

National Certificate of Educational Achievement

2013 Assessment Report

Latin Level 1

- 90862 Translate adapted Latin text into English, demonstrating understanding**
- 90863 Demonstrate understanding of adapted Latin text**

COMMENTARY

Candidates achieved well in a subject which remains a rigorous and challenging test to the brightest of minds. Most candidates demonstrated an obvious command of the Latin syntax and idiom expected at this level. Complicated elements of Latin syntax in the translation were tackled well; in particular instances of ablative absolute were translated into very natural English, and participles were translated by natural English alternatives such as temporal and causal clauses.

For the comprehension standard this year's candidates were well prepared, and a large proportion of candidates gained Excellence. Those who read the questions carefully and gave all the required information scored better than those who were careless, rushed, or did not check their answers carefully. Overall candidates showed sound knowledge of Latin accident and syntax. This reflects thorough training for the more demanding questions.

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:

- correctly identified cases and translated them appropriately, e.g. *in vestibulo balnearum* means “in the entrance of the baths” rather than “in the baths of the front hall”
- translated Latin words appropriately using the meanings given in the vocabulary list provided, e.g. *venire* means “to come” rather than “to go”, *detulerunt* means “they reported” rather than “they told”, *deinde* means “then” rather than “finally”
- used the vocabulary list to identify correctly what gender a noun was, e.g. *Licinius veniet* cannot be translated as “she will come”
- could recognise that a verb was a perfect passive, but could not appropriately translate, e.g. *traditum est* should be translated as “was handed over” rather than “has been handed over”
- did not correctly link adjectives to their nouns by matching number, gender and case rather than word position, e.g. *huic* does not agree with *venenum*, nor does *hi* agree with *totam rem*.

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:

- tried to guess what words meant by using a similar-looking English word to translate, e.g. *venenum* was mistranslated by its derivative “venom”; the vocabulary list supplied in the examination should be used by candidates to provide appropriate meanings for all words in the passage

- did not translate words with more than one meaning appropriately according to the context, e.g. *in quodam servo* means “on a certain slave” rather than “in a certain slave”, likewise *in perturbatione* means “in the confusion” rather than “into confusion” (for which *in* would require the accusative case after it rather than the ablative)
- translated plural Latin words as singular in English, e.g. *balneas* as “the bath”, or *vice versa*, e.g. *maleficium* as “wrong-doings”
- added in additional words which were not present in the Latin text and inappropriate to the context, e.g. *ad dominam* should be “to their mistress” rather than “to his mistress”, *effugit* means just “he escaped” rather than “he managed to escape”, *conficere* means simply “to carry out” rather than “to continue to carry out”, *ut vellet* means “that he wanted” rather than “that, as a result, he wanted”
- confused similar words, e.g. *ad dominam* means “to their mistress” rather than “to their master”; the vocabulary list should be used when candidates have any uncertainty
- did not translate proper nouns (names and places) by using their nominative form in English, e.g. “*Clodia*” rather than “*Clodiae*” or “*Clodiam*”
- did not spell proper nouns (names and places) correctly, e.g. “*Calius*” or “*Caellius*” or “*Caelus*” for “*Caelius*”, “*Cloda*” for “*Clodia*”, and “*Linius*” or “*Lucinius*” or “*Lucius*” or “*Liminis*” for “*Licinius*”.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

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

- realised that a present participle in Latin refers to an action happening at the same time as the main verb, while a past participle refers to an action which has already happened before the main verb
- showed flair in their translation in certain phrases, e.g. *domi* as “in his house” (acceptable at this level as a nice substitute for “at home”), *accidit ut ille haberet* as “he happened to have”
- realised that *eius* cannot refer back to the subject of the sentence (for which *suus*, *-a*, *-um* is used), but must refer to a different person
- translated relative pronoun appropriately, realising that the number and gender of the relative pronoun comes from the antecedent (the word the relative pronoun refers back to), while the case of the relative pronoun comes from its function within the relative clause, e.g. *quae sapiens iussit* means “who wisely ordered” rather than “which wisely ordered”, as the antecedent of *quae* is *dominam* (mistress) and therefore feminine
- gave a more natural translation for adjectives where appropriate, e.g. *quae sapiens iussit* is better translated as “who wisely ordered” rather than “who, [being] wise, ordered”
- did not use “may” or “might” to translate a purpose clause, but rephrased with an infinitive to render the phrase more naturally, e.g. *ut delitescerent* is better translated by “to hide” rather than the more literal “so that they might hide”
- translated more difficult phrases too literally rather than using a natural English expression, e.g. *aliquid veneni* is better translated as “some poison” rather than “something of poison”, likewise *venissent eo* as “had come there” rather than “had come to there”.

