

2023 NCEA Assessment Report

Subject:	Classical Studies
Level:	Level 3
Achievement standard(s):	91394, 91395, 91396

General commentary

All Level 3 questions required the candidate to discuss, with a depth of analysis. Traditionally this has been with the question stem “To what extent ...”, which requires candidates to measure (e.g. to some extent, to a great extent, it depends on ...), or candidates could argue the opposite. To achieve with Merit and Excellence, candidates must have integrated this analysis throughout their response, rather than addressing it at the end as an evaluative conclusion. Those who integrated their analysis in response to their selected question achieved a higher grade.

Please note that question stems / starters may vary, but still require the same depth of analysis and integration for higher levels of achievement, e.g. “In what ways ...”, “Discuss the impact or change ...”.

Candidates who used the key words / themes of the question to plan their ideas, demonstrated focus and structured their response/ argument, instead of just writing all that they knew. Candidates should not use all key words / themes from all four questions and combine to answer one question. This leads to an unfocused and confused response.

Candidates who wrote in extended paragraph format developed greater analysis than those who wrote smaller, less-detailed paragraphs covering multiple points. Using the planning page before beginning their response is crucial to this end. Candidates are strongly encouraged to focus on quality over quantity – this includes the length of the response and the number of examples, contexts, or art works used to respond.

Some candidates answered a question they had prepared for, rather than a question from the options available in the examination. These responses did not meet the standard. Similarly, candidates who used inappropriate texts, art works, or historical figures for their chosen question found it challenging to meet the standard. Providing a plot summary, description of an art work, or biography of a figure does not meet the standard. Candidates must show some originality of thought in relation to the question.

Candidates are required to use primary-source evidence. This could be in the form of direct quotation, accurate paraphrasing, or reference to specific details of art works. This evidence must be relevant to their chosen question and used to support their key ideas / argument. Just as candidates are required to choose an appropriate literary text, art work, or historical figure, they must also choose appropriate source evidence.

Candidates are encouraged to look at the assessment schedules for each examination paper. These give guidance on the types of responses required for each level of achievement. For example, the AS 91394 schedule shows that at A3/4 candidates are required to show evidence of sound understanding of the ways in which a work of classical literature reflects

the social, political, religious, and / or artistic environment of the time in which it was produced, but there is some oversimplification. This means that a link between their chosen literary text and historical context is an indicator of achievement. Of course, this will present differently according to the chosen text.

Report on individual achievement standard(s)

Achievement standard 91394: Analyse ideas and values of the classical world

Assessment

The examination included four questions from which candidates were required to select one to respond to. The questions covered the themes specified in the 2023 assessment specifications: leadership, relationships, power, and responsibilities.

The questions required candidates to apply their understanding of the ideas and values of the classical world as communicated through a classical literary text.

Candidates were required to develop a response that analysed and drew conclusions about “extent” in relation to the focus of the question.

Commentary

Candidates who used Greek and Latin terms often (and correctly) performed better than those who did not. These terms need to be used in context and explained appropriately.

The examination paper says one literary text, but candidates sometimes use two or three different texts – this is not recommended. Neither is using all four key words / themes in their responses, which made it difficult to understand what question they were answering.

The vast majority of responses were on *The Aeneid*. However, Homeric epics and Greek drama were also popular. Juvenal was less popular, but still a good choice for this standard.

Horace was not a good choice for this standard as, while it allows for excellent context, it does not have enough content. Many responses on Virgil's *The Aeneid*, up to Book 12, along with the other traditionally learned books, were successful.

Relating to *The Aeneid*, it is important to remember that Italians were already living in Italy. Aeneas does not found Italy, but he settles in Italy, builds Lavinium for Lavinia, and from there Iulus heads out and builds Alba Longa, from which we get Romulus and Remus. Cupid is not the son of Juno, and Juno did not send Cupid down to Carthage poison Dido. Italians and Romans are not the same people until Augustus unites them. It was the Italian people who often lost their lands under the Civil War, which Virgil knew since he lost his family lands. Aeneas is not Augustus.

Candidates this year did in fact add new values of constantia and gravitas, but candidates are still reminded to continue to respond with more than just the value of pietas and furor.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- wrote everything they knew about the text and put in key words or ideas / values of the Roman / Greek world
- gave a plot summary
- provided some wider context material

- included fact, though some may have included minor errors
- included a narrow range of examples
- identified some of their chosen text's ideas and values
- included some quotes, though not all may have been relevant.

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

- showed in-depth knowledge of the text, but that depth did not continue in drawing conclusions or showing an understanding of wider context
- included relevant and accurate quotes
- defined the key ideas and values successfully with good examples
- included some historical context material, but it may have been in a stand-alone paragraph and not integrated.

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

- constructed original and well-thought-out responses that addressed the question well
- demonstrated clear knowledge of the text and integrated a wide range of supporting evidence from both the text and historical / social / political / artistic context
- presented balanced and objective analysis of ideas and characters
- provided different examples to support their response and demonstrated a breadth of understanding by including appropriate examples beyond those commonly used
- wrote answers that reflected the focus of the question and the "extent" element consistently, with detailed discussions of the text, often with a thematic approach
- discussed the historical context of the text in a clear and explicit manner, regularly showing that they understood the wider ramifications of the text
- wove historical context throughout their discussion – this was particularly evident with *The Aeneid*, with the emphasis on the importance of pietas for Augustus and his policies.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- had inaccuracies or incorrect understanding of the plot
- provided a plot summary of the text without reference to the question or provided a plot summary without analysis or examples
- chose the wrong question for their knowledge and showed confusion about what was being asked
- did not identify key ideas and values, or did not define them correctly
- wrote short responses
- stated everything they knew without making it meaningful.

