

Examiners' report

A LEVEL

LATIN

OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Latin

H443

For first teaching in 2016

H443/01 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.

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Paper 1 series overview

Examiners felt that the level of demand and the performance of candidates were closely in line with the 2024 paper. Both passages had a clear storyline and where sentences contained a particularly difficult phrase there was usually enough in the rest of the section to allow candidates to pick up marks. The vast majority of candidates grasped the general gist of the two passages and it was rare to find a candidate who had run out of time.

As in previous years, many chose to do the scansion question before beginning their translation of the Ovid, which is fine. Some also chose to tackle the Ovid passage before the Livy.

Most, but not all, followed the requirement to write on alternate lines. Typed scripts were mostly likely to slip up in this regard. The quality of handwriting on handwritten scripts was rarely an issue.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
- made good use of the generous English introductions so that they knew what was going on - had a wide knowledge of the sort of vocabulary tested at this level, especially vocabulary typical of Livy (e.g. <i>tribunus</i>, <i>pugnare</i>, <i>signa conferre</i>) and Ovid (e.g. <i>carina</i>, <i>puppis</i>, <i>virgo</i>) - were able to make sensible guesses at the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g. <i>alias</i>, <i>universus</i>, <i>velifer</i>, <i>ignoscere</i>, <i>velare</i>) - had a strong knowledge of accidence and syntax, including features particular to Livy and Ovid (e.g. the third person perfect form in <i>-ere</i>) - understood the metrical scheme of a pentameter line - checked their work carefully to make sure that they had not omitted a Latin word by mistake.	- did not know the meaning of even quite common words (e.g. words on the GCSE and AS Level Defined Vocabulary Lists) - did not make the best use of the introductions to the passages as a guide to the storylines - did not always make sensible guesses at the meaning of unfamiliar words to fit the context (especially <i>velifera</i> and <i>gentis</i> in the Ovid) - did not have a strong enough knowledge of accidence and syntax to cope well with the more difficult sections - were unsure on the pentameter line in the scansion question.

Section A overview

The two major difficulties in the passage were the phrase *vestrum quoque quibus commodum est* and the final sentence. Most candidates followed the storyline well, especially those who made full use of the English introduction.

Question 1

- 1 Translate the following passage into English. **Please write your translation on alternate lines.** [50]

On the anniversary of Scipio's victory over the Carthaginians in battle, he is in the Forum facing a charge of financial misconduct. He reminds the assembly of his achievements and invites them to join him in giving thanks to the gods.

The speeches went on until nightfall and then the trial was postponed until a later date.

ubi ea dies venit, tribuni in rostris prima luce consederunt; arcessitus Scipio magno agmine amicorum clientiumque per mediam contionem ad rostra subiit silentioque facto 'hoc' inquit 'die, tribuni plebis vosque, Quirites, cum Carthaginiensibus signis collatis bene ac feliciter pugnavi. itaque, cum hodie litibus supersederi aequum sit, ego hinc in Capitolium ad Iovem ceterosque deos qui arcu praesident salutandos ibo, hisque gratias agam quod mihi et hoc ipso die et saepe alias optime gerendae rei publicae mentem dederunt. vestrum quoque quibus commodum est, Quirites, ite mecum, et orate deos ut mei similes principes habeatis.'

5

ab rostris in Capitolium ascendit. simul se universa contio avertit et secuta Scipionem est, adeo ut postremo etiam scribae tribunos relinquerent, nec cum eis praeter servos quisquam esset. Scipio non in Capitolio modo sed per totam urbem omnia templa deum cum populo Romano circumiit. celebratio is dies fuit aestimatione vera magnitudinis eius quam quo triumphans de Carthaginiensibus victis urbem invectus est.

10

Livy 38.51 (adapted)

Names

<i>Scipio, -onis</i> (m)	Scipio (a Roman general)
<i>Quirites, -ium</i> (m pl)	citizens of Rome
<i>Carthaginienses, -ium</i> (m pl)	Carthaginians
<i>Capitolium, -i</i> (n)	the Capitoline hill
<i>Iuppiter, Iovis</i> (m)	Jupiter

Words

<i>rostra, -orum</i> (n pl)	platform
<i>contio, -onis</i> (f)	assembly, gathering
<i>lis, litis</i> (f)	court case
<i>supersedeo, -ere</i>	I refrain from
<i>aequus, -a, -um</i>	right, just
<i>scriba, -ae</i> (m)	scribe
<i>aestimatio, -onis</i> (f)	recognition, valuation

1(i): A few candidates had problems with the meaning of *consederunt* but most found this a gentle start to the passage. It was not necessary to take account of the prefix *con-* but translations which took it as *contra-* or *circum-* were not accepted.

