

Examiners' report

GCSE

LATIN

OCR Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in Latin

J282

For first teaching in 2016

J282/01 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.

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

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Paper 1 series overview

J282/01 (Language) is the compulsory component of GCSE (9-1) Latin. It is worth 100 marks, representing 50% of the total marks for the GCSE. Latin Language is an externally assessed written examination testing AO1. This component focuses on:

- translation
- comprehension questions
- either questions on syntax and accidence within the context of a narrative passage or translation of short English sentences into Latin
- derivation of English words from Latin.

Examiners considered this paper to be of a fair and appropriate standard, resulting in a good spread of marks. The majority of candidates' performance was generally high and it was pleasing to see a number of completely accurate scripts. Examiners also commented on the number of candidates who achieved full marks (or close to full marks) on the grammar questions. There were very few marks below 50.

Examiners felt that the paper was accessible to the full range of candidates, while differentiating very well, particularly in certain questions. Both the translation question and the comprehension questions revealed, in the majority of cases, a sound understanding of the two storylines. There were very few examples of 'No Response', suggesting that candidates of all abilities were able to engage with all the questions.

Examiners were pleased to note that errors of exam technique were relatively few. However, as has been noted in previous reports, some candidates showed a tendency to provide alternative responses, using either brackets or an oblique stroke. An alternative incorrect piece of information is regarded as HA (a harmful addition), which negates an otherwise correct response.

Key point call out: alternative responses

In Question 2, for instance, the response 'He noticed/found a flute on the ground' would be given one out of two marks, because the alternative response 'found' is incorrect.

Candidates should therefore be advised against offering alternative responses.

The majority of candidates managed the time allowance of an hour and a half very well, and appeared to have had sufficient time to complete the paper. A good number chose to produce a rough draft, followed by a neat copy, of the translation question, and a minority attempted both Question 10 and Question 11. The number of corrections elsewhere in scripts suggested that candidates had plenty of time to check their work. Examiners noted, however, that correct responses were often changed to incorrect responses. Any alterations need to be clear and unambiguous, and the rough version of the translation should be crossed out.

The majority of candidates performed well on this paper, and examiners would like to congratulate both the candidates and their teachers.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
• spotted comparative adjectives (e.g. <i>graviorem</i> in Question 3) and adverbs (e.g. <i>diutius</i> in Question 15) • recognised the difference between similar Latin words (e.g. <i>Romanus</i> and <i>Romae</i> in Question 18) • included all the necessary details in comprehension questions (e.g. <i>mox</i> in Question 14) • offered clear explanations in Question 10 (b) and Question 10 (f) • showed understanding of the use of the subjunctive in Question 10 (c) • scored four or five marks in most sections of the translation question • demonstrated a good knowledge of the DVL and Latin accidence and syntax throughout the paper • did well with the following: participles, indirect statements, and active/passive/deponent verbs • offered clear and correct meanings in Question 9 • made use of the information provided by the glossaries (e.g. the gender of the characters) • did not omit 'little' words in Question 19, such as <i>tandem</i>, <i>tum</i>, <i>saepe</i>, <i>tamen</i> • translated tenses accurately in Question 19.	• gave incorrect alternatives to an otherwise correct response • gave incorrect derivatives in Question 9 (e.g. 'habit' for <i>habitabat</i>) • translated the Latin words in Question 9, instead of giving a derivative • were unsure of certain parts of speech in the questions on syntax and accidence • gave partially correct responses (e.g. 'He wanted to show' in Question 5 (b)), which was not accepted because of the omission of <i>omnibus</i> • omitted words in the translation question (e.g. <i>tamen</i> and <i>saepe</i>) • scored one mark (isolated knowledge of vocabulary only) or two marks (part correct, but overall sense lacking/unclear) in sections of the translation question • confused words in both the translation and comprehension questions (e.g. <i>posuit</i> confused with <i>potuit</i> in Question 19 (v)) • translated singular nouns as plural and vice versa.

Section A

Question 1

- 1 *Marsyas erat satyrus stultus, qui in silvis habitabat* (line 1): what **two** things are we told about the satyr Marsyas?

1

2 [2]

A straightforward start to the examination, this question was correctly answered by the majority of candidates, although some offered the answer 'He was a satyr', not noticing that this fact was given in the question. Others made use of the information in the glossary and responded with 'He was a type of minor woodland god', which, while true, was not accepted, since it is not in the lemma.

Question 2

- 2 *dum in montibus ambulat, tibiam in terra iacentem conspexit* (lines 1–2): what happened during Marsyas' walk in the mountains?