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

Assessment

The examination included four questions from which candidates were required to select one to respond to. The questions covered Explanatory Notes 3 and 4 of the standard as specified in the 2023 assessment specifications.

The questions required candidates to apply their understanding of the significance of a work(s) of art in the classical world.

Candidates were required to develop a response that analysed and drew conclusions about “extent” in relation to the focus of the question.

Commentary

Candidates who utilised multiple art works often struggled to reach the depth and detail needed for higher levels of achievement.

Candidates must show understanding of art-specific terminology. Many did not clearly demonstrate this, e.g. confusing techniques with style.

There was an increase of quotes used by candidates, but they need to be relevant to the answer. Quotes alone do not necessarily mean a higher grade if they are not in context.

Candidates should provide more than the context of the situation of the time, they need to give specific evidence or examples from the art work and not talk around the art period.

Candidates who struck a balance between features of the art work and the context in which it was produced achieved well.

Most candidates responded with the Ara Pacis Augustae, and the Prima Porta Augustus.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- knew the art work(s) well, but didn't answer the question directly
- made basic references to the context in which the art work(s) was created
- answered the question, but gave a limited overview of both aspects
- answered on more than one art work, each in little detail
- answered the question in an unbalanced manner or with minor inaccuracies
- had an appreciation of key features of the art work(s)
- attempted to link context to the art work(s)
- understood the purpose of the art work(s)
- attempted to answer their chosen question directly.

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

- answered in depth, but may have been unbalanced in approach
- showed knowledge / appreciation of the context in which the art work(s) was created
- included specific evidence in their response
- incorporated quotes that were relevant to the question and response
- used the art work(s) appropriately as evidence
- showed a good appreciation of the key features of the art work(s).

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

- demonstrated perceptive analysis by linking features of the art work(s) and the context in which it was created
- used evidence to support an analysis of the question
- chose the correct art work for the question and addressed the “extent” part of the question with relevant evidence and quotes

- showed sophistication of ideas in their response
- made appropriate comparisons to other works or contexts, or used supplementary art works as brief comparison
- showed clear understanding of the question and answered it well
- utilised the evidence from the art work(s) effectively
- consistently wove contextual detail into their answer
- wrote a sustained and detailed response
- understood limitations and evaluated different perspectives on art work(s)
- used relevant and appropriate quotations of art historians / classicists / historians.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- provided incorrect details of the art work(s), or superficial information
- only gave one aspect of the art work, e.g. for the Colosseum only wrote about the seating
- wrote more about the context on the art work and did not answer the question, e.g. explaining about the gladiators in the Colosseum, but nothing about the structure
- did not understand the question, e.g. candidates struggled with Question One
- used an art work that wasn't in context, e.g. Michelangelo's David
- did not use specific features of the art work
- responded with a range of art works
- discussed context and not features of art work(s).

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

Assessment

The examination included four questions from which candidates were required to select one to respond to. The questions covered the themes specified in the 2023 assessment specifications: leadership, ideology, status, and change.

The questions required candidates to apply their understanding of the impact of a significant historical figure on the classical world.

Candidates were required to develop a response that analysed and drew conclusions about "extent" in relation to the focus of the question.

Commentary

Candidates who attempted to respond to a question with a narrow or prepared focus were significantly less successful than those who could adapt their knowledge to the context of the question. Similarly, narrative-heavy responses did not result in high achievement.

Generally, a good range of primary-source evidence was included in the form of quotations. These candidates were more successful in achieving at a higher level.

Candidates who wrote about Socrates struggled to choose the correct question (or adjust their information / evidence to the questions). These candidates tended to stay at an achieved level because of this.

Alexander the Great was the most popular figure, followed by Augustus and then a small number of Socrates. Pericles, Julius Caesar, Nero and Cleopatra came up, but only a very small amount for each.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- sustained an appropriately structured response
- used specific examples, but tended to lean more into narrative when using these
- included brief or minimal use of primary sources, and occasionally these were not attributed
- attempted to address the “extent” part of the question, or it was implied
- gave a simplistic answer to the question with some basic understanding of the socio-political context of the time.

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

- structured a response to fully answer the answer question
- explored the wider context and cultural context
- included specific and relevant details, such as dates and figures, as their examples
- offered different viewpoints, such as the viewpoint of sources or people in the context
- integrated and correctly attributed primary-source evidence; at times offering more than one source for an example
- attempted to address the limitations of sources, but in a general way.

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

- answered all parts of the question thoroughly
- drew conclusions related to the question that were supported by selected examples discussed the wider context of the relevant historical figure
- included a range of both primary and secondary sources that were integrated throughout and attributed
- showed critical evaluation related to the question or sources
- demonstrated an awareness of values and traditions of classical society beyond the immediately obvious and used complex primary sources
- wove their argument into the body of the essay
- answered both parts of the question with a thoughtful response that took classical beliefs and concepts into consideration
- acknowledged the limitations of sources throughout the essay and with specific relevance to the sources used
- considered multiple viewpoints and gave reasons for them.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not answer the question they chose
- wrote a response that did not address both parts of the question with detail
- wrote a narrative of events that took place in the classical figure's life; at times these did not relate to the question
- provided irrelevant examples.