1(ii): Not everyone knew the meaning of *arcessitus*. Although the ablative *multo agmine* meant 'with a great crowd', examiners accepted translations which took the ablative as instrumental after *arcessitus*. *subiit* caused problems: it means to come up to from underneath, so 'went up to the platform' was fine but not 'went under the platform'.

1(iii): The ablative absolute *silentio facto* caused surprising problems, but examiners accepted a wide range of translations. *plebis* needed to be taken with *tribune*, not *vos*. As often, *cum* (with? when?) caused difficulty; here the sense was 'I fought with the Carthaginians'. Candidates who had read a fair amount of Livy were familiar with the phrase *signis collatis*, for which a variety of translations were accepted. *feliciter* was sometimes confused with *ferociter* and *fortiter* – teachers who keep a list of easily confused words might want to add them to it.

1(iv): The *cum* clause was difficult but helpful glossing allowed most to get the idea that it was right to refrain from court cases that day. Examiners didn't allow the singular 'court case'; candidates ought to be reminded that even if a word appears in the glossary as singular it may be plural in the passage. Better candidates knew that *cum* is followed by the subjunctive when it means 'since' and so correctly took *sit* as merely 'since it is right'; others wrongly felt they needed to take the subjunctive as 'may be' or 'might be'. The commonest error in what followed was not seeing that *salutandos* belonged with *ad lovem* in a basic gerundive of purpose expression: this is easily missed when, as here, there is some distance between the *ad* and the gerundive. Common vocabulary errors on this section included *hinc* ('from here', not 'here' or 'henceforth') and *arci* (here referring to the citadel not the vault of heaven).

1(v): This was perhaps the most demanding section. It required candidates to spot the future tense *agam* and to see that *quod* must mean 'because' here rather than 'which'. As often, *et ... et* caused problems for those who took the first *et* as 'and'. Better candidates used it to deduce the unfamiliar *alias*: 'both on this very day and often on other days'. The gerundive depending on *mentem* was tricky, especially for those who had learnt *gero* as only 'to wear' or 'wage war'. What was needed was something like 'the ability to manage the state in the best possible way'. *optime* was sometimes wrongly taken as *maxime*.

1(vi): Very few successfully handled the first clause due to the case of *vestrum* (genitive not dative), the sense of *quibus* ('those of you for whom') and the meaning of *commodum*. The imperative *ite* ('come with me!') was surprisingly confused with *ita* and many seemed unfamiliar with an indirect command introduced by *orate* ('beg' rather than 'speak to'). *principes* was wrongly taken as 'principles' by candidates who thus missed Scipio's point that the Romans needed leaders like him.

1(vii): This was a straightforward section on which most candidates scored well. The only real difficulties were *simul* ('at the same time', not 'as soon as'), *universa* ('the whole assembly') and the case of *contio* (nominative not dative).

1(viii): In the first half *postremo* was not well known ('finally' or 'last of all' rather than 'next'). *scribae* was often taken as genitive singular rather than nominative plural ('even the scribes left the tribunes'). The *nec* clause with the difficult *quisquam* was often handled well by those who knew that *praeter* meant 'except' not 'because of' (confused with *propter*) or 'a praetor'.

1(ix): This straightforward section was mostly handed well, although not all saw that *omnia templa* was the object of *circumiiit* and that Scipio was walking around temples rather than somehow surrounding them.

1(x): A pleasing number correctly took *vera* with *aestimatione* rather than *magnitudinis* and took account of the ablative ('that day was more famous for the true recognition of his greatness'). It was a common error to ignore the case of *is dies* and assume that Scipio was the subject of *fuit*. 'Greatness' was needed for *magnitudinis* rather than crowd here, which made no sense in the context. *quam quo* ('than the day on which') caused predictable problems, as did the meaning of *triumphans urbem invectus est* ('he rode into the city in triumph'). Many wrongly took *triumphans* to be 'triumph' as a noun.

