

Examiners' report

A LEVEL

LATIN

OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Latin

H443

For first teaching in 2016

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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 2 series overview

The alternative sections of the paper seemed to even out in terms of demand: both posed a challenge to candidates of all abilities. Approximately two-thirds selected Comprehension and Grammar, and there was a wider range of performance here than among the Prose Composition candidates. Some impressive performances were seen on both and there were fewer really low-scoring performances than in recent years; marks approaching 50, however, on either section were rare. Time seemed adequate for all – except for a small number who ill-advisedly spread it between attempts at both sections.

Section A overview

In a comprehension exercise such as this, unlike a purely translation paper, a response is either right or it is wrong: answers which are close, even including some of the correct words, do not show genuine *comprehension* of what is being read and therefore may not count. The sections of Latin used in the questions are mostly several lines long and candidates who attempt to pick out answers without taking time to digest the *whole* of each section soon create a muddle for themselves.

In Q1, for instance, a response such as the one in Exemplar 1 below contained a jumble of useful elements but showed limited grasp of what the sentence as a whole is really saying.

Exemplar 1

plain of treacheries. They
got the republic in very
great danger. They
admired their slaughter.
~~They had set fire to some~~
~~to some things and~~ They
had prepared to set fire
to some ~~things~~ and to
do cruel things in the
streets and the country.

The time allowed should be generous enough to allow for a complete reading of the passage *before* any responses are committed to paper and, ideally, for a second thorough reading afterwards to catch any points missed.

Many produced responses to the grammar questions which were at variance with their responses earlier about the same parts of the passage. Candidates are advised to make use of the grammar questions as an opportunity to revisit their responses to the comprehension questions, rather than viewing them as something detached from the main part of the exercise.

Candidates who did well on this section generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this section generally did the following:
• had a wide and firm knowledge of vocabulary acquired from reading a range of Latin authors • were able to make plausible guesses at the meaning in context of unfamiliar words • had a robust knowledge of standard <i>accidence</i> and syntax • digested the text and questions thoroughly before starting to write down responses to any questions.	• did not know the meanings of common words, e.g. those listed on the AS vocabulary list • lacked sufficient experience/flexibility to make plausible shots at unfamiliar words • lacked a sufficiently robust knowledge of basic <i>accidence</i> and syntax • did not study the text as a whole, focusing piecemeal on individual questions.

Question 1 (a)

1 *cum res ... sumendum* (lines 1–3):

(a) what accusations did Cato make against the conspirators?

[5]

Most made something of these lines, but many did not read *cum ... paravisse* as a single structure, instead picking out bits haphazardly (see above). 'Wicked', for instance, was regularly transferred from the men to the plans, and the ascending tricolon 'slaughter, burning and other cruel deeds' was often broken up and separated from 'prepared against the citizens and the country'.

Question 1 (b)

(b) what course of action did he suggest?

[2]

The general sense of this was usually correctly interpreted, but many were unsure what to make of the verb *sumere* and there was a tendency not to reproduce exactly what the words *more antiquo* were saying.

Question 2

2 In lines 4–6 (*postquam ... suaserat*), what indications are there that Cato's speech received a positive reaction from the Senate?

[6]

A good number of candidates managed to gain 4 or more marks here – helped by having a point to spare in the mark scheme. Not all conveyed the meaning of *sententiam*, with 'sentence' or 'wisdom' appearing in a number of scripts. Examiners were tolerant with reasonably close renditions of the difficult sentence *virtutem ... ferunt*, but only a handful of candidates really explained what Sallust means here. Two common idioms caused problems: *alii alios* was rarely understood, and not all realised that *habetur* records how Cato 'was regarded' by the senate.

Question 3

- 3 *tum ... praetores* (lines 7–9): what does Sallust mention which shows fear and urgency? [5]

Many also achieved good results here – again helped by a little flexibility in the mark scheme. It was crucial to appreciate the force of *agendum* ('had to be done' or similar) and that *ante noctem* belonged with it rather than with *ratus*. Many appropriately noted that the executioners were placed on immediate standby and that the consul himself took Lentulus off to the prison and the praetors took the remaining conspirators, although very few knew what to make of *praesidiis dispositis*.

Question 4

- 4 *est in carcere ... facies* (lines 9–12): what details does Sallust give about the prison to which the prisoners were taken? [6]

This proved to be one of the most testing sections. A surprising number did not recognise *appellatur*, translating it as 'driven', or similar. As ever, numerals were not well known, *duodecim* being thought by many to mean 'twenty', while *pedes* was sometimes turned into *pedites*, with entertaining results. Very few grasped that the prison was actually underground, making this point a particularly good discriminator. In the final phrase *terribilis* was more frequently taken with *odore* than with *facie*, costing many a mark.

Question 5

- 5 Translate *in eum locum ... invenit* (lines 12–14).
Please write your translation on alternate lines. [10]

There were many good attempts at this, with a large number gaining 7 or more marks. Common errors included not bringing out the force of *demissus*, the meaning of *fregerunt*, the dislocation of the adjective *nobilis*, and the meanings in this context of *gente* and *consulare imperium* ('empire of Rome' appearing quite frequently). The last phrase proved a real discriminator, as the use of *dignum* + ablative seemed generally unfamiliar (both 'dignified' and 'deserving by' appearing) and the fact that it describes *exitium vitae* was rarely spotted.

