably, this will have repercussions on the marks, since it is only too clear that in past years high marks have been awarded also to translations that showed little knowledge of grammar and little understanding of the text.

This will no longer be possible with the new mark scheme, and teachers are advised to use it in their everyday teaching. Focusing on the sense of single units means firstly recognising the units and understanding the structure of the Latin sentence, which is what candidates usually find most difficult. Reading the whole text carefully, identifying verbs, conjunctions, connectors

and markers in general before attempting any translation is absolutely vital, and experience over the years has shown that candidates who make clever use of their pencil, underlining verbs and making clear the relation between conjunction and subordinate verbs, are invariably those who produce the best translations.

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 candidate, but in a predictable range. While the majority of candidates chose to translate Ovid, a larger number than in recent years chose Cicero. No perceptible difference in the range of performance for each text was noted.

Candidate performance against each criterion

This year too many candidates struggled with paper one. 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

Many candidates had problems with the first sentence, not identifying the accusative + infinitive construction with *iubet* and not noting the contrafactual condition; the *ne* clause was generally well translated. The text was chosen with a view to reducing the possibility of consequential errors, by which candidates have tended to benefit in the past. In general, candidates seemed to keep the thread of Cicero's argument through the next section, with some errors on word type and with idioms (e.g. *oculos adiecissent*; *in primis*). The final period, as often, proved a challenge for candidates, depending on the extent to which key structures (parallelism, *fore uti*, *cum...tum*, *opponendum* (*esse*) *putetis*) were understood/recognized.

Candidates should be coached to be ready for a reasonably predictable range of subordinate clauses (especially those with the subjunctive) that will appear on most pages of a Ciceronian text. Training candidates 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 conditions) suggested in the teacher support material on the OCC is prerequisite to success. And, 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 candidates who achieved a reasonable level of comprehension of the passage, but did not keep track of the grammatical structures or were not very precise in their translations.

Ovid

Candidates had relatively few difficulties with the first few lines. Candidates who went astray seemed focused on vocabulary only, and formed some odd conclusions not supported by the syntax. These candidates tended to exhibit this tendency throughout the paper. Lines 346-348

proved difficult for many candidates, since they were not always successful in managing agreement and word type, especially with interlocking word order (e.g. *gignateis ... membris; aetherias ... sedes*). This in particular is such a common feature of Ovidian hexameter that candidates should expect to see it. Less successful candidates tended to grasp for meaning only, without building the translation around obvious syntax and without paying enough attention to word types (there was a lot of switching between verbs and nouns and adjectives). Deponent verbs did not seem to be as familiar to candidates as in previous years. As usual with Ovid, to use singular for plural and vice versa is certainly acceptable, but unless a literal translation renders a passage unintelligible it will be better for candidates 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. A rudimentary application of scansion is always helpful.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates should be reminded that translations of single terms must be adequate for their context: far from being a mere mechanical exercise, candidates 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. Using the dictionary as a resource for potential syntax is also important, especially for idioms and for the constructions common to a verb (i.e. *dare aliquid alicui*). Teachers who do not already do this should allocate some extra time to practicing dictionary skills. Candidates should focus in their preparation on identifying phrase types (e.g. clauses, noun phrases, participial phrases, prepositional phrases) and on not violating the natural boundaries of Latin phrases and clauses. The best and most effective preparation is simply to have candidates practice in test conditions as often as possible.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 25	26 – 50	51 – 54	55 – 66	67 – 78	79 – 90	91 – 105

General comments

All teachers will be well aware that the marking of paper one will undergo a substantial change from May 2016. The fragmentary model now in use will be replaced by a more comprehensive one, where the stress is on the translation not of single words but of sense units. Inevitably, this will have repercussions on the marks, since it is only too clear that in past years high marks have been awarded also to translations that showed little knowledge of grammar and little understanding of the text.

This will no longer be possible with the new mark scheme, and it is advised that teachers use it in their everyday teaching. Focusing on the sense of single units means firstly recognising the units and understanding the structure of the Latin sentence, which is what candidates usually find most difficult. Reading the whole text carefully, identifying verbs, conjunctions, connectors and markers in general before attempting any translation is absolutely vital, and experience over the years has shown that candidates who make clever use of their pencil, underlining verbs and making clear the relation between conjunction and subordinate verbs, are invariably those who produce the best translations.

