

Examiners' report

AS LEVEL

LATIN

**OCR Level 3 Advanced Subsidiary GCE
in Latin**

H043

For first teaching in 2016

H043/01 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

This year's paper was generally well received by candidates and there were some excellent responses. The passages of Latin used in Questions 1 and 2 both contained interesting stories and examiners felt that this helped candidates in their understanding. The majority of candidates as usual chose to answer the comprehension questions (Question 2) rather than the sentences to be translated from English into Latin (Question 3); as a result, this question has not been included in this report. A very small number answered both optional questions. This practice should be discouraged by centres, as there is no advantage to be gained from it and the time could be better spent concentrating on one question. Most candidates followed the instructions to write on alternate lines, but there were a few who still did not do this. It is important because it enables the examiner to enter the marks accurately and also allows the student to correct errors or put in omissions.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
• had a very good knowledge of the vocabulary on the Defined Vocabulary List • had a sound knowledge of the prescribed accidence and syntax • had carefully read the English introduction to the Latin passages • took careful note of the words glossed • produced a translation which made sense and followed the storyline.	• were not familiar with all the vocabulary on the DVL and often confused words of similar appearance • did not have a strong enough knowledge of accidence and syntax to cope well with the more difficult sections • did not make effective use of the introduction to the passages as a guide to the storylines • in the comprehension questions, did not take into account the number of marks allotted for each question.

Section A overview

This passage of adapted Latin forms the compulsory translation question. It is preceded by an introduction in English which sets the scene. It is marked by dividing the passage into 11 sections, each of which is marked out of 5. Most candidates followed the storyline well and many achieved almost full marks. There were some more difficult sections which provided differentiation. Candidates who performed less well struggled with more complex constructions and frequently confused similar-looking words, such as *mors*, *mora*, *morbus*. Lack of certainty over case and number endings of nouns also caused problems at times.

Question 1

1 Translate the following passage into English.

Please write your translation on alternate lines.

[55]

(i) *regi nuntiatum est Darium cum multis milibus peditum equitumque appropinquare.*

This was generally well answered except that almost all candidates translated *milibus* as 'soldiers', even those who otherwise produced excellent versions.

(ii) *itaque valles fugiens suas copias trans montes ducere constituit. cum Tarsum advenisset,*

Most candidates coped well with this. Translating *valles* as singular was a common error, even though the word is glossed. A number ignored the ending of *Tarsum* and wrote 'when Tarsus had arrived'.

(iii) *captus pulchritudine fluminis per mediam urbem fluentis, depositis armis, statim plenus pulveris ac sudoris in frigidam aquam se proiecit.*

Although longer, this section was generally well translated; the number of glossed words helped in this. The most common vocabulary problems were misunderstanding *plenus* (often 'plenty') and rendering *armis* as 'armour' or 'armies'. The ablative absolute was generally understood.

(iv) *tum subito tantus rigor totum corpus eius occupavit ut membra movere non posset ac vox includeretur.*

The result clause was generally well understood. However *membra* was quite often translated as singular, although it is glossed as a neuter noun, and ignorance of *vox* confused some.

(v) *non modo nulla spes remedii, sed ne mora quidem mortis inveniebatur.*

Many did not recognise *non modo*; some translated *remedii* as 'remained'. Also, a lack of certainty about case endings caused confusion among many candidates, who did not see that the two nominatives, *spes* and *mora*, are the subject of *inveniebatur* and that *remedii* and *mortis* are genitive.

(vi) *forte erat unus ex medicis, nomine Philippus, qui solus remedium offerebat; sed rex hunc suspicabatur.*

This easier section was mostly well translated. A common error was making *solus* agree with *remedii* rather than *Philippus*. Many candidates, even the best performing, translated *hunc* simply as 'this', without realising that English needs 'this man' to avoid confusion.

(vii) *amicus enim fidelis, ignorans infirmi Alexandri, epistulam priori die miserat, in qua monuerat*

This was another straightforward section; some omitted the pluperfects and a very small number rendered *miserat* as 'miserable' or even a letter 'full of misery'.

(viii) *ut illum hominem caveret, quod a Dario multa pecunia corruptus esset.*

This short section was well translated by the majority, but a significant number became very confused because they did not take *multa pecunia* as ablative and so produced a version which took no account of the storyline, such as 'money had been seized by Darius'.

(ix) *Alexander tamen melius esse putabat se dubiae fidei medici credere quam certo morbo perire.*

This was by far the most difficult section and a completely accurate translation after *putabat* was rare. Candidates needed to recognise that *fidei* is dative and that *dubiae* is an adjective not a noun and in agreement with *fidei*, and that *medici* is genitive. They also needed to take account of the accusative *se*. A common error was to take *certo* as 'certainly', rather than agreeing with *morbo* which was often taken as 'death'.