Section B overview

With only one really demanding line, the Ovid passage was translated well by the majority of candidates. The scansion was also handled well – the difficulty at the start of the pentameter line still allowed candidates to scan the rest of it correctly.

Question 2 (a)

- 2
(a) Translate the following passage into English. **Please write your translation on alternate lines.** [45]

A priestess of Diana has the task of sacrificing any Greek visitors to her land. When Orestes and Pylades arrive, she reluctantly prepares the ritual. After she learns where the men have come from she offers to let one of them live.

The nature of the sacrifice, so our ancestors established,
is that strangers fall, killed by the maiden's sword.

praefuerat templo multos ea rite per annos,
invita peragens tristia sacra manu,
cum duo velifera iuvenes venere carina
presseruntque suo litora nostra pede.
par fuit his aetas et amor, quorum alter Orestes, 5
alter erat Pylades: nomina fama tenet.
protinus immitem Triviae ducuntur ad aram,
evincti geminas ad sua terga manus.
dumque parat sacrum, dum velat tempora vittis,
dum tardae causas invenit ipsa morae, 10
'non ego crudelis, iuvenes, ignoscite!' dixit;
'sacra suo facio barbariora loco.
ritus is est gentis. qua vos tamen urbe venitis?
quodve parum fausta puppe petistis iter?'
dixit, et audito patriae pia nomine virgo 15
consortes urbis comperit esse suae.
'alter ut e vobis' inquit 'cadat hostia sacris,
ad patrias sedes nuntius alter eat.'

Ovid, ex *Ponto* 3.2.65–84 (with omissions)

Names*Orestes*, -is (m)

Orestes (a Greek)

Pylades, -is (m)

Pylades (a Greek)

Trivia, -ae (f)

Trivia (another name for the goddess Diana)

Words*rite*

dutifully

tempora, -um (n pl)

temples (of the head)

vitta, -ae (f)

ribbon

ritus, -us (m)

custom

parum

too little

faustus, -a, -um

fortunate

consors, -sortis (m/f)

fellow citizen

comperio, -ire, -peri, -pertus

I find out

ut

(here) provided that

hostia, -ae (f)

victim

2(a)(i): The scansion question, which many candidates answer before translating, had been chosen to alert them to the final quantity of *invitā*, which shows that it is ablative agreeing with *manu* and not nominative. Many scanned the line incorrectly, however, and therefore missed the agreement. Otherwise, the couplet was generally handled well.

2(a)(ii): Examiners knew that *velifera* might be an unfamiliar word but thought that it was the sort of word that more successful candidates might know or be able to deduce from *velum* + *fero*. A pleasing number were successful (e.g. 'sailing boat'). There were even one or two 'veliferous' boats. Candidates might have been puzzled about why the narrator talks of 'our coast' but it was easy enough to translate. The alternative perfect tense for *venere* unfortunately produced some predictable infinitives (e.g. 'the young men were to come').

2(a)(iii): The first line required *par* not to be confused with *pars*, nor *aetas* with *aestus*. There was quite a lot of 'heat' and 'passion' instead of 'age'. Examiners required a precise translation of the last three words *nomina tenet fama* – it was not enough to say that the young men had famous names.

2(a)(iv): This section was a good test of vocabulary knowledge, especially *protinus*, *immitem*, *evincti* (*vincio* not *vinco*) and *geminas*.

2(a)(v): sensible guesses about the meaning of *velat* allowed candidates to still score full marks on this section. The most successful candidates realised that the sense of the last part was that the priestess was herself trying to find 'reasons for a delay' (because she was reluctant to carry out the sacrifice) rather than 'causes of the delay'. *morae* was occasionally confused with *mors*, perhaps because of the context.

2(a)(vi): The meaning of *ignoscite* was often not known, even by some of the most successful candidates who confused it with the AS list word *ignoro*. In the pentameter, understandably enough, relatively few worked out what *suo* was doing, where Ovid seems to have compressed *sacra (quae sunt) barbariora suo loco* so that *suo* refers to the *sacra* ('I carry out rites that are more barbaric than their place' i.e. the place in which they are carried out).

