

Examiners' report

A LEVEL

LATIN

OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Latin

H443

For first teaching in 2016

H443/04 Summer 2025 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate responses is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from [Teach Cambridge](#).

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Paper 4 series overview

H443/04 (Latin Verse Literature) focuses on the comprehension and analysis of two set texts chosen from those prescribed in the specification in Groups 3 and 4 for 2025–2026. Virgil continues to be the most popular choice for both Groups 3 and 4. There were a few centres who opted for the Juvenal *Satire* 6 selection for Section A. For Section B, however, few centres studied the Juvenal selections in Group 4, with Ovid's *Fasti* 2 being the next most popular choice after *Aeneid* 2.

Candidates coped well with the time constraints of the exam and most were able to write complete 20-mark essays, suggesting that they managed their time well with the 15 mark questions. Knowledge of the prescribed English material was good and helped most candidates to write full responses with valid counter arguments.

Most candidates answered the 15-mark questions well and were aware that it is necessary to cover the whole passage in order to make a good range of points. Generally, candidates were aware that they needed to give a translation of the Latin they had quoted, but a few were still relying on ellipsis or single word quotations rather than picking out phrases and discussing them.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
- had an excellent knowledge and understanding of the set texts (including the ability to translate the Latin accurately) - understood that some responses to the short answer questions needed to go beyond simply providing a straight translation of the Latin In 15-mark questions: - selected a range of full quotations and discussed both their content and style - gave detailed and specific analysis of literary techniques with clear explanations as to how they enhanced the meaning of the text In 20-mark questions: - supported a clear line of argument with specific and wide-ranging examples from both the Latin and the English prescription.	- in short answer questions and translations did not have secure knowledge of what the Latin meant and thus produced translations with omissions and incorrect vocabulary, or translations which showed a misunderstanding of the grammar In 15-mark questions: - did not show their knowledge of the Latin which they had quoted - did not explain the effect of stylistic features but merely identified them (or did not discuss them at all) In 20-mark questions: - did not provide detailed examples or only offered examples predominantly based on the text in the question paper - gave arguments which were superficial and did not go beyond a retelling of the narrative.

Section A overview

Both questions produced some excellent answers, with the Virgil text being generally more popular than the Juvenal.

How to get full marks in a translation?



Many candidates miss marks due to the omission of words. While this will mostly result in a slight error for words such as *interea*, omission of more significant words (such as *ignotum* and *ultra* in Question 1 (b), for example) are considered major errors. Teachers should also make candidates aware of the guidance on applying the marking grids for set text translations available in mark schemes, specifically points 1-6.

Question 1 (a)

1 Read the following passages and answer the questions.

(a) Translate *ecce ... obtulerat* (lines 1–5).

[5]

Most candidates performed well on this question. A common error which prevented candidates from achieving full marks was the omission of words such as *ignotum* and *ultra* in line 3.

Question 1 (b)

(b) *fidens animi ... occumbere morti* (lines 5–6): what do we learn about Sinon here?

[2]

This question was answered very well, with most candidates scoring 2 marks.

Question 1 (c)

(c) *accipe nunc ... disce omnes* (lines 9–10): explain what Aeneas means by these words.

[1]

Generally speaking, candidates did not achieve the mark if they only offered a literal translation of the Latin. To achieve the mark, there needed to be an explanation that Sinon exemplifies the treachery of all Greeks.

Question 1 (d)

(d) *namque ut ... accipere* (lines 11–14): how does Sinon seem vulnerable?

[3]

Generally, this question was answered well with most candidates achieving full marks. A variety of translations were accepted for *turbatus* and *inermis*. Candidates needed to convey a sense that Sinon was surrounded and in full view, rather than simply stating that he was outnumbered.

Question 1 (e)

(e) *composito ... destinat arae* (line 2): whose actions are described here?

[1]

Some candidates incorrectly answered Ulysses to this question.

Question 1 (f)*

(f)* *adsensere omnes ... non digna ferentis* (lines 3–17): what makes this such a powerful and emotional section of Sinon's speech?