..... [2]

Most candidates scored at least one of the two marks here. The most common errors were *conspexit* translated as 'found' and *in terra* as 'in the ground'.

Question 3

- 3 *'si artem canendi me docebo, amici mei credent me deum graviores esse'* (lines 2–3): in what way did Marsyas think that learning to play the flute would benefit him?

.....

..... [3]

This was a more demanding question, as it tested both an indirect statement and a comparative adjective. Most candidates dealt with the indirect statement well, but some assumed that a comparative adjective has to be followed by 'than' and consequently wrote 'more important than a god'.

Question 4

- 4 *mox omnes satyrum mirabantur quod optime canere poterat* (line 4): why did everyone admire Marsyas?

.....
 [1]

This question was almost always answered correctly, the only issues being an inability to spot the meaning of this glossed word and the superlative form of the adverb *optime*.

Assessment for learning



It would be worthwhile for teachers to spend some time in class looking at the glossaries on past papers and pointing out to their students just how much information can be found there: for this question, the glossary makes it clear that *cano* here means 'I play' or 'I make music' and not 'I sing'.

Question 5 (a)

- 5 *itaque Marsyas constituit Apollinem ad certamen invitare. nam omnibus ostendere volebat se meliorem illo deo esse* (lines 4–5):

- (a) what did Marsyas decide to do?

.....
 [1]

This question was almost always answered correctly.

Question 5 (b)

- (b) for what reason did he make this decision?

.....
 [3]

This was a good discriminator, with only the strongest candidates achieving full marks. The most common errors were the omission of *omnibus*, mistranslation of *ostendere* and not recognising the ablative of comparison.

Question 6

- 6 *primo nemo dicere poterat quis e duobus deis melius caneret* (line 6): what was unclear at the start of the competition?

.....
 [1]

Another more challenging question for some candidates: the comparative adverb *melius* was often translated as superlative.

Question 7

- 7 *'nunc hunc stultum satyrum necabo quod me ad certamen vocare ausus est'* (lines 7–8): why did Apollo say he would kill Marsyas?

.....
 [2]

Most candidates scored at least one of the two marks, but not all were familiar with the semi-deponent verb *ausus est*, and assumed that it was passive, resulting in translations such as 'He was dared'. Others confused the verb with the adjective *audax* and consequently wrote 'He was bold'.

Question 8

- 8 *Marsyas mortem crudelem passus est* (line 8): what happened to Marsyas in the end?

..... [1]

This question was almost always answered correctly, although some candidates referred to Marsyas being killed cruelly, which was not accepted.

Question 9

- 9 For each of the Latin words below, give **one** English word which has been derived from the Latin word and give the meaning of the **English** word.

One has been done for you.

Latin Word: *optime*

English Word: optimist

Meaning of English Word: someone who believes that good things always happen

Latin Word: *habitabat*

English Word:

Meaning of English Word: [2]

Latin Word: *vocare*

English Word:

Meaning of English Word: [2]

This question is designed to be accessible to candidates of all abilities, and most scored at least two marks. For the first word *habitabat*, 'habitat', 'inhabitable' and 'inhabit' were the most common responses, and candidates appeared to have no difficulty in defining these words. 'vocal' and 'vocation' were the most popular choices for *vocare*, but some clearly struggled with giving the meaning. Examiners were prepared to give benefit of the doubt (BOD) when they felt that the definition was close enough. Occasionally examiners came across candidates who simply translated the Latin word as the derivative, which did not gain any marks. Others seemed to have been trained to think of an English word beginning in the same way as the Latin, which often does work, but some caution needs to be taken.

OCR support



Teachers are reminded that Bloomsbury have published an OCR-endorsed Pocket GCSE Latin Etymological Lexicon, which provides derivatives for the words on the DVL.

Exemplar 1

Latin Word:	<i>optime</i>
English Word:	optimist
Meaning of English Word:	someone who believes that good things always happen
Latin Word:	<i>habitat</i>
English Word:	house
Meaning of English Word:	a place where you live [2]
Latin Word:	<i>vocare</i>
English Word:	vocalise vocation Your calling
Meaning of English Word:	to use your voice in life [2]

An example of an incorrect derivative of *habitat* can be seen in Exemplar 1. The mark scheme states that 'Incorrect derivation cannot score a mark for a correct meaning of the English word'. Therefore, only the derivative of *vocare* and its meaning can be awarded.

Assessment for learning



Sometimes candidates give incorrect derivatives which simply start with the same two or three letters as the Latin (e.g. 'habit' for *habitat*). It may be laborious for teachers to go through the DVL with their students, working out appropriate derivatives which have a link to the meaning of the Latin, but that would ensure full marks in this question, which is designed to be one of the most accessible on the paper.