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 candidate, but in a predictable range. As in the case of HL, the majority of candidates chose to translate Ovid, but a larger number than in recent years chose Cicero. No perceptible difference in performance depending on the choice of text was noted in any range.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Cicero

In the first sentence of the text, the most consistent problems arose with navigating the parallel structure after the second *numquam*, and in noting the locatives *militiae* and *domi*. Many candidates seemed focused on providing vocabulary rather than translation; others focused on producing an elegant translation, but often left words out. It is very difficult to find a balance, but candidates should be encouraged to build their translations around easily identified structures (e.g. *aut ... aut*) and to note word order, which tends to fall into some conventional patterns in Cicero (e.g. in the phrase *obrepisti ad honores errore hominum*, it seems entirely unlikely to give *hominum* to *honores*). For middle achieving candidates, maintaining consistency in translation of words that agree, and identifying word type, proved a challenge. Deponent verbs continue to be a challenge for Standard Level candidates. Aside from these points, as often with Cicero at SL, candidates who make the attempt and keep their wits about them tend to do quite well.

Ovid

Candidates had relatively few difficulties with the first few lines, beyond a rather surprising gender switch for *Erycina*, and some issues with rendering the relative clause. Candidates had the opportunity to show their precision in the middle (*illa ... rni*) where they had to keep track of agreements and phrases (the relative clauses and the prepositional phrase). *Molire* (imperative) was a stumbling block for many, even though a deponent imperative has recently appeared on previous exams. The passage *tu ... ponti* was confusing for candidates who relied too heavily on the dictionary, neglecting case and other ending indicators (e.g. *superos* was very often taken as a verb, presumably *superas*). Agreement and word identification is key to managing Ovid. The usefulness of scansion for paper one Ovid (a skill which is required for many authors in paper two) cannot be overstated. Recognizing tense and mood depends on correct

identification of the conjugation to which a verb belongs – some candidates seemed more interested in the meaning of a verb and should be cautioned to note key syntax issues.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

The recommendations for Standard Level paper one are essentially the same as those for HL. It goes without saying, perhaps, that some knowledge of the stories in the *Metamorphoses* can only benefit candidates as they struggle with a relatively short text that must necessarily be a smaller part of a larger narrative excerpt.

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

General comments

The new curriculum will bring some changes to Higher Level paper two. The structure of the paper will remain the same in what is now to become Section A, while Section B will be, as seen in the specimen papers, a very open question where candidates have an opportunity to show their personal engagement with the prepared texts. As the assessment criteria make clear, the factors that can make a difference will be the willingness to go beyond the set reading, and the ability to construct from a prompt a logical and well-supported argument.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The paper was considered to be of appropriate difficulty and of a similar standard in comparison with last year by the vast majority of teachers.

As usual, the great majority of candidates chose the combination of elegiac/lyric and epic, followed by historiography and letters. Very few chose philosophy.

The whole extent of marks was awarded, with answers ranging from excellent to rather poor. In general, candidates tended to be more at ease with the prepared texts of paper two than with the unseen translation.

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 candidates will be highlighted.

Scansion questions were, on the whole, quite good. The explicit requirement of “writing out and scanning” lines made candidates clearly indicate the quantity of each syllable above the line: elisions are not counted per se, but of course are necessary in order to give the correct scansion.

Translations were also quite good, which is a credit to the candidates’ preparation, but please note that, since these are prepared texts, the mark scheme is quite demanding: omissions count as major errors, and candidates must be careful in not leaving out any words, typically adverbs and conjunctions.

Some teachers were puzzled by questions requiring to give additional details about a character, situation, etc. These are obviously very open questions aimed at testing the knowledge or understanding of the background, and candidates have a wide range of options to choose from. The mark scheme for this kind of questions is very open and there is no predetermined answer.

Although questions in the paper often ask to explain geographical references, candidates do not always show awareness of the geographical context of the actions described. Since the wording of question 1(d), as pointed out by teachers, may have been misleading, the mark scheme was amended to take into account a really wide range of possible answers, including references to the geographical locations, the mythological characters and their relevance. Oddly perhaps, quite a few candidates did not satisfactorily explain the reference to *Eos* in Catullus linking it to the divinity of dawn and, therefore, the East.

Questions that require to “support an answer by quoting the Latin text” must be carefully considered. These are, from an assessment point of view, extremely valid and reliable questions, and teachers should make their students practice this kind of task. It is unfortunate that some candidates lost marks because they did not quote the Latin at all. In some cases, however, the Latin was not enough. In 3 (c), for example, an answer like “I did not swear an oath to destroy Troy (*Troianam gentem*)” is not satisfactory because it misses the crucial verbs *iuravi* and *excindere*. Without these, there is no evidence that the Latin has been understood (a correct answer should have given *Troianam excindere gentem iuravi*). The same when too much Latin is given, to the point that an examiner cannot be sure to what exactly the candidate is referring, e.g. 3 (d) “I ask for relief from my madness (*tempus inane peto, requiem spatiumque dolor*)”: which are the words for “relief” and “madness”? The same for ellipses, which should be avoided altogether as it is potentially ambiguous. As a good rule of thumb, the Latin should be self-explanatory, i.e. make the text clear to somebody who has no previous knowledge of it. I hope this will help candidates and teachers.