You should refer **both** to the content **and** to the language of the passage.

[15]

Misconception



A few lower-scoring responses did not correctly identify the syncopated form of *adsensere* and *tulere*, and instead referred to them as infinitives or historic infinitives.

Candidates who answered this question well understood that the speech's power lies in its rhetorical impact and power to manipulate the Trojans rather than 'the audience'. The most successful approach was to divide the passage into sections: the preparation of the sacrifice; the escape; Sinon's guilt and worry for his family; his entreaty to the Trojans for pity. The most successful responses understood the horror associated with human sacrifice (although some did then digress into irrelevant discussion of Iphigenia). They also discussed how Sinon mourning the loss of his homeland and family would appeal to the Trojans' proto-Roman admiration of *pietas*.

Lower-scoring responses spent a lot of time discussing how Sinon's speech makes the audience feel pity rather than showing awareness that the audience would be aware that he is lying. Many candidates thought that the final lines were an appeal to the gods rather than Sinon's appeal to the Trojans.

Assessment for learning



Many candidates wasted time by discussing lines 1–2 which were outside the lemma. Teachers should encourage their candidates to mark out the relevant sections for each question to avoid this mistake.

Exemplar 1

In addition to this, Sinon's account of his actions to escape ~~to~~ his sacrifice makes his speech particularly powerful ~~as~~ and emotional, as he is able to ~~show~~ ^{show} ^{both} his bravery ~~as~~ and sheer fear at betraying his own people. This is seen by his promotion of 'eipui' ~~to~~ as he claims 'eipui, fateor, leto me et vincula rupi' (I snatched myself away from death, I confess, and broke the chains). The emphatic positioning of 'eipui' highlights the shocking nature of Sinon's actions as he admits to escaping the sacrifice that was being prepared for him, making it a powerful account of his actions. Moreover the alliteration of in 'limosoque lacu per noctem obscurus in ulva delihui dum vele darent' (I lurked by a slimy lake through the night, hidden in ~~in~~ the grass until they should set sail), of 'l' ~~and~~ ^{first} 'd' allows Sinon to emphasise the slimy, ~~a~~ uncomfortable condition he was faced with to try save his own life, while the alliteration of the 'd's' allows him to encapsulate his anxiety, as it almost mimics his heart ~~beating~~ thumping, while hiding from the Greeks.

This exemplar demonstrates how the candidate effectively makes a point in relation to the question, supports it with consistent and translated reference to the Latin, and discusses both how the content and style makes the speech powerful and emotional. The candidate has effectively explained why the promotion of *eripui* is effective. The point about alliteration is well made, correctly identifying the device and explaining its effect.

Question 2 (a)

2 Read the following passages and answer the questions.

(a) What has Juvenal just said about the Silver Age?

[1]

Candidates performed well on this question.

Question 2 (b)*

(b)* How do these lines convey Juvenal's outrage and disbelief that Postumus is getting married?

You should refer **both** to the content **and** to the language of the passage.

[15]

Generally candidates were able to show a good understanding of the whole passage. The most successful responses divided it into sections: Juvenal's incredulity; his suggestion of ways to commit suicide; his suggestion that a *pusio* would be a better option. Not all candidates were able to confidently discuss the reference to Ursidius, possibly because of the question's reference to Postumus. This ambiguity was taken into account when answers were marked. It was disappointing how few candidates discussed in any great detail the methods of suicide which Juvenal suggests. Many, however, were able to offer up lively discussion of the verb choices, the diminutive, and contrast between boys and wives in the *pusio* section.

Question 2 (c)

(c) *sed cantet ... mamillis* (lines 1–4): give **two** examples of the woman's outrageous behaviour. [2]

Generally this was answered well but it is a good example of where direct translation of the Latin will not necessarily be given marks. Many candidates did not properly explain why *recta facie siccisque mamillis* shows outrageous behaviour, instead simply stating that the woman speaks 'with a straight face and dry nipples'.

Question 2 (d)

- (d) *haec eadem ... adulter* (lines 5–7): how do these lines show that the woman is a gossip who knows too much?

