Assessment Report

Level 3 Classical Studies 2017

Standards 91394 91395 91396

Part A: Commentary

It is pleasing to note that candidates are now more familiar with the format of the examination questions, with more responses explicitly analysing 'to what extent…'. It is important that candidates learn that this type of question is asking for a measure, e.g. to some extent, a great extent, it depends on etc, and to achieve with Merit and Excellence they must endeavour to integrate this analysis throughout their response rather than addressing it at the end as an evaluative conclusion.
Some candidates continued to answer a question they had prepared for, rather than a question from the options available in the examination. This led to responses that did not adequately address the demands of the question. Similarly, candidates who used inappropriate text(s), art work(s) or a significant historical figure for their chosen question found it challenging to meet the standard.
Candidates who used the key concepts/words in the question, e.g. obstacles, emotion, change, to focus and structure their analysis produced more successful responses than those who did not. Similarly, candidates who wrote in extended paragraph format were able to develop greater analysis than those who focused on communicating their understanding primarily through diagrams and bullet-points.
Candidates are encouraged to spend time planning their responses in the space provided.

Part B: Report on standards

91394: Analyse ideas and values of the classical world

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- analysed ideas and values at a basic or under-developed level in the context of the question set
- used key words from the question
- focused their answer around the plot of a text, and inserted some analysis of values intermittently
- provided some primary source evidence in the form of direct quoting or paraphrasing, although these were not always the most relevant
- made some links to social/historical contexts
- largely relied on generalised points
- drew basic conclusions.

Candidates who were assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- lacked understanding of the ideas and values of the classical world, often overgeneralising
- recalled narrative/plot without realising the importance of events in light of ideas and/or values

- used learnt material in a way that did not authentically engage with the question, e.g. prepared a response which was based on a previous examination question
- wrote unbalanced and short responses
- described episodes or a plot summary from the text, but provided no analysis
- focused too much on the wider context of the literary work with little discussion from the text
- confused Homeric and Roman qualities, and Greek and Roman civilisations
- drew undeveloped or unlikely conclusions with little relevance to the question
- provided evidence which was incorrect or misinterpreted.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- discussed, in depth, ideas and values of the classical world in the context of the question set, but lacked perception
- used key words from the question to form their response
- effectively linked episodes from the text(s) to classical ideas and values
- wrote coherent, fluent answers which were well organised
- referred to the text(s) by quoting or paraphrasing, in order to develop their argument, and used Latin and/or Greek terms where appropriate
- used multiple examples to support their points
- often provided too much information about the socio-political context that was not relevant to their chosen question, e.g. unnecessary peripheral detail about Augustus, Rome, Athens or irrelevant modern-day issues
- drew sound conclusions about the ideas and values of the classical world, taking into account the examples they had analysed.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- discussed, with insight, ideas and values of the classical world in the context of the question set, and linked them effectively to literary text(s)
- used the wording of the question to formulate their response
- analysed‘the extent to which…’very well, their argument often clearly stated at the beginning of their response
- focused on the analysis of the ideas and values rather than recalling plot in detail
- made links to many parts of the text(s)
- wrote a fluent, sophisticated response, not necessarily in chronological order
- appreciated the complexity of the text(s) and their characters
- included original ideas, well-developed argument(s), quotes from secondary sources, and/or insightful links to the socio-political context of the text(s)
- compared and contrasted quotes/passages from the text(s) to show perception
- provided critical evaluation of the world of classical writers
- understood the deeper meaning behind the text, and particularly with the Aeneid, knew how the epic continued to unfold after Book 6, e.g. thinking perceptively about Aeneas’ furor when killing Turnus
- drew developed conclusions that were supported by specific, well-chosen evidence.

Standard specific comments

The majority of candidates used an appropriate text to answer their chosen question.

This standard focuses on the ideas and values of the classical world inherent in works of classical literature. When analysing the ideas and values inherent in Virgil’s Aeneid, a large number of candidates focused their response too narrowly on the achievements of the emperor Augustus, many of which were completed after the death of Virgil, and omitted the analysis of the ideas and values in the text. For example, stating that Virgil was referring to Augustan marriage reforms which occurred years after his death (Lex Iulia de Adulteriis Coercendis of 17 BCE andLex Papia Poppaeaof 9CE) or the banishment of Julia in 2BCE. While candidates knew a lot about Augustan reforms and the life of the emperor, they are best reminded to focus on the scope of this standard and bring that knowledge in as appropriate to strengthen their response. The level of specificity of some candidates’ responses regarding the Roman

emperor would be best suited to AS 91396 and often detracted from the candidates' ability to analyse ideas and values with insight.

While pietas and furor are key ideas inherent in the Aeneid, many candidates either misunderstood their meaning or attributed all emotional responses in the poem to one of these values. Candidates are encouraged to consider other values such as mercy, compassion, justice, clemency, or ideas such as attitude to war or religious devotion and observance alongside furor and pietas.

Some candidates responded to works of Latin literature – Apuleius' Metamorphoses and Ovid's Metamorphoses. Unfortunately, a number of candidate responses only drew on single examples from the text (i.e. the story of Cupid and Psyche) which did not allow sufficient depth of understanding for Level 8 of the curriculum. These texts are great choices for this standard but more than one story or poem should be used to ensure that the candidate can sufficiently address the question.