While the whole range of marks was awarded in almost all the options, it is important to remark again that candidates seemed to struggle with the philosophical arguments of Lucretius. A good acquaintance with philosophical reasoning is essential when reading this very specific literature, and teachers should keep this in mind if choosing the more philosophical options offered in the new curriculum.

The 8-mark question often produced answers that were a pleasure to read, displaying a truly remarkable level of knowledge and sophisticated analytical skills. This question will only be awarded 6 marks in the new curriculum, but please remember that 2 marks will still be awarded for the consistency of the overall argument, i.e. the way stylistic details contribute to answering

the main question. Marks will still be awarded for single details supported by the Latin, but without a coherent argument no full marks can be gained.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers must focus on the required passages, but also have candidates 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 candidates 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, candidates must have an appropriate level of linguistic competency; for the latter, candidates need only know things about the required passages. It is, perhaps, a subtle difference but an important one nevertheless.

A map of the ancient world in the classroom (even better, a set of maps through different ages) is a great help for bringing to life the geographical setting of the events narrated.

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

General comments

The new curriculum will bring no changes to Standard Level paper two, so all comments for this year can be taken to be valid for future papers as well.

The whole extent of marks was awarded, with answers ranging from excellent to very poor. Although Standard Level paper two produces some rather poor scripts, in general, Standard Level candidates tend to be more at ease with the prepared texts of paper two than with the unseen translation.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The paper was considered by the vast majority of teachers to be of an appropriate level of difficulty and of a similar standard in comparison with last year.

As every year, the vast majority of candidates chose elegiac/lyric and epic, a good proportion chose history and letters, and very few philosophy. As in Higher Level, please remember that

the more philosophically oriented options will require a rather specific preparation in ancient philosophy and not just literature.

Candidate performance against each criterion

In what follows, some of the problems more commonly encountered by candidates will be highlighted. Please refer to the Higher Level report for the more general remarks.

Scansion questions were, on the whole, quite good, even in otherwise poor scripts. Translations were on the whole of very different quality, and too many marks were lost for omissions (a typical example being *modo* in question 1c). Translations of prepared texts are expected to be of a very good level, and candidates should carefully check that the entire text has been translated.

Question 1(c) is a good example of the degree of accuracy required in an answer, with “chaos” and “death” considered to be too generic for “*tumultum*” and “*mori per vim*”, where some reference to the civil wars and death *through violence* was necessary.

More candidates than expected showed little awareness of the historical context of the texts, with numerous answers in question 1 failing to correctly recognize the references to the achievements of Augustus, or the historical background implied in the mentioning of the Marsian war or Spartacus’ revolt. As a rule, candidates should be expected to be tested on historical and geographical references wherever they appear. In some cases incorrect factual details were given, e.g. in Question 8 (d), where a considerable number of candidates mixed up the decree of Nepos and the *senatus consultum*.

Some teachers were puzzled by the expression “rhetorical figures”. This is of course a synonym for “figures of speech” commonly used in academic as well as scholastic context all over the world, and the vast majority of candidates had no problems in answering these questions correctly. Please note that some flexibility is to be expected in the wording of questions and teachers should prepare their students accordingly. Finally, candidates should avoid answers such as “synchysis” or “word order” (sometimes also “chiasmus”) that often refer to perfectly normal constructions in Latin, and where no evident rhetorical intention is discernible. Since the mark scheme is very clear in this regard, it may seem that some centres are not making good use of it.

For the quotations of Latin please refer to the Higher Level remarks. It is vital that candidates be well aware of what is expected from them, since many marks can be gained or lost depending on how Latin is quoted. By way of example from Question 2, “to love all years (*amare porro*)” was obviously not acceptable, but also “to love all years (*ni te ... annos*)” or “to love all years (*omnes annos*)”. In this case, the three key words *amare omnes annos* should clearly have been stated. The mark scheme in previous years was quite open in this regard, but please note that more and more precision will be required in the years to come.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

As in Higher Level, teachers must focus on the required passages, but also have candidates read the texts in translation as much as possible.

Even more than at Higher Level, it seems that Standard Level candidates could benefit from a map or a set of maps of the ancient world hanging in the classroom.

By way of conclusion, the teachers' comments were very useful and have been much appreciated – although there were few of them. 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 following 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.