[4]

Candidates responded well to this question.

Discussion of literary techniques in short answer questions



The guidance in the mark scheme for some of the short answer questions instructs the examiner to accept valid and relevant discussion of literary techniques. Teachers must make sure that candidates understand that they must still show clearly that they understand what the Latin means.

For example, a candidate who wrote 'Juvenal shows the woman knows too much with the anaphora of *quid*' would not receive a mark. However, the candidate who explained that the anaphora of *quid* shows that the woman not only knows what the Chinese are doing but also the Thracians and so knows too much, could potentially have achieved 2 marks. As in 15-mark questions, best practice for discussion of literary techniques in this instance would be to provide a reference to the Latin, alongside a translation, to support the point.

Question 2 (e)

- (e) Translate *dicet quis ... facit* (lines 8–12).

[5]

This was a very accessible translation question with many candidates gaining full marks. The most common error was mistranslation of the future tense *dicet*.

Section B overview

Few centres studied the Juvenal selections in Group 4, with Ovid's *Fasti* 2 being the next most popular choice after *Aeneid* 2.

Question 3 (a)

3 Read the following passage and answer the questions.

- (a) *arma diu ... in hostes* (lines 1–3): which aspects of Virgil's description create sympathy for Priam?

[4]

This sort of question does not require style points (though valid points are credited if made). All that is required is four details from the Latin and a brief comment on why they evoke sympathy. Where candidates did not gain marks it was because they did not show detailed knowledge of the meaning of the text or mistranslated it (e.g. by referring to *inutile ferrum* as 'useless weapons' in the plural).

Question 3 (b)

- (b) *hic Hecuba ... sedebant* (lines 7–9): what makes this an appropriate simile?

[2]

Some candidates were not able to explain fully what makes this simile appropriate. Most were able to identify that the doves represent Hecuba and her daughters. Some were not able to link the storm with the Greeks. Some were not able to properly explain the ways in which the Trojan women were like doves and the Greeks were similar to a storm.

Question 3 (c)

- (c) *ipsum autem ... inquit* (lines 10–12): how does Virgil show the foolishness of Priam's actions?

[2]

Candidates had no issues with question.

Question 3 (d)

(d) Translate *non tali auxilio ... locavit* (lines 13–17).

[5]

This was the trickier of the two *Aeneid* translations, but a range of responses was accepted, particularly for *huc tandem concede*. Once again, omission of words was a common error, notably *omnes* in line 15 and *longaevum* in line 17.

Question 3 (e)*

(e)* *ecce autem ... funere vultus* (lines 18–31): how does Virgil make this a dramatic and emotional passage?

You should refer **both** to the content **and** to the language of the passage.

[15]

Generally speaking, candidates answered this question really well. There was clear evidence that they had been well prepared to discuss both the content and style of a passage so rich in drama and emotion. The strongest responses were able to confidently discuss the spondaic/dactylic elements of the passage (lines 18 and 21, for example). It is best practice for candidates to show their understanding of the metre by annotating the quotation they are referring to. Lower-scoring responses struggled with the more complex Latin of Priam's appeal to the gods but most answers offered excellent coverage of the whole passage.

Exemplar 2

Firstly, Virgil dramatically describes Polites fleeing into the palace. He draws the reader's attention in right from the beginning with the ~~re~~ imperative 'ecce' (look!) emphatically placed at the beginning of the line. Then he describes how 'elapsus Pyrochi de caede Polites' (Polites escaped from the slaughter of Pyrochus), with 'elapsus' (escaped) perhaps giving the reader false hope that Polites will survive. Virgil details that 'per tela, per hostes/particibus longis fugit et voca atria lustrat/saucius' (he fled through weapons, through the enemy in the long porticoes and surveyed the empty halls, wounded). The repetition of 'per' (through) here and the double enjambment ~~adds pace~~ quickens the pace, ~~adding~~ adding urgency and drama to Polites' flight. Plus, the enjambment means that 'saucius' (wounded) is delayed and emphatically placed at the beginning of the line with ~~consequa~~ after it to allow the reader to linger on the significance of this. Polites is ~~per~~ injured, perhaps fatally, or at least it will limit his ability to fight. This dramatically reveals that he is unlikely to escape and reach safety.