91395: Analyse the significance of a work(s) of art in the classical world

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- discussed the significance of a work(s) of art in the context of the question set
- wrote a lot on the historical/artistic/mythological context instead of focusing on answering the question
- provided more description and explanation than analysis
- based their answers on too many art works. As a result, their answers provided too many factual details and failed to respond to the question set in sufficient detail
- provided some specific evidence
- provided lengthy, general and/or irrelevant introductions
- drew basic conclusions.

Candidates who were assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- provided a response that did not answer their chosen question
- misinterpreted what the question was asking of them
- provided very little relevant and accurate information in response to the question
- chose inappropriate art work(s) for the chosen question.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- discussed, in depth, the significance of a work(s) of art in the context of the question set
- analysed 'the extent to which...' although treatment was often unbalanced, e.g. this analysis was often provided in a concluding evaluation at the end rather than integrated throughout
- developed a structured, analytical response
- used key words from the question to focus their response
- chose art works wisely and were able to use their art works to answer the question in detail
- used 1-3 art works and wrote in depth rather than covering multiple art works in breadth
- made relevant connections
- drew sound conclusions supported by evidence.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- discussed, with insight, the significance of a work(s) of art in the context of the question set

- analysed ‘the extent to which...’ explicitly throughout the response
- thought carefully about the demands of the question and selected art works appropriately
- used a few art works to answer the question perceptively and in depth
- approached the question methodically addressing all aspects in appropriate detail
- began directly responding to the question without giving extraneous information or an irrelevant introduction about the works they had chosen
- used relevant terminology with purpose
- showed an ability to think critically
- drew developed conclusions that were supported by specific, well-chosen evidence.

Standard specific comments

Candidates are advised to respond to the focus of their chosen question and not provide a response that merely communicates what they know about an art work(s).

Candidates are encouraged to draw a wide range of evidence from one to three art works. Those who chose four or more art works usually wrote a descriptive response that lacked analysis and prevented them from showing a higher level of understanding.

Candidates should use and respond to the key words in the question. They should avoid drawing sketches / diagrams that add little or no value to their response.

Candidates are advised to carefully select the question that best suits what they have learned about.

91396: Analyse the impact of a significant historical figure on the classical world

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- discussed a significant historical figure in the context of the question set
- provided some analysis, but this was not sustained, e.g. ‘to what extent’ would be mentioned but not discussed in detail
- used key words/concepts from the question in their response, e.g. successful in expanding, led by example, political/religious/philosophical ideologies, helped, hindered bringing about change
- used narrative detail to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding
- provided some primary source evidence, mostly in the form of paraphrasing
- drew basic conclusions.

Candidates who were assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- misinterpreted their chosen question
- chose a question that did not lend itself to their chosen figure as well as other questions could have
- veered away from their chosen question in their response, highlighting the need for planning
- retold a narrative of a significant historical figure’s life/career rather than analysis
- produced an episodic response that was not methodical, e.g. events/details not in chronological order or linked thematically
- used pre-learnt material in a way that did not authentically engage with the question, e.g. some candidates wrote at length about how a significant historical figure was helped or hindered in their rise to power, but did not discuss the change(s) to society that the figure was attempting to bring about (Question Four)
- used bullet points only
- wrote a lengthy introduction, not required by the standard
- provided no primary source evidence, or a little primary source evidence that was not appropriate in the context of their chosen question.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- discussed, in depth, a significant historical figure in the context of the question set
- analysed most key words/concepts in the question with purpose
- addressed all aspects of the question, although treatment was often unbalanced, e.g. the 'extent' aspect of the question was often narrowly focused
- applied a methodical approach to planning and structuring their response
- chose appropriate narrative evidence to support their ideas
- integrated primary source evidence of specific relevance to the context, with some attribution
- analysed connections between the significant historical figure's life/career and their historical context, e.g. relationships with people and places, historical events which continued to influence, conflicting ideologies
- provided alternative viewpoints, e.g. different primary/secondary source perspectives on an event or relationship, sometimes including their own viewpoint too
- Often approached the question from a thematic perspective
- drew sound conclusions supported by evidence.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- discussed, with insight, the impact of the significant historical figure in the context of the question set
- skilfully used the key words/concepts in the question to structure and develop argument(s)
- addressed all aspects of the question in appropriate detail
- presented an argument, critically evaluated alternative viewpoints, then synthesised all ideas to draw developed conclusions
- consistently integrated and attributed a range of primary, and where appropriate secondary evidence of specific relevance to the context
- implicitly and/or explicitly acknowledged the complexity of the primary, and where appropriate secondary source evidence, e.g. addressing the strengths/limitations of sources in relation to style, time, place and relationships in the context of the question set and their chosen historical figure, such as Plato being Socrates' pupil, bias in the Res Gestae
- critically evaluated connections between the significant historical figure's life/career and their historical context to draw conclusions about the extent of their impact
- drew developed conclusions that were supported by specific, well-chosen evidence.

Standard specific comments

Historical figures most commonly used were Alexander the Great, Augustus and Socrates. Some candidates wrote about figures such as Hippocrates, Nero, Julius Caesar, Agrippina and Cleopatra.

A few candidates answered using mythological/literary figures such as Aeneas, which were inappropriate for this achievement standard.

It is recommended that candidates would benefit from developing a thematic approach to their response.

Classical Studies subject page

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