National Certificate of Educational Achievement

2011 Assessment Report

Latin Level 1

90862   Translate adapted Latin text into English, demonstrating understanding

90863   Demonstrate understanding of adapted Latin text

COMMENTARY

Although the size of the Level 1 Latin cohort for 2011 was smaller than in previous years, the overall quality of the candidature was very strong. For standard 90862, many candidates wrote almost flawless translations. For standard 90863, some candidates were greatly challenged by grammar questions that required them both to identify cases, tenses, and moods and to explain their construction.

STANDARD REPORTS

90862　Translate adapted Latin text into English, demonstrating understanding

ACHIEVEMENT

Candidates who were awarded Achievement for this standard demonstrated the required skills and knowledge. They typically:

- displayed good dictionary skills to distinguish **deus** (god) from **dea** (goddess), and **vir** (man) from **vires** (strength)
- kept sense units together in their translations, especially with syntactic items such as **non modo** …, **sed etiam** …
- realised that **num** can mean "surely … not" in a main clause, but means "whether" when introducing a subordinate clause (indirect question)
- recognised comparative and superlative forms and translated appropriately e.g., **maximis viribus**, "with very great strength" (not "with the greatest strength")
- could spell and copy correctly to convey correct sense e.g. writing "through" rather than "threw", and "horse" rather than "horese" or "hourse"
- did not express their translation using acceptable English e.g. writing "for short time" instead of "for a short time"
- translated names and places using the nominative case e.g. "Sinon" rather than "Sinonem"
- recognised that **hortabatur** is a deponent verb, not passive.

NOT ACHIEVED

Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved for this standard lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement. They typically:

- did not have the dictionary skills required to distinguish one word from another e.g., thinking that **ligneum** meant "giant" (mistaken for **ingens**), or mistaking **donum** (gift) for **domum** (house), or **dolum** (trick) for **donum** (gift)
- did not choose an appropriate translation for a word e.g. translating **urbs** as town, or **cives** as "people", or "**Troianos**" as "Romans"
- did not use correctly words that were provided in the glossed vocabulary e.g. writing "troians" instead of "Trojans", or assuming that a man's name was "Sinon Quendam".

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Merit typically:

- translated words appropriately to the context e.g. **illum** as "that man" not just as "that (thing)", or **se esse captivum** as "that he was prisoner" rather than "that himself was a prisoner"
- distinguished between accusative of duration of time and ablative of time within which e.g. translating **brevi tempore** as "in a short time" rather than "for a short time"
- considered carefully and chose the best alternative between different cases with the same ending e.g. translating **deae** as "for the goddess" or "of the goddess" (but not as "from the goddess", which would require a past participle and a prepositional phrase)
- conveyed the meaning of clauses by translating conjunctions correctly e.g. translating **ut eum necarent** as "to kill him" rather than "and kill him"
- translated all parts of clauses e.g. **aut** … **aut** as "either … or", not just as "or".

ACHIEVEMENT WITH EXCELLENCE

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement with Merit, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Excellence typically:

- translated using natural English idiom, e.g. translating **laeti clamaverunt** as "they happily shouted" or "they shouted happily" rather than "happy shouted", or translating **factum** as "made" or "which was made" rather than "having been made"
- distinguished between ablative of means and ablative of description, following the sense of the word order e.g. translating **maximis viribus** as "hurled his spear with very great strength" rather than "one Trojan with very great strength"
- translated the subjunctive mood without using "may" or "might", and not using "can" or "could" unless there was a form of **possum** present
- used sophisticated ways of translating subordinate clauses to match natural English idiom – for example, translating an ablative absolute as a main clause joined by "and" to a second main clause e.g. translating **portis urbis apertis, multi cives cucurrerunt** … as "many citizens opened the gates of the city and ran …"

OTHER COMMENTS

One section of the passage for translation was ambiguous for candidates: *donum deae Minervae*, which candidates translated as either "the gift of the goddess Minerva", or "the gift for the goddess Minerva". Both responses were accepted because there was nothing elsewhere in the translation nor in the introduction for a candidate who didn't know the story of the Trojan Horse in depth to indicate that the Horse was left as a gift for Minerva, and not made by her.

Candidates are reminded that some Latin nouns are always treated as plurals although they are singulars in English. Two examples are *hostes, hostium* (m.pl.) enemy (not enemies) and castra, -orum (n.pl.) camp, (not camps). Candidates who translated *hostes* as 'the enemies' were stretching the bounds of English meaning.

90863 Demonstrate understanding of adapted Latin text

ACHIEVEMENT

Candidates who were awarded Achievement for this standard demonstrated the required skills and knowledge. They typically:

• answered questions in English unless explicitly instructed to answer in Latin

• could spell words accurately in English so that their answers were not ambiguous e.g. not writing "imperor" instead of "emperor"

• answered questions accurately, and did not quote a whole sentence when only one word was required

• distinguished carefully between verb tenses

• gave two answers, of which only one was correct e.g. stating that a word was dative or ablative, when the text showed that it could, in fact, be only ablative.

NOT ACHIEVED

Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved for this standard lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement. They typically:

• appeared not to have checked their answers for accuracy, or include detail

• seemed not to have checked the meanings of unfamiliar words in the word list provided

• supplied answers that were quite incongruent with the information provided in the text

• appeared unfamiliar with specific grammatical terms e.g. number means that a noun is either singular or plural, whereas many candidates answered with a numeral between 3 and 6.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Merit typically:

• provided a literal translation, paying attention to verb tenses, number (singular and plural) of nouns, etc and did not paraphrase or omit words e.g. translating as "Nero's admirers" rather than as "those who tried to flatter Nero"

• distinguished between the different forms of reported speech i.e. reported statement, reported question, reported command

• distinguished between **ubi** in a main clause, where it means "when", and **ubi** introducing a subordinate clause, where it means "(at) where".

ACHIEVEMENT WITH EXCELLENCE

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement with Merit, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Excellence typically:

• provided a rich answer when asked to answer in detail

• showed they knew what various cases were used for e.g. genitive of possession, ablative of the agent, dative of advantage

• identified syntactical constructions correctly e.g. purpose clause, reported question, reported statement

• recognised a gerundive and realised that it expresses an idea of necessity

• translated tenses, voices, moods, etc. accurately e.g. **flagravisse** means "to have been on fire", not just the dictionary meaning of "to be on fire"; **studio** means "with enthusiasm" (ablative case) not just "enthusiasm".

OTHER COMMENTS

Candidates are reminded when asked to give their opinion that the answer itself will lie somewhere in the text, or the answer can be reasonably inferred by connecting the meaning of different sections of the text. Candidates should not just make up an opinion or reason, however historically plausible.