Virgil continues the drama into his account of Polites' death.

At

P.T.O.

He switches the focus to how 'illum ardens
 infesto vulnere Pyrrhus insequitur' (blazing Pyrrhus
 pursued him with a wound ready to inflict). 'ardens'
 (blazing) and the ^{powerful} forceful verb 'insequitur'
 (pursued) dramatically bring out the destructive
 force of Pyrrhus, with exclamation suggesting he is
 unstoppable. The word 'infesto' (ready to inflict) literally
 means 'threatening', suggesting Polites' death is
 imminent and inescapable. Virgil ~~so~~ adds 'iam
 inque manu tenet et premit hasta' (now,
 even now, he grasped him with his hand and pushed
 down with his spear). The repetition of 'iam' (now)
 focuses the reader on this moment, heightening the
 drama, plus the vivid historic present verbs 'tenet'
 (grasps) and 'premit' (pushes) add to the sense
 of immediacy for the reader. Furthermore, the chiasmic
 effect of 'manu tenet et premit hasta' (he grasped
 him with his hand and pushed down with the spear)
 further creates a dramatic description of the killing
 and Pyrrhus' brutal professionalism in it. This
 brutality adds drama and emotion as it might
 provoke the reader's outrage against Pyrrhus' cruel
 violence. This is furthered when Polites finally reaches
 his parents and 'concidit, ac multo vitam cum
 sanguine fudit' (collapsed, and poured out his
 life with a lot of blood). The vivid verbs 'concidit'
 (collapsed) and 'fudit' (poured out), again historic present,
 add to the drama. Plus the word order of 'multo

P.T.O.

vitam cum sanguine' (his life with a lot of blood), with 'vitam' (life) placed within 'multo... sanguine' (a lot of blood) reflects the meaning of Polites' life disappearing as his blood flows from his body. This ~~sympathetic~~ image increases the drama further and draws out the reader's emotions in sympathy for him and outrage at Pyrrhus' cruelty.

Priam's outrage also serves to compound the reader's, as Virgil describes how "at tibi pro scelere," exclamation, "pro talibus ausidiis... persolvant gratas dignas et praemia reddant debita" (he shouted, ^{"But in"} "In return for your crime, in return for such god-broven behaviour, may the gods pay you worthy thanks and may they give you the rewards you deserve"). The repetition of 'pro' (in return for) here, as well as the phrase 'gratas dignas' (worthy thanks) and 'debita' (you deserve) highlights how Priam feels Pyrrhus needs to pay for his actions.* The variation of the verbs 'persolvant' (may they pay) and 'reddant' (may they give/pay), in the present subjunctive for a fervent wish, convey the strength of Priam's emotions that Pyrrhus should be punished. He calls on the gods to do this, 'si qua est caelo pietas quae talia curat' (if there is any righteousness in heaven to care for such things), adding to the strength

P.T.O.

*Also, the loaded language 'scelere' (crime) and 'ausis' (broven behaviour) adds to ^{in sense of} Priam's contempt for Pyrrhus' actions."

of his emotions. 'pietas' (righteousness) is as important Roman virtue, showing how Priam is claiming the moral high ground. and his outburst His accusation that Pyrrhus has 'patris foredasti' 'noti coram me coram letum fecisti et patrios foredasti funere vultus' (made me see the death of my son face to face and defiled the face of his father). with piteous alliteration bringing out his resentment, brings out his outrage further. The words 'coram' (face to face) highlights the trauma of seeing a son die and 'foredasti' (defiled) stresses that this is a moral crime, heightening the emotion.

This candidate effectively demonstrated very good engagement with the Latin of the whole passage. They discussed a combination of content and style, and supported their discussion with well chosen (and translated) examples from the text.

The first point shows excellent understanding of how Virgil builds tension and vividly describes the desperate escape of Polites.