2(a)(vii): *gentis* caused problems for those who seemed to think that human sacrifice was a 'gentle' rite, but most got the point that the sacrifice was a local custom. Some missed the ablative *qua* with *urbe* ('from what city'). Examiners allowed the present tense *venitis* to be taken as perfect (e.g. 'which city have you come from?') but required *petistis* to be taken as perfect. Glossing *parum* and *fausta* didn't always help as some candidates took it as referring to the journey rather than the ship.

2(a)(viii): The word order caused difficulties here as *pia* needed to be taken as nominative agreeing with *virgo* rather than with *nomine*. The meaning of *pia* was often not well known and a sizeable number of candidates simply left it out. As often, *suae* caused problems, although it was straightforward enough here once candidates saw that *virgo* was the subject of *comperit* rather than dative or ablative singular (i.e. *urbis suae* = 'of her own city').

2(a)(ix): Provided that candidates took *ut* at the start of the line, most handled the hexameter portion well. In the pentameter it was necessary to take account of the form of *eat* (present subjunctive not future indicative) and translate *nuntius alter eat* as 'let the other go as a messenger' rather than 'let another messenger go'. A variety of translations of *ad patrias sedes* were allowed.

Assessment for learning



If in doubt, when a literal translation makes perfectly good sense (e.g. *nomina fama tenet*: 'fame holds/maintains their names'), candidates should stick to the literal and show their knowledge of the grammar (i.e. accusative plural *nomina*, nominative singular *fama*, present tense *tenet*) rather than loosely paraphrase. If this passage is used as a mock paper, this is a phrase worth drawing attention to. It's a good example of the occasionally deceptive word order of an inflected language like Latin (object - subject - verb). A good classroom question to test metrical knowledge might be to ask why Ovid did not write *fama nomina tenet*.

Sensible guessing



When guessing the meaning of an unfamiliar word like *ignoscite*, it is sensible for candidates to use their knowledge of a Latin word from which it may have been derived. However, they should also check that their translation makes sense in the context. In the case of *ignoscite*, quite a few candidates clearly related it to *ignis* without stopping to think why the priestess might be asking the two young men to set fire to themselves, which seemed unlikely in the circumstances.

Exemplar 1

their
of ¹ ~~her~~ own city.

As in previous years, examiners sometimes noticed that when candidates change their mind over the meaning of a word, perhaps at the checking stage, they more often than not replace a correct translation with an incorrect one. First instincts are often a better guide!

In the case of the example above, the candidate would have been better off sticking with their initial translation of *urbis suae*.

Question 2 (b)

2

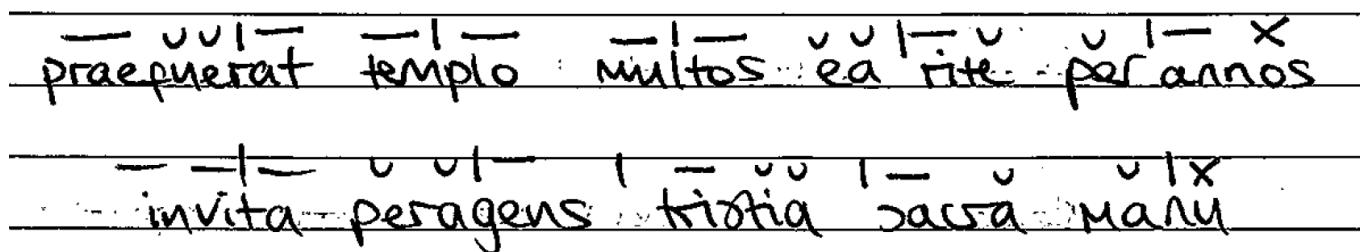
(b) Write out and scan lines 1–2:

praefuerat templo multos ea rite per annos
 invita peragens tristia sacra manu

[5]

A common error in the hexameter was to take *ea* as a single long syllable. In the pentameter, those who scanned *invita* as a dactyl missed the chance to see that it was ablative and agreed with *manu*, and were then forced to scan *peragens* as three longs when their ear might have told them that that the *-a-* was short. They usually recovered after that and completed the second half of the line successfully. By far the most common mark for this question was four for this reason.

Exemplar 2



Fewer candidates did not gain marks this year by not copying out the Latin words. Those who did so could not be given full marks as it needs to be clear that each syllable has been correctly identified as long/heavy or short/light.

This exemplar shows how the question should be answered. Each syllable has been clearly marked as long or short. There is no need to mark a caesura and the final syllable of each line can be marked as an anceps (x).

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