

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

LATIN

J282

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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. 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 can be downloaded from OCR.

Paper 4 series overview

This paper focuses on Latin Verse Literature, specifically selections from the Cambridge Latin Anthology, pp 74, 78, 80–84, 88, 90–92. Candidates are expected to have studied the specified texts in detail; they should have a good knowledge of the contents of the texts and be able to analyse some of the literary techniques used by the poets; they should also be able to discuss some of the themes and issues which arise from the text.

The questions range from straightforward factual information from a quoted portion of the text, through a deeper analysis of some specific literary effects to more extended answers which give a considered response to wider aspects of the texts as a works of literature.

This paper targets two assessment objectives. AO2 requires the candidate to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the literature. AO3 requires the candidate to analyse, evaluate and respond to literature. The Mark Scheme indicates which of the two objectives is being examined in each question but the two are, of course, interdependent: no successful analysis, evaluation or response can be made unless the basic knowledge and understanding are already there.

‘Understanding’ is just as important a feature of AO2 as ‘knowledge’. Candidates should try to answer the question that is being asked rather than simply relying on a literal translation of the lemma. Very often such a literal translation does provide the answer that is needed but this is not always so: the very first question on the paper is a case in point.

The overall standard on both objectives in this paper was high. A great many candidates displayed an impressive degree of accuracy in their textual knowledge as well as familiarity with a wide range of literary techniques. Candidates were able to draw on a wealth of technical terms, usually (although by no means always) correctly used. Candidates are not in fact required to use technical terms and will do just as well if they explain their points adequately without them. There is no penalty for using technical terms incorrectly but there were occasions when a term was wrongly used but it was just not clear what point the candidate was trying to make: no credit could be given in those instances.

Even where candidates displayed limited knowledge of the specifics of the texts, they often wrote full and interesting answers in the final essay question. They had clearly engaged with the poems of Ovid, Horace and Martial that they had read. There is every opportunity on this question for candidates to express their own personal views. All views are treated as valid by the examiners if they are supported by sound references to the text.

Legibility

Once again examiners have battled with a substantial number of scripts which were on or below the borderline of legibility. This was the case throughout the paper and not confined to longer answers where candidates might have been pressed for time. If examiners cannot read a script, or can only do so with extreme difficulty, there is a real danger that candidates will not receive a fair assessment. Both candidates and those who prepare them for the examination need to be aware of this.

Question 1 (a)

1 Read the passage and answer the questions.

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Martial, *Recipe for happiness*, lines 1–8

(a) *res ... relicta* (line 3): Martial mentions two ways of obtaining wealth or property. What are they?

-
- [2]

Nearly all candidates could translate line 3 but this does not answer the question. A large number wrote 'not by work but bequeathed'; this gained 1 mark only. Those who answered 'work' and 'inheritance' (however they expressed these ideas) gained the 2 marks. Very few candidates scored 0.

Question 1 (b)

(b) *non ingratus ... quieta* (lines 4–5): how do these lines show that Martial is more likely to find happiness in the countryside than in the town? Make **two** points.

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Candidates found this a hard question and often seemed to be trying to explain why the countryside would make Martial happy rather than how the examples he gives are more characteristic of the countryside than the town. This is an AO3 question, requiring interpretation and analysis rather than plain factual information. Those who said something reasonable about *non ingratus ager, lis numquam* and *toga rara* usually got the marks. *mens quieta* can be used but needs a bit more justification; *focus perennis* could surely be found equally in either location (even though an observation about plentiful firewood would probably have been accepted).

Question 1 (c)

(c) *prudens ... mensa* (lines 7–8): in these lines Martial mentions four things that are part of a happy life. Give **two** of them.

-
- [2]

Nearly all candidates scored 2 here and many gave all the examples. 'Simplicity' was not accepted as a translation of *simplicitas*.

Question 2

2 Read the passage and answer the question.

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Horace, *A country spring*, lines 9–16

Translate this passage into English.

..... [5]

In general, the translations of this passage were very good indeed. Errors tended to be reversal (or omission) of *flagrantis* and *atrox*, or mistranslating *impositam*, which simply means 'positioned on'.

Question 3 (a)

3 Read the passage and answer the questions.

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Horace, *The town mouse and the country mouse*, lines 14–20

(a) *carpe viam ... comes* (line 2): what does the town mouse want the country mouse to do at this point?