The second point effectively discusses Virgil's word choice and the use of the historic present. While many candidates were able to identify the chiasmus in line 22, not all were able to discuss effectively what the effect is, as this candidate does.

The final discussion on Priam's outrage is also impressive. The candidate once again discusses Virgil's word choice and makes a perceptive point about the use of the subjunctive.

Question 4 (a)

4 Read the following passage and answer the questions.

(a) Translate *plurima sunt ... fritillo* (lines 1–5).

[5]

This was mostly answered well. Where marks were missed it was often due to not spotting the superlative form of *plurima* (a common error at GCSE and A Level) and/or omitting *ipsi*.

Question 4 (b)

(b) Explain the reference to *bullatus* (line 5).

[1]

Some candidates did not achieve this mark because they did not show understanding that a *bullā* was a charm specifically associated with childhood.

Question 4 (c)

(c) *nec melius ... gula* (lines 6–10): how does the young man behave as a result of his father's influence?

[3]

Candidates were confident in answering this question.

Question 4 (d) (i) and (ii)

(d) *cum septimus annus ... culina* (lines 10–14):

(i) why might you expect a Roman boy's behaviour to change at the age of seven?

[1]

(ii) what, according to Juvenal, actually happens?

[3]

Some candidates did not understand that age 7 was when a Roman boy's formal education would begin. Many seemed to think that at this age Roman children were considered to be 'grown up' or made a transition to adulthood. For Question 4 (d) (ii) most achieved 2 marks with a direct translation of lines 13–14 but a number did not mention the employment of 1000 teachers.

Question 4 (e)*

(e)* *quid suadet ... cinaedis* (lines 15–30): how does Juvenal draw attention to the negative effects of bad parenting in this passage?

You should refer **both** to the content **and** to the language of the passage.

[15]

This was a challenging passage and candidates either answered it very well or poorly, with not many achieving the middle level of marks. The biggest misconceptions lay in the understanding of lines 16–19 with some candidates not understanding the contrast Juvenal is making. The most successful responses showed good understanding of the philosophical context of these lines, although a number showed some confusion over the differences between Stoic and Epicurean thought. Overall, candidates were more confident discussing *Larga* and her daughter, with many making perceptive comments on Juvenal's word choice of *moechum* and *cinaedis*.

Question 5 (a)

5 Read the following passage and answer the questions.

(a) Translate *sic epulis ... audet* (lines 1–5).

[5]

Overall, candidates answered this well. Some found line 2 *et positis iuxta secubere toris* a challenge and the purpose clause in line 4 was not always accurately rendered.

Question 5 (b)

(b) *utque videt ... soporis idem* (lines 7–8): explain Faunus' reasoning here.

[2]

Candidates responded confidently to this question.

Question 5 (c)*

(c)* *intrat ... acta patent* (lines 9–26): how does Ovid make this passage vivid and entertaining?

You should refer **both** to the content **and** to the language of the passage.

[15]

Candidates clearly engaged with the humour of this passage and the strongest answers understood properly the impact of the crossdressing scene which precedes it on the audience's enjoyment. More successful responses also commented on how it reads like a scene from a comic drama and discussed the use of slapstick towards the end. Most felt able to comment on *et tumidum cornu durius inguen erat* without issue, and acknowledgement of this episode as an account of attempted assault was handled maturely and sensitively by candidates.

Exemplar 3

He begins by dynamically describing Faunus 'enters and wanders here and there rashly as an adulter' (*intrat... adulter*). The promoted 'intrat' (*enters*) reflects his eagerness to carry out his plan, and the phrase 'huc illuc' (here and there) nicely describes his almost random movements. In the darkness, Faunus cannot see and thus he 'follows his cautious hands' (*cautas subsequiturque manus*). The ~~the~~ separation of 'cautas... manus' (cautious hands) physically

mimics the ~~more~~ manner in which he is feeling his way forward; out stretched and spread out. Finally, he makes it to the soft coverlets of the bed by groping, (*versat... lucti*), having discovered where Omphale lay. The bed sounds particularly comfortable, with 'the captured coverlets' (*captata cubilia*) drawing emphasis to ~~the~~ its appeal with the repeated 'c' sound. Thus, Ovid makes this passage vivid and entertaining by building suspense in how Faunus searches for Omphale in the dark.