Key point call out: meaning of derivative

Candidates are reminded to choose a derivative which they can easily define. The most popular choice for *vocare* was 'vocal', but many lost the mark for its meaning, which is often the case when adjectives are chosen as derivatives. Sometimes a definition starting with 'relating to' (as in 'relating to the voice') works well.

Question 10 (a)

10 Answer the following questions based on part of the story you have already read.

nam omnibus ostendere volebat se meliorem illo deo esse.

postridie certamen coepit. primo nemo dicere poterat quis e duobus deis melius caneret. tandem tamen, satyro victo, Apollo nuntiavit 'nunc hunc stultum satyrum necabo, quod me ad certamen vocare ausus est.' itaque Marsyas mortem crudelem passus est.

5

Names

Apollo, Apollinis (m)

Apollo (the god of music)

Marsyas, Marsyae (m)

Marsyas (a satyr)

Words

certamen, certaminis (n)

contest, competition

cano, canere, cecini

I play, I make music

satyrus, satyri (m)

satyr (a type of minor woodland god)

(a) *se meliorem illo deo esse* (line 1): identify the **case** of *melio*rem.

..... [1]

This proved to be a surprisingly good discriminator, with some otherwise strong candidates losing the mark by giving an incorrect case.

Question 10 (b)

(b) *nemo dicere poterat* (line 2): identify the **form** of *dicere* **and** explain why it is used here.

.....
 [2]

The majority of candidates scored the first mark for 'infinitive' (there is no need to add the tense or voice), but the explanation proved more challenging for some, who struggled to see the connection between *dicere* and *poterat* or stated that this was an accusative and infinitive construction.

Question 10 (c)

(c) *quis e duobus deis melius caneret* (lines 2–3): explain why *caneret* is in the **subjunctive** mood.

..... [1]

This was one of the best differentiators on the paper, with only the strongest candidates responding with 'indirect question'. The most common incorrect response was 'indirect statement'.

Assessment for learning



The question on the use of the subjunctive mood continues to be one of the most challenging questions on the paper, and teachers are advised to review regularly in class the six uses of the subjunctive at GCSE.

Question 10 (d)

(d) Identify an example of the **perfect** tense in line 3.

..... [1]

This was well answered by most candidates.

Question 10 (e)

(e) Pick out a **pronoun** in line 4.

..... [1]

Most candidates scored the one mark available here.

Question 10 (f)

(f) *ad certamen* (line 4): identify the **case** of *certamen* **and** explain why this case is used here.

..... [2]

The majority of candidates were able to identify the correct case but some candidates struggled with the explanation. Other candidates gave a correct explanation but then lost the mark by adding incorrect information such as 'It is the object'. In such cases, the second mark was lost because this was considered to be a harmful addition.

Question 10 (g)

(g) *necabo* (line 4): identify the **tense** of this verb.

..... [1]

This question was almost always answered correctly.

Question 10 (h)

(h) Identify an example of the **accusative** case in line 5.

..... [1]

Most candidates scored the one mark available here, but examiners were surprised to see how often 'Marsyas' was given as the answer.

Assessment for learning



Once again, practice in looking at the glossed words would be helpful, this time to ascertain the case of Marsyas (the first form of a glossed noun is always nominative singular).

Question 11 (a)

11 Translate the following English sentences into Latin.

(a) The slaves are in the street.

.....
..... [3]

This was the most accessible of the English to Latin sentences, with the majority of candidates gaining at least two marks for *servi* and *in via*. The verb was the main stumbling block, with a good number of candidates writing *est* or *erant*.

Question 11 (b)

(b) We were running to the big gate.

.....
..... [3]

Most candidates gained the mark for either *ad portam* or *magnum*, but only the strongest were able to render 'We were running' correctly.

Question 11 (c)

(c) Why did you leave the food, master?

.....
..... [4]

This was considered to be the most challenging of the sentences, with many candidates scoring only one mark for *cur*. Some attempted to use a form of *discedere* for 'did you leave' and others did not realise that 'master' should be in the vocative case. In addition, *cibus* was often confused with *cena*.

Section B

Question 12

- 12 *Carthaginienses, Hannibale duce, bellum contra Romanos gerebant* (line 1): what **two** things are we told about the Carthaginians?

1

2 [2]

This was a straightforward start to the Section B comprehension questions, with many candidates scoring full marks. The main reason for not doing so was the omission of *bellum*, resulting in responses such as 'They were fighting against the Romans'. Another issue was confusing *Romanos* with *Romam*, something examiners see almost every series.