..... [1]

Nearly all candidates got this right in one form or another.

Question 3 (b)

(b) *terrestria ... brevis* (lines 2–6): what ideas about life and death does the town mouse put forward? Make **two** points.

•
.....
.....
•
.....
.....
..... [2]

Most candidates understood these lines very well and provided two (or more) of the town mouse's points. Paraphrases that made the essential point were always accepted.

Question 3 (c)

(c) *haec ... exsilit* (lines 6–7): what effect did the town mouse's words have on the country mouse? Make **one** point.

.....
..... [1]

Most got an acceptable sense for either *pepulere* or *domo exsilit*.

Question 4 (a)

4 Read the passage and answer the questions.

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Horace, *The town mouse and the country mouse*, lines 28–37

(a) *ergo ... officiis* (lines 1–4): what does the town mouse do to give the country mouse a pleasant experience in the rich man's house? Make **two** points.

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-
-

..... [2]

This was generally well answered and there are several possible points. *purpurea ... veste*: candidates needed to include the colour and to have the mouse lying or resting **on**, not **in**, something. The pre-tasting of the food also could not be accepted as it is outside the lemma.

Question 4 (b)

(b) *ille ... convivam* (lines 5–6): pick out and translate a **Latin** word that tells us how the country mouse was feeling during the meal.

Latin word
English translation

[2]

Nearly all candidates gained marks here. Examiners did not insist on a verbal translation for *gaudet* as this would have made it a more difficult choice than *laetum*.

Question 4 (c)

(c)

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Translation:

Suddenly a huge banging of doors shook them both off the couches. In terror they ran all over the room, and they were more frightened out of their lives when the lofty house resounded with Molossian dogs.

How does Horace, by his style of writing, make this a dramatic scene? Make **two** points, each referring to the Latin.

- [4]

Candidates find this type of question quite difficult and need a good deal of guidance about what is required and how to answer it. They must give two examples and 2 marks are available for each. To gain 2 marks the candidate must give a relevant example, a correct Latin reference and an explanation of how it makes the scene dramatic. The Latin reference may be as little as a single word if it exemplifies the point being made; if the reference is too lengthy it may fail to identify the key point and, in this way, gain no credit.

The examples **must** be points of **style** and the wording of the question makes this clear: merely matching a bit of Latin with the translation provided cannot score any marks. Plenty of possible stylistic examples are suggested in the Mark Scheme. ‘Choice of vocabulary’ is a valid stylistic device but the candidate needs to show that there is something particularly dramatic about the choice of the word, rather than another word of similar meaning.

Exemplar 1

- The use of "suddenly" "subito", meaning "suddenly", creates an abrupt change in the mood of the scene, which makes it more dramatic.

[4]

Here *subito* is selected and a good explanation is given of how it creates a dramatic effect. This gained 2 marks. Some candidates made a direct comparison between the previous calm enjoyment of the meal and the shock of the noise, which made an even better answer.

Examiners rewarded with marks answers which described *subito* as being in an emphatic position 'at the beginning of the line'. This is not, of course, correct but examiners gave benefit of doubt because of the way the lemma is set out in this question.

Exemplar 2

- 'subito ingens valvarum strepitus lectis exussit.... untrumque' - this emphasizes how loud the doors were to the mice. It was so loud that the mice fell from the couches. This shows how small the mice are and how scared they were

This example scored 0. No specific word or phrase is selected, there is nothing related to style and the explanation is very generalised. A long quotation such as this almost never scores marks as it is just not specific enough.

It sometimes felt as although candidates had selected *subito* and *ingens* just because they are the first words in this passage. Candidates do better to look at the whole passage given as the lemma and select good examples to illustrate what is asked.

Where candidates have selected a good stylistic example, they also need to give a convincing explanation as to how it is dramatic. The following are good examples:

- "The use of the intensifier *per* in *personuit* (resounded) shows how the mice were overcome by the sound and how the whole house was affected by it."
- "*trepidare* has an almost onomatopoeic effect as you can almost hear the mice trembling with fear, adding to the drama of the scene."

The historic infinitives (confused by some with the historic present tense) do have a dramatic effect but it is difficult for a modern reader to explain why. Where candidates used historic infinitive as their example examiners accepted that it made the scene more vivid or something similar.