This candidate achieved a mark on the borderline of Level 4 and Level 3. This exemplar shows that they had some engagement with the Latin but their points are not supported with well-selected examples from the passage. Candidates should be discouraged from using ellipsis in their Latin quotations and ideally they should put their English translation in parentheses rather than the other way around. This candidate has not discussed any style points at the start of the passage beyond the reference to *intrat*. The point about the separation of *cautas ... manus* is more confidently made. The point about the alliteration of 'c' in *captata cubilia* is unconvincing and the explanation as to how this makes the passage vivid and entertaining is underdeveloped.

Question 5 (d)

(d) *ille gemit ... humo* (lines 27–28): how do these lines show Faunus' discomfort? [2]

Candidates responded well to this question.

Question 5 (e)

(e) *ridet et ... puella suum* (lines 29–30): explain the references to *Alcides* and *Lyda puella*. [2]

Some candidates did not understand that they needed to explain in what way *Alcides* and *Lyda puella* referred to Hercules and Omphale. Many incorrectly referred to Alceus as Hercules' father rather than grandfather.

Question 5 (f)

(f) *veste deus ... vocat* (lines 31–32): what were the consequences of this incident? [2]

Many candidates understood that it is specifically the Luperci who run naked as part of the Lupercalia.

Section C overview

Most candidates answered the question on the *Aeneid*. Interestingly, many candidates answered on Ovid in Section B but Virgil in Section C.

Question 6*

6* 'There is nothing positive in *Aeneid* Book 2.'

To what extent do you agree?

[20]

The most successful responses to this question were able to offer a counter-argument which demonstrated full understanding of the place of *Aeneid* 2 in the wider context of the poem and the Augustan regime. Many candidates seemed to underestimate the role of Aeneas' destiny as founding hero of Rome in the overall tone of Book 2. The strongest responses identified the start of Aeneas' transition from Homeric to proto-Roman hero as an indication of hope. Those who achieved higher marks were able to give detailed examples from the latter stages of Book 2 and these often made perceptive comments on the role of the gods (specifically the scene where Venus reveals their contribution to the fall of Troy) and fate.

Less successful responses focused predominantly on the deceit of Sinon and the Trojan horse and the deaths of Priam and Polites. Some candidates did not seem to understand the implications of the Trojans' use of treachery when they disguise themselves as Greeks and how this would have been perceived by the Roman audience. Some candidates seemed to ignore that the narrative is told from Aeneas' point of view as a survivor and refugee, even arguing that from a Greek perspective, Book 2 can be read as quite positive.

Question 7*

7* 'Juvenal's view of humanity is overwhelmingly pessimistic and negative.'

From your reading of *Satires* 3, 14, and 15, how far do you agree with this statement?

[20]

The few who answered this essay seemed to have very much enjoyed the selections of Juvenal which they had read. More successful responses were able to discuss examples across all three satires and the best answers evaluated the role of persona in relation to the question. There was some lively discussion of Egyptian cannibalism and the dangers of Rome. Stronger responses evaluated the nostalgic and idealistic representation of the past as part of their counter-argument.

Question 8*

8* To what extent do you think that crime and immorality are Ovid's main focus in *Fasti* 2? [20]

This was the second most popular essay choice after the Aeneid question but generally was not answered as confidently. Some candidates had difficulty understanding the often disjointed structure of *Fasti* 2. Some did not discuss the *Regefugium* in any great detail and instead listed narrative examples from earlier in the text which did not help to develop their argument.

More successful responses saw candidates identify other themes which may have been Ovid's focus such as his presentation of the Augustan regime or his portrayal of Roman history. A few very strong responses analysed his presentation of autocracy and debated whether the *Fasti* can be considered a pro- or anti-Augustan poem.

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