Key point call out: check that all details are included

Candidates are advised to check that they include all relevant details in their responses to comprehension questions. As a guide, they should note the number of marks and answer lines available for each question. If in doubt, aim to include all the relevant information in the lemma.

Question 13

- 13 *postquam ad urbem parvam Casilinum nomine advenerunt, quam milites Romani defendebant* (lines 1–2): what **two** things does this tell us about the city of Casilinum?

1

2 [2]

This was usually well answered, but, once again, it was the omission of a word (*milites*) which cost some candidates a mark.

Question 14

- 14 *putabant enim hos milites sine cibo mox perituros esse* (line 3): why did the Carthaginians decide to besiege Casilinum?

.....
 [3]

This was a good discriminator which required candidates to deal with the indirect statement, recognise the future active infinitive and include the requisite detail.

Exemplar 2

..... For ~~the~~ ~~was~~ ~~fighting~~ these soldiers were fighting without
 food soon ~~was~~ were going to die / perish [3]

Exemplar 2 has been given two out of three marks, since *sine cibo* has been rendered correctly and *perituros esse* is also correct with the additional detail of *mox*. Note that the alternative 'perish' has not been treated as a harmful error, since the mark scheme accepts this meaning of the verb. If the candidate had written, for instance, 'to die/fall ill', no mark would have been awarded. The verb introducing the indirect statement *putabant* has, however, been confused with *pugnabant*, and therefore the first mark cannot be awarded.

Key point call out: giving alternative answers

Candidates are reminded that an alternative incorrect answer is viewed as a harmful addition, which negates an otherwise correct response.

Question 15

- 15** *milites et cives urbis de vita adeo desperabant ut diutius vivere nollent* (line 4): how does this show the terrible situation for those living inside the city?

.....

.....

..... [3]

This was quite a challenging question, involving a result clause and an irregular comparative adverb, but the mark scheme did not require all four points for full marks, which made it more accessible. Most candidates scored at least the first mark, since *desperabant* was glossed. The main reasons for not receiving full marks were the omission of *de vita* and inability to recognise the comparative form of *diutius*.

Question 16 (a)

16

- (a)** *itaque alii ad summos muros urbis ascenderunt ut ad terram se deicerent* (lines 4–5): why did some climb to the top of the city walls?

.....

..... [2]

Although many candidates scored full marks on this question, vocabulary was an issue for some, with *se deicerent* often translated as 'to jump' or 'to fall', and *ad* confused with *in*.

Question 16 (b)

- (b)** *alii in muris immoti stabant et corpora sua armis hostium offerebant* (lines 5–6): what did others do to ensure they were wounded by enemy weapons?

.....

..... [2]

The mark scheme accepted any two of four possible responses, which made the question accessible to most candidates. The first two points listed in the mark scheme were usually well understood, but there was some confusion with the last two points, resulting in responses such as 'They offered their weapons to the enemy'.

Key point call out: noun endings

A basic point, but candidates are reminded that knowledge of word endings (not just vocabulary) is essential when translating Latin.

Question 17

- 17 *Gracchus, ubi cognovit quid accideret, rem diligenter cogitabat* (line 7): write down **and** translate the **Latin** phrase which describes Gracchus' reaction to the news.

Latin phrase	English translation

[2]

The majority of candidates gave the correct answer to this question, and examiners were pleased to note very few examples of the entire lemma being written down.

Key point call out: questions requiring the selection of some Latin and a translation

In questions of this type, it is vital for candidates to read the rubric carefully. Here the instruction was to write down a Latin phrase (i.e. more than one word), although sometimes only one word is required.

Question 18

- 18 *nam civibus militibusque auxilium ferre maxime cupiebat, sed imperator Romanus eum iusserat nihil facere* (lines 7–8): what problem did Gracchus face?

.....

.....

..... **[4]**

This was one of the best discriminators on the paper, with only the very strongest candidates recognising that Gracchus was the subject of *cupiebat* rather than the citizens and soldiers.

Other issues were translating *imperator Romanus* as 'the commander of Rome' and the handling or omission of *eum iusserat*.

Question 19

19 Translate **Passage 3** into English.

[50]

The translation was considered by examiners to be very fair, providing an appropriate level of challenge. Despite one or two more demanding sections, candidates who had made mistakes were usually able to get back on track in the next section. Examiners were impressed by the overall standard of translations, with many candidates making very few or no errors. Less successful candidates also seemed to find the question accessible, and usually managed to score high marks in at least one or two sections.