(x) *accepta igitur medicina, epistulam Philippo tradidit atque inter bibendum oculos in vultum legentis fixit.*

There were many excellent translations of this section, but also many less successful versions; the ablative absolute was generally recognised but some took *Philippo* as meaning 'from Philip' which made no sense in terms of the story. Misunderstanding of *vultum* caused a problem for some, as did the two present participles. The final *legentis* was sometimes rendered as 'ambassador' or 'legion', which made no sense in the context.

(xi) *ubi medicum securum esse sensit, laetior factus est et quattuor post diebus vires recepit.*

As before, there were many accurate translations of this final section, from those who were following the story and saw this as a satisfactory conclusion. Others did not realise that *medicum* was the object not the subject. Most recognised *quattuor*, although there were a few 'forty days', but the most common error was not knowing *vires*. This was rendered as 'truth' or 'forces' but most frequently as 'men'. Consequently, 'he received men' was a common rendering, although it made no sense in the context of his recovering from his illness. Those who realised it made little sense tried 'he returned to his men' or something similar.

Effective use of vocabulary



Candidates frequently mistranslated similar looking words. Centres are advised, even at this level, to spend some teaching time focusing on words that can easily be confused with one another. A number of textbooks provide lists of such words as a helpful starting-point.

Section B overview

The optional Question 2 consists of a passage of adapted Latin on which are set various sub-questions, together worth 25 marks. It is preceded by a brief introduction in English which sets the scene. Interestingly, candidates who scored very well on the translation in Question 1 did not always perform to the same level in Question 2. Success in comprehension requires not only the same accuracy needed for translation, but also the ability to keep the storyline firmly in mind, select the piece of Latin needed for the specific question and answer in English, ideally in their own words. Many candidates did not take note of the number of marks allotted to each sub-question and produced responses which were too brief and which did not cover all the required points. Candidates should note that literary criticism is not required for this question.

Since only a few candidates opted to answer Question 3, detailed commentary on their performance has not been included here. This question consisted of five English sentences for translation into Latin, worth 5 marks each. Candidates should be advised that it might be better not to choose this option unless they are well prepared and have thoroughly practiced in class. Accurate knowledge of noun and verb endings is necessary as well as familiarity with the required constructions. Those who did choose this option generally did well, but a small number were clearly unprepared and gained very few marks.

Question 2 (b)

(b) *cum ... cognovisset* (lines 1–2): why did soldiers come to the house?

[2]

Many candidates stated that the soldiers came to condemn Panopio to death, not that he was already condemned.

Question 2 (c) (i)

(c) In lines 2–4 (*commutatis ... passus est*), how did the slave:

(i) protect his master?

[3]

Most gained two marks for the slave exchanging clothes and rings with his master but not all realised that *postico* (abl.) meant from the rear entrance.

Question 2 (c) (ii)

(ii) put himself in danger?

[3]

Many did not understand the reflexive construction *se in cubiculum recepit* and mentioned 'welcoming the soldiers into the bedroom', which was inaccurate. They were also confused by *se ipsum occidi passus est* which they rendered as he 'suffered death' rather than 'he allowed himself to be killed', so only a few gained all three marks here.

Question 2 (d)

(d) *parva ... laudis* (line 5): what contrast does the author make here?

[4]

The contrast is between *parva facti narratio* and *magna causa laudis*. Four distinct points were needed here, that it was 'a short story to tell' but 'a great reason for praise'. Few gained all 4 marks as there were many confused answers.

Question 2 (e) (i)

(e) *nam ... intelleges* (lines 5–7):

(i) give **one** English word to represent the phrase *ante oculos ponere*.

[1]

There were very few acceptable answers given here; 'imagine' or 'envisage' or simply 'see' were suitable choices.

Question 2 (e) (ii)

(ii) what makes this a frightening scene? Give **three** points.

[3]

Almost all gained three marks here, although some did not know *minantes*, for which 'threatening' was required.

Question 2 (f)

(f) *breve ... factum esse* (lines 7–8): what does the author say that underlines the unusual conduct of the slave?

[4]

Many confused answers were given here and only a few candidates scored all four marks; some gained only one or even none. Again, four distinct points were needed, that 'it didn't take long to say that one man wanted to die for another' but it 'was not easily believed that such a thing ever happened'.

Question 2 (g) (i)

(g) In lines 8–10 (*postea ... inscripsit*):

(i) why did Panapio build a *monumentum*?

[2]

Most candidates gained both marks here.

Question 2 (g) (ii)

(ii) what else are we told about it?

[2]

Again, most gained two marks, although some omitted that the thanks were for such great service. A small number took *splendidum faciendo* as 'splendidly made'.

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