Question 5 (a)

5 Read the passage and answer the questions.

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Horace, *Spring and thoughts of mortality*, lines 17–28

(a) *quis ... superi?* (lines 1–2): explain what Horace means in these two lines.

.....
.....
..... [2]

Many gave a literal translation but where a question asks for an explanation this needs to be given in the candidate's own words. A wide variety of paraphrase is always accepted in a question like this provided that the essential points come out, as indicated in the Mark Scheme.

Question 5 (b)

(b) *cum semel ... pietas* (lines 5–8): how does Horace emphasise to Torquatus that when he has died there is no coming back? Make **two** points, each referring to the **Latin**.

-
.....
.....
-
.....
.....

..... [4]

This is the same type of question as Question 4(c) and is marked according to the same principles. This time no translation is provided. This means that points which focus only on the content of the passage are just as acceptable as those which pick out points of style. The important thing is that the chosen example provides a good answer to the question.

Exemplar 3

.....

- Horace also writes 'no piety' (non te restituet pietas) = no piety, will bring you back). This shows that even if you show your respect and devotion to the gods, not even a divine power could bring you back from death [4]
This shows the finality of it ~~as~~ as even the gods power can't help you.

This response gained 2 marks: it contains a Latin reference, which is correctly translated, and a full explanation of how it emphasises Horace's point.

Most candidates who used this example included all three qualities (even though *facundia* was mistranslated on a few occasions) to show that even the qualities most prized by the Romans were of no use once you were dead. There are further stylistic points to be made (the tricolon, repeated *non*) and these were also popular with candidates. Examiners accepted all these as separate points, but not the carving up of the three qualities into separate answers.

semel also provided an easily manageable point and some candidates used the reference to Minos, although with varying success. The future perfect tense of *occideris* does not provide a valid example here as it is simply the correct grammatical form with *cum* and therefore provides no emphasis.

Question 5 (c)

(c) *infernis ... Hippolytum* (lines 9–10): Horace says that Diana does not free Hippolytus from the underworld. How does this help to emphasise Horace's point further? Make **one** point.

.....
.....
.....
.....

[2]

Most focused on Diana here and scored at least 1 but she must be identified as a god or goddess. Some candidates obviously had little idea of who she was and those that focused on Hippolytus were even more hazy.

Question 5 (d)

(d) *Lethaea* (line 11): what effect did the river Lethe have on those who drank from it?

.....
..... [1]

A surprisingly large number of candidates were unaware of the amnesiac properties of this river.

Question 6

6* Read the passage and answer the question.



Ovid, *The sights, sounds and seasons of the countryside*, lines 1–10

How does Ovid make the countryside seem like the perfect place to be?

In your answer you may wish to consider:

- the variety of things to see and hear
- how fertile everything is.

You must refer to the **Latin** and discuss a range of stylistic features such as choice, sound and position of words. [8]

In this 8-mark literary analysis question (AO3) candidates are expected to formulate a coherent answer to the question which focuses on specific details of the text. Examiners annotate this answer by using tick+ and tick?

Tick+ indicates a valid and well understood textual reference with a full explanation of how it makes the countryside seem the perfect place to be.

Tick? indicates an example that is relevant but is minor or slight, or the explanation is not fully developed.

These annotations show the parts of the answer that deserve credit but the mark for the **whole** answer is assessed in accordance with the Marking Grid for the 8-mark extended response on page 12 of the Mark Scheme.

It must be stressed that ticks, of whatever variety, do not equal marks. However, as a rough guide, examiners would expect to see **at least** 4 tick+ points (or 3 tick+ and some tick? points) to award a mark in Level 4, and there would need to be some level of overall coherence in the answer, together with some stylistic observations and correct Latin references. Not all points made need to be stylistic but the complete absence of points of style brings the answer (however good in other ways) down to a maximum of 4 (Level 2 on the Marking Grid).

Exemplar 4

Firstly, Horace uses the anaphora of "aspice" (see) to show the reader that there are ~~so many~~ many beautiful sights to see in the countryside. The use of this anaphora implies that Ovid has to switch the reader's attention to something else otherwise they would just look at one beautiful image. Therefore, this shows that he thinks the countryside is the perfect place to be.

