Latin

Overall grade boundaries

Grade:	E	D	C	B	A
Mark range:	0-7	8-15	16-22	23-28	29-36

The range and suitability of the work submitted

A variety of work of very different quality was submitted. There have been pieces of work of outstanding academic standard, and others that can be improved. In order to improve candidates should chose a topic that is worthy of investigation. The better essays investigated research questions related to the most important figures of the Classical antiquity such as Augustus, Nero, Tacitus, Sallust, Cicero and Virgil for Latin, and Plato, Thucydides, Aeschylus, Aristotle, Homer and Euripides for Greek.

The weaker essays struggled to distinguish between a report loaded with facts and a research essay guided by a research question that stimulates an investigation with an ensuing analysis and argument.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: research question

Most candidates stated their intentions clearly. Some essays presented inappropriate research questions due to the fact that they concentrated on historical periods other than classical antiquity or that they followed a comparative approach not directly related to classical languages, literature or civilization. Some other essays were too limited in scope, just making some comments of excerpts from an author with no actual analysis or evaluation involved. Working on a too broad topic was also a common error.

Criterion B: introduction

Some candidates do not explain the significance of the topic and they fail to explain how the research topic relates to existing knowledge on the topic. This could be verified in the bibliography: some essays do not list secondary sources on the topic being analyzed.

Criterion C: investigation

Stronger essays collect an interesting range of evidence to evaluate and analyze throughout the essay. Weaker essays do not show evidence of substantial background and/or collect material that is irrelevant to the research question.

Criterion D: knowledge and understanding of the topic studied

The best essays addressed the research question with a solid foundation on relevant knowledge. Weaker essays provide information that is not relevant to the topic or that is already common knowledge on the topic being analyzed.

Criterion E: reasoned argument

The best essays developed an argument with solid foundation on relevant knowledge. Weaker essays describe or report information without analysis, summarizing plots and historical events. Some weaker essays relied heavily on narrative or made generalized claims without evidence. Another common mistake is not properly integrating the discussion in the body of the essay but padding out information instead.

Criterion F: application of analytical and evaluative skills

Sometimes an essay offers sufficient descriptive material but does not attempt a critical analysis. Weaker candidates struggle to distinguish between a report loaded with facts and a research essay guided by a research question that stimulates an investigation with an ensuing analysis and argument

Criterion G: use of language appropriate to the subject:

Candidates must avoid generalizations or statements that are either vague or unsupported (no reference given). Weaker essays tend to express personal views.

Criterion H: conclusion

Only the weakest candidates performed poorly here. Consistency is the key word. The conclusion should develop out of the argument and not introduce new or extraneous information. It should not repeat the material of the introduction; rather it should present a new synthesis in light of the discussion.

Criterion I: formal presentation

Very weak essays fall way below the word limit of 4000 words. Strong essays list all the works cited in bibliography following a standard format. Weaker essays missed some of the components of the essay and provide information without citing the references.

Criterion J: abstract

Weaker essays do not present the three elements required, losing marks needlessly. How the research question was investigated or a very little understanding of what the conclusion was are the most common mistakes. A good abstract almost always accompanied a good essay. Poor candidates wrote poor abstracts because they had very little understanding of the Extended Essay requirements.

Criterion K: holistic judgement

Candidates should, before finally presenting their work, read it through thoughtfully, asking themselves whether the essay, taken as a whole, succeeds in persuading a sympathetic reader of the interest, importance and validity of its conclusions, and, if not, what steps could be taken to retrieve the situation.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

The student needs to follow the Extended Essay Guide closely and be extremely familiar with the assessment criteria.

In order to improve, candidates should choose a topic that is worthy of investigation. The research question should be made very clear and should be focused, avoiding research questions that are too broad in scope or research questions whose outcome is self-evident. The use of secondary sources is a must in any research essay: it is far from possible to develop an argument if there is not further investigation on the topic of choice. Candidates should avoid speculations and generalizations.

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