Section (i): This was a straightforward start to the passage, with many candidates scoring at least four of the five marks. Candidates who scored well on this question recognised that *frumentum* was accusative and the object of *inferre* and realised that *debeo* was first person singular. Examiners also accepted active to passive transposition provided that the pronoun agent 'by me' was included. Less strong candidates struggled with the pronoun *sibi*, and often missed it out or translated it as 'to him'. In addition, *statim* was frequently omitted or translated as 'suddenly'.

Section (ii): The majority of candidates handled this section well, even though not all candidates were familiar with *erunt*.

Key point call out: irregular verbs

Candidates are reminded that they are likely to encounter irregular verbs such as *esse*, *posse*, *velle* and *ferre*, and should make sure that they are familiar with all tenses required for GCSE and not just the irregular present tense.

Section (iii): Many candidates were familiar with the meaning of *timens*, but did not translate it as a present participle. Provided that there was some subordination, (e.g. 'Since he was afraid') or coordination ('He was afraid... and'), translating the participle as 'he was afraid' was accepted.

Other errors included the omission of *quoque* and confusing *propter* with *prope*.

Section (iv): This section consisted of an indirect question and an idiomatic use of *capere* (but one included in the Defined Vocabulary List). Most candidates coped well with the second sentence, which scored two marks even if the rest of the section was completely wrong. This is a good illustration of what the marking grid means by 'Part correct, but with overall sense lacking/unclear'.

Other errors included the omission or mistranslation of *diu* and *tandem*. Even if the rest of the section contained no other errors, these two inconsequential errors would bring the mark down to four out of five.

Key point call out: check for omissions

Candidates are encouraged to check that they have translated every word in the passage. With the passage printed above the space for the answer, it is an easy matter to look at the answer and tick each of the Latin words translated.

Section (v): This was one of the most accessible sections of the translation, consisting of two main verbs and two items of glossed vocabulary, and it was pleasing to see that many candidates gave a perfect translation. Common mistakes, however, included confusing *posuit* with *potuit* and not knowing the meaning of *agris*.

Section (vi): This was one of the more challenging sections in the passage, with the main issues being not recognising the indirect command, not spotting both imperfect subjunctives, the handling of *ea nocte* and the case of *Casilini*.

Assessment for learning



For this question, the glossary makes it clear that *Casilini* is genitive, since the second form of a glossed noun is always genitive singular.

Exemplar 3

They ~~was~~ placed the grain into a large jar. Then they ~~was~~ sent the large jar to the Magister of Casilinum ~~is~~ on the river at night.

This extract covers sections (v) and (vi). In section (v), the first part of the section has been omitted, the person of *posuit* is incorrect and *dolia* has been translated as singular. Nevertheless, there is enough correct sense (the tense of *posuit*, *frumentum* recognised as the object and the prepositional phrase) to award two out of five marks.

In section (vi), there is no continuous sense and just isolated knowledge of vocabulary. As there are two items of unglossed vocabulary correctly translated (*tum* and *flumen*), one mark was given.

Section (vii): Some struggled with the relative clause in this section, not always recognising *quae* as a relative pronoun. Others were clearly unfamiliar with the perfect tense of *tollere*.

Practice on identifying the main clause would be useful. Here, if the relative clause is omitted, we are left with *magistratus dolia vidit et sustulit*, which is a straightforward subject-object-verb sentence.

Assessment for learning



Frequent testing of irregular principal parts is recommended.

Section (viii): Most candidates understood the gist of this section and scored at least two out of five. The main issues were not knowing the meaning of *postridie* and *quinque*, and omission of *tamen* and *alia*.

Key point call out: numbers

A reminder that cardinal numbers 1-10, 100 and 1000 are included in the DVL.

Section (ix): Most candidates scored at least two marks on this section in part due to the various translations of the cum clause which were accepted by the mark scheme. Even if the second half of the section was completely wrong, two marks were given for a correct translation of Hannibal...audivisset. The handling of suos was the most common issue in the second half of the section, followed by a failure to connect iussit with iubere (see Assessment for Learning in section (vii)) and omission or mistranslation of semper.

Exemplar 3 continued

.....Hannibal, who heard about this, ordered himself
that the river be always crossed.....

This section of Exemplar 3 shows a response which contains several errors (cum translated as 'who'; suos translated as 'himself'; omission of an agent following the active to passive transposition), but has still been given three out of five, as the overall meaning is clear.

Section (x): The translation ended with a more challenging section: hoc modo was sometimes omitted or mistranslated; poterat was often confused with potuerat; some struggled with eis qui.

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