The candidate gives the Latin with a translation and a stylistic observation (anaphora), following it with a full explanation of how the example makes the countryside seem the perfect place. This point is annotated tick+.

Attributions to the wrong author (as at the start of this exemplar) are normally ignored as having no bearing on the validity of the points made.

Exemplar 5

"nec desunt comites, seduta turba, careat" - dogs dogs are not missing as companions, a very crowd. The lines by nec desunt shows how the dogs are still there are and are not missing, this is a beautiful image of the dogs.

Here we have Latin, correctly translated, with a good stylistic observation but the explanation does little more than repeat the translation noting that it is "a beautiful image". This does not relate the example closely enough to the question and the annotation here would be tick?

There were many very good answers to this question. Most candidates knew the text well and showed a keen appreciation of Ovid's poetry. Good points were made about the repeated *aspice*, the abundance of apples, the sheep who surround their lush pasture in Ovid's line, the goats whose feet audibly clatter on the rocks and the companionable dogs. Some thought the *inaequali harundine* was a deliberate imperfection in the perfect countryside, rather ignoring the fact that a tune on 'equal reeds' would have been all on one note. The last two lines (if used) were not so well handled and they do not contribute to the perfection of the countryside in an obvious way. Nonetheless a few candidates made an acceptable point of the empathy which Ovid creates with the mother cow.

Question 7

7* Judging by the poems you have read, what did the Romans think were the most important things in life?

In your answer you may refer to the passages printed in this question paper, but you should also refer to other parts of the prescribed texts that you have read. [10]

The 10-mark extended response provides candidates with an opportunity to show their overall understanding of the text they have studied and the personal response that they have made to it. The marking is based on the guidance on page 15 of the Mark Scheme. This makes clear that the marks are equally weighted between AO2 (knowledge and understanding) and AO3 (analysis, evaluation and response to literature). An argument, however good, must have detailed textual support to achieve the higher levels of marks and knowledge of the text, however detailed, will only score so far if no conclusions are drawn from it.

Examiners have used ticks of various types to indicate valid AO3 points and accurate pieces of textual evidence. These annotations indicate parts of the answer to which credit should be given. Examiners base their assessment of the whole answer on the descriptors given in the Grid on page 15; the ticks, of whatever variety, do not in themselves indicate a particular mark.

In this question candidates are asked to look at the evidence of the poems they have read and form some conclusions from this about what seemed important to the Romans. Many candidates found this quite difficult, perhaps particularly those who had not looked at the material from this or a similar point of view during their preparation for the examination. Some therefore took a poem, such as Martial's 'Recipe for happiness', went through its handy list of points and declared that these were important to the Romans. Some of these points could have been developed with support from other texts but some carried very little weight indeed, that the Romans thought sleep was very important, for example.

Exemplar 6

In Martialis' 'recipe for happiness', he writes a long list of things that make life happier. For example, he says that an easy social life and like-minded friends are important. This shows how the Romans thought that family and friends were very important in bringing happiness to your life.

Here the candidate draws a conclusion based on one example from a single poem. The conclusion is extended to include 'family' of which there is no mention in the example given. There is plenty of material about friendship and hospitality in Horace's 'The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse' which could have been brought in to support the point; Ovid's 'companionable dogs' could even have been drafted in at a pinch. It is impossible to conclude from a single small example that the Romans regarded friends, let alone friends and family, as an important aspect of life.

The most successful essays were those where the candidate was able to identify several things that were important to the Romans and to support their suggestions with a variety of textual references. These included the countryside, the life of luxury versus the simple life, what made for a happy life, friendship and social life, how to deal with the knowledge of our mortality and the role of religion. These essential ideas were presented in a great variety of ways, revealing the candidate's own response to the poems studied. Candidates often showed too a good appreciation of the wider context of some of the poems, such as the Epicurean philosophy of life and the way Ovid uses the countryside to comfort a jilted lover. Neither of these is essential knowledge but both clearly helped to give candidates a fuller understanding of the poems.

Another method adopted by some candidates was to look at each poem separately to identify what the poet was putting forward as important. This tended to produce a less coherent argument overall but in many instances, it got the job done quite well and scored good marks.

In all cases the inclusion of accurate and specific textual evidence was vital to support whatever point the candidate was making.

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