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:

- used a variety of alternatives to translate Latin participles, e.g. *misit lectos amicos* is wonderfully translated as “chose friends and sent them” rather than “sent chosen friends”
- translated the demonstrative *ille* by “that” when used emphatically, rather than by “he” when it simply indicates a strong subject change; likewise *hic* by “this”; is, a non-emphatic pronoun/adjective is correctly translated by “this, that, he, she, it,” etc. e.g. *iussit hos conficere mandata illius*, where the contrasting pronouns are emphatic and should be translated as “ordered these [men] to carry out that man’s instructions” rather than “ordered them to carry out his instructions”
- realised that *conscii* was not a nominative subject or a genitive of some sort, but used in apposition to the subject (“they” on the end of *adiuvarent*)
- correctly identified and translated the phrase *effugit multis spectatoribus clamantibus* as an ablative absolute rather than an ablative of accompaniment (which would require the preposition *cum*), i.e. “he fled while many onlookers were shouting” or “he fled amidst the shouts of many onlookers” rather than “he fled with many onlookers” with the idea of *clamantibus* omitted or placed elsewhere
- correctly identified and translated the phrase *in perturbatione* as “in the confusion” rather than “in confusion”.

OTHER COMMENTS

When candidates wish to use a natural English idiom or a more natural form of expression, but are concerned that they may not be giving a sufficiently literal translation, they are advised to write a literal translation, cross it out lightly so that it can still be read, and then to write their improved translation above or after their literal translation. Note that candidates must not give two versions: one version must be crossed out. It is a joy when candidates offer a translation that expresses the thought of the Latin phrase in an erudite, polished and sophisticated manner, and the cultivation of this skill provides enormous benefits to English writing.

90863 Demonstrate understanding of adapted Latin text

ACHIEVEMENT

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

- were able to give general information or explain the gist of the story, but did not add enough detail
- identified some relevant information but did not correctly connect adjectives to their nouns, or did not appreciate that an adjective was superlative, or misinterpreted the tense of a verbal idea
- carefully selected the words required for an answer, and did not quote whole sentences when only one word was required

- were able to return proper nouns to their nominative case when translating (as given in the vocabulary list provided), e.g. *Apollo* rather than *Apollinis*, and *Tiber* rather than *Tiberis*.

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:

- supplied answers which were at odds with the information provided in the text
- did not check their answers for accuracy, or include detail
- did not check the meanings of unfamiliar words in the wordlist provided
- did not find their answer within the lines specified in the question
- did not know specific case uses, e.g. the dative of agent used with a gerundive to express the agent
- gave a translation which was different from the meanings provided in the vocabulary list, and which was contrary to the meaning, e.g. the Romans were being troubled by a dreadful plague, not by a dreadful pest.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

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

- identified cases correctly and distinguished carefully between verb tenses
- supplied English translations when asked to do so
- recognised that adjectives can be used as nouns in Latin, e.g. *mala* means “evil things, troubles”.

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 text, when asked to do so, in a literal way, paying close attention to verb tenses, number (singular and plural) of nouns, etc. and did not paraphrase or leave any words out
- gave all the information available when asked to answer in detail
- knew what various cases were used for, e.g. accusative of extent of time, dative of the agent, dative of advantage
- identified syntactical constructions correctly, e.g. reported question, indirect object, purpose clause
- recognised a gerundive and realised that a dative is used with it to express the person doing the action (dative of the agent)
- knew that *ut* is used with an indicative verb to express “as”, e.g. *ut solebat* means “as he was accustomed”.

OTHER COMMENTS

Those candidates who failed to provide an English translation when asked to do so in comprehension questions jeopardised their chances of gaining Excellence; likewise those candidates who quote Latin examples from the passage outside the lines specified cannot gain credit for their answers.