Question 6

- 6 *de ceteris ... est* (lines 14–15): what happened to the other conspirators? [1]

This was well understood by almost all candidates, although (as in Q1 (b)) they often skated over the meaning of verb *sumere*.

Question 7 (a), (b), (c) and (d)

7 State and explain the case of the following:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| (a) <i>cives</i> (line 3) | [2] |
| (b) <i>spatio</i> (line 7) | [2] |
| (c) <i>ceteris</i> (line 9) | [2] |
| (d) <i>eodem modo</i> (line 15) | [2] |

Case names were supplied correctly by the majority, although a few guesses appeared, including the absent genitive. Explanations, however, were often inadequate and sometimes quite wrong.

'State and explain the case.'

The appropriate grammatical labels, e.g. 'instrumental' for (d), 'time within which' for (b) – are always welcome, from those who are 100% certain what these denote. In unsure hands, however, they can become a lottery, in which case they are probably best avoided and replaced by a brief translation of the encapsulating phrase. Sometimes, as in (a), a translation is almost the only way of conveying what actually is the reason for the case: to say, for example, '*cives* is accusative because it follows *in*' does little more than state the self-evident and was not accepted as a satisfactory *explanation* of the effect of this phrase in this context. Final warning: if candidates offer both a grammatical term and a translation, these must match – otherwise no mark will be given.

Question 8 (a), (b) and (c)

8 Give the present infinitive of the following:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| (a) <i>locutus</i> (line 1) | [1] |
| (b) <i>dispositis</i> (line 8) | [1] |
| (c) <i>fregerunt</i> (line 13) | [1] |

This was generally tackled well, with noticeably fewer first person singulars this year in place of the infinitive. The deponent *loqui* was, surprisingly, probably the best answered, *frangere* the least familiar, while too many lost a mark in (b) by carelessly writing *deponere*. Candidates need to be aware that for this exercise every right or wrong letter counts.

Question 9 (a) and (b)

9 Explain why the following verbs need to be subjunctive, using a translation if you think it is helpful:

(a) *venerit* (line 2) [1]

(b) *fieret* (line 8) [1]

Part (b) was confidently analysed by most, usually as a purpose clause, with a minority judging (reasonably) that the context might equally imply a fearing clause. For (a), 'a *cum* clause' was not judged to be a sufficient 'explanation', which demanded either translation as 'since' (not 'when') or the label 'causal'.

Question 10 (a) and (b)

10 In line 7, *ratus ante noctem agendum esse*, which parts of the verb are:

(a) *ratus*? [1]

(b) *agendum*? [1]

This question was often well done in both parts. However, the neuter singular *agendum* led some to see it automatically as a gerund, and for (a) some were misled by their awareness that the deponent *ratus* can frequently be translated as 'thinking' into describing this grammatical form as a present participle.

Section B overview

For those equipped with the skills and experience necessary for this kind of exercise the passage seemed well within their scope. A wide range of standard Latin constructions was tested – indirect statement, question and command, relative clause, consecutive and final clauses – and the storyline rarely moved outside some of the most common Latin vocabulary. In several places, however, less practised candidates frequently seemed unaware of the need (common in exercises of this type) to reduce English phrasing to its basic meaning and re-interpret it using recognisable Latin idioms. While the number of really polished versions was perhaps a little disappointing, there were many serviceable attempts and fewer candidates this year seemed completely out of their depth.

Opportunities for more stylish writing – idiomatic alternative constructions, subordination using participles, or the choice or positioning of individual words – were fairly easy to find: most responses merited at least 2 or 3, and many earned all of the 5 marks available. The most successful candidates, however, are always those who concentrate on getting the standard grammar and vocabulary right rather than experimenting with unsure alternatives, especially if these are no real improvement on the obvious.

Candidates who did well on this section generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this section generally did the following:
• had a wide and firm knowledge of vocabulary acquired from reading a range of Latin authors • had a robust knowledge of standard accidence and syntax • had had plenty of practice at similar examples of this exercise (especially previous papers) • aimed at producing a straightforward, accurate version, without taking unnecessary risks with grammar or vocabulary.	• did not know the meanings of common words, e.g. those listed on the AS vocabulary list • lacked a sufficiently robust knowledge of basic accidence and syntax • lacked sufficient experience/flexibility to turn English idioms into plausible Latin • tried to use complex constructions or exotic vocabulary unnecessarily in place of standard alternatives.

Question 11

11 Translate this passage into Latin prose.

You are reminded that marks will be awarded for the style of your translation.

Please write your translation on alternate lines.

[50]

(i) *Severus hoped to conquer the whole island and gradually advanced through Caledonia.*

This sentence allowed a good start for most, apart from a few stop-gaps for 'gradually' and one major grammatical hurdle; the majority did not notice the need for 'hope' to be accompanied by *se* + future infinitive, not just an English-style present infinitive.

(ii) *The troops put great effort into cutting down forests and bridging rivers ...*

Candidates offered a variety of approaches here, some ingenious without being especially difficult, (e.g. Exemplar 2); others more sophisticated, using the phrase *operam dederunt* + two gerundives; there were also, unfortunately, too many which attempted impossibly un-Latinate constructions (e.g. Exemplar 3). The phrase *flumen iungere* was employed quite frequently but unfortunately without the essential *pontibus*, which was again often neglected by those who used *flumina transire*.

Exemplar 2

copiae, quamquam magno cum
 labore silvas excidebant et
~~flumina~~ trans flumina pontes
 aedificabant, diu proelium

Exemplar 3

progressus est. milites magnum ~~opem~~ ^{laborem} ~~in~~ ^{exidentem} ~~decidens~~ silvasque aedificientem
 pontem trans exidentes silvasque
 aedificientem pontes trans glumes dederunt,

(iii) *but for a long time they fought no battle and saw no enemy. The inhabitants had left in the fields many herds of cattle ...*

This was fairly easy for many, provided they had basic vocabulary and grammar at their disposal. *incolae* seemed surprisingly unfamiliar or the difference between *inimici* and *hostes*, or *discedere* and *relinquere*. The formation of the perfect stem of *relinquo*, the ablative plural *agris* and the neuter plural *pecora* were all surprisingly hit-and-miss. It was good to see many retaining something of the emphasis in 'no battle ... and no enemy', e.g. by using *nec ... nec* or by simply omitting the connective altogether (*nullum proelium, nullos hostes*).

(iv) *which the soldiers tried to seize until they suddenly came under attack. So weak that they could hardly walk ...*

It was important here to choose the relative pronoun carefully to refer back to *pecora* (rarely given enough thought). Practised Latinists sensed that anything like *sub impetum venire* was unlikely to be an idiomatic Latin equivalent for the English phrase 'came under attack', which was done much better by the straightforward *oppugnati sunt* ('suddenly' suggesting the perfect rather than the imperfect). Many supplied a subjunctive here, but actually none is required when *dum/donec* states a historical fact rather than an expectation. The consecutive clause usually did get a nice subjunctive, but sometimes with the loss of 'could' – too important to the sense here to be adequately represented by *ambularent* alone, rather than *ambulare possent*.

(v) *around fifty thousand men were killed by their own side to avoid capture.*

Predictably, the number 50,000 caused widespread problems: the spelling and indeclinable nature of *quingenta*, the declension of *mille*, and the need for it to be accompanied by a genitive (e.g. *copiarum*). After much research into Latinity, both masculine and neuter agreement were found to be acceptable for 'were killed'. However, this section presented two examples where English wording cannot be simply reproduced in anything resembling 'real' Latin: 'by their own side' and 'to avoid capture' were readily turned by those accustomed to doing this kind of thing into *a suis (militibus)* and *ne caperentur*, while the less experienced relied on approaches such as *a suo latere* and *ut capi vitarent*.

(vi) *But Severus, carried in a litter to conserve his strength, demanded to reach the very end of land.*

The 're-set' of the story here gave many a second wind and most were able to come up with something that conveyed the right idea. 'To conserve his strength' was often done using a neat gerundive as with a

standard purpose clause. Few candidates, however, seemed aware of the difference in meaning between *vis* and *vires*: the latter was what was needed here. 'Demanded to reach' offered several possible routes and many incorporated colourful vocabulary such as *flagitavit* or *poposcit*. The least successful phrase was 'the very end of land', where many gave over-simplified versions, omitting *ad* or anything to cover 'very', or tried to invent curious superlatives such as *finitissimum*.

(vii) *There he observed how the length of the days and nights changes between summer and winter with the course of the sun.*

This section presented only one major grammatical hurdle – to make the final verb subjunctive in an indirect question (present and imperfect were accepted equally). A small number decided, rightly, that the sense here is actually better conveyed by an indirect statement. The big surprise was how many candidates struggled with vocabulary for 'summer' and 'winter'. Both here and on 'days and nights' candidates often struggled to find the correct formation in the appropriate declension.

(viii) *He eventually forced the Caledonians to surrender the greater part of their territory ...*

This was a straightforward section for many – so long as they had vocabulary for 'forced' and 'surrender', and didn't confuse *maiolem* with *meliolem*. 'Territory' could simply be *terra*, but it was nice to see *fines* often used instead. 'Their' had to be reflexive, rather than *eorum* – something that often went unnoticed.

(ix) *then returned to his fortress at York, where shortly afterwards he died, worn out by illness.*

Many seemed to find this a fairly simple finale, but for others it turned into a minefield of small difficulties. 'Returned' often became *reddidit*; the fortress was usually a *castellum* or just *villa*, rarely a *castra*; York, being in apposition to 'fortress', required the accusative rather than the locative; 'shortly afterwards' often sparked off the idiomatic *haud multo post*, but there were many less impressive variations such as *mox postea*; *mortuus est* was frequently misspelled; and, while many knew *(de-)fatigatus* or, better still, *confectus* or *consumptus*, surprisingly many added the preposition *a* to the noun *morbo* or simply didn't know the word for 'illness'.

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