

# Assessment Report

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### Part A: Commentary

Choice of literary text, artwork, and historical figure is very important. Some do not lend themselves to the demands of Level 8 of the New Zealand Curriculum because there is insufficient source evidence available, or what is available is too narrow / brief. AS91394 literary texts must relate to the 'ideas and values', AS91395 artworks must relate to 'significance' and 91396 historical figures must relate to their 'impact'. If the values, significance or the impact is narrow and lacking depth, this will affect the candidate's ability to answer 'the extent to which...' and / or will reduce the number of questions they can choose from in the examination.

All questions begin with 'to what extent...'. This means candidates are asked to measure (e.g., to some extent, to a great extent, it depends on, etc.), and to achieve with Merit and Excellence, candidates must endeavour to integrate this analysis throughout their response, rather than addressing it at the end as an evaluative conclusion. Those who did integrate achieved a higher grade. Similarly, those who did not address the 'to what extent' at all found it challenging to meet the standard because it affects the answer to the question.



Candidates must use the key words of the question (e.g., tragic, peace / prosperity, took risks) to focus and structure their argument / response.

Candidates must not expect that every question will explicitly include the 'theme', which is in fact a concept too, from the assessment specifications. Sometimes it will be an aspect of that theme.

Candidates who wrote in extended paragraph format were able to develop greater analysis than those who wrote smaller, less detailed paragraphs covering multiple points. Using the planning page before beginning their answer is crucial to this end.

Some candidates answered a question they had prepared for, rather than a question from the options available in the examination. Too many candidates regurgitated an internal assessment and tried to make it fit the context / focus of a question without answering the question itself. 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 artwork or biography of a figure does not meet the standard.

Candidates must use primary-source evidence. This can 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 in a way that supports their key ideas / argument. Just as candidates are required to choose an appropriate literary text, artwork, 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 evidence required for each level of achievement.

## Part B: Report on standards

### 91394: Analyse ideas and values of the classical world

#### Examinations

The examination included four questions, from which candidates were required to select one to respond to. The questions covered the themes specified in the 2021 assessment specification: leadership, relationships, ideology, and identity.

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 'the extent to which' in relation to the focus of the question.

Candidates who used Greek and Latin terms often (and correctly) succeeded better than those who did not.

Many candidates tried to incorporate Roman virtues, but not all were able to define these terms correctly.

Learning a range of quotes will help candidates write better responses.

Candidates who answered in the context of Virgil focused on Books 1,2 and 4 almost exclusively, with the odd reference to Book 6. It would be in the best interests of candidates aiming for Excellence to show knowledge of other books, such as Book 8 and Book 12.

A couple of content-specific comments relating to The Aeneid: Virgil died in 19BCE and a lot of responses referred to the Lex Julia Augustus' morality law for adultery, but this law was brought in during 18BCE. Augustus is not using Virgil to push his morality stance, and too many candidates wrote using Book 4 of The Aeneid as an example of Augustus' morality laws. Virgil was not in Augustus' inner circle; he could not predict Augustus' mood, and can't have publicised a law a year after he had died.

Most responses were on The Aeneid, some on Aristophanes and Juvenal, a few on Homer's Iliad and Odyssey.

## Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- demonstrated a good general understanding of the text in relation to their chosen question
- tried to link to the wider context
- answered the question, but lacked the depth needed for Merit. This may have been because they focused on only one or two examples from the text, or the examples they did provide were discussed too briefly for higher grades
- lacked specific evidence and some candidates muddled their evidence, e.g., using the wrong examples to explain their points.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not answer the question or submitted a rote-learned answer, or prepared for an aspect of a theme, which did not address the question
- gave a plot summary at the expense of responding to the question
- used inaccurate material / evidence
- provided a review of the text through a modern lens
- did not use any evidence to support their argument.

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

- understood the text and how it was connected to the context of the question
- used appropriate and immediately relevant evidence to support their explanation
- provided a good discussion of the text, demonstrating that they knew the text well
- used a range of examples or 2–3 in detail
- drew general but supported conclusions.

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

- used a wide range of examples and quotes
- regularly used specific and relevant evidence, which was often woven into their explanation
- skilfully linked the text to its wider historical context and integrated that throughout their response
- showed perceptive understanding and drew well-developed conclusions.

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

**Examinations**

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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 2021 assessment specification.

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

the classical world and develop a response that analysed and drew conclusions about 'the extent to which' in relation to the focus of the question.

Candidates who responded using one artwork tended to show greater depth of understanding than those who answered using more than one.

Candidates need to understand and use terminology specific to their chosen artwork.

A concise and precise answer can achieve better than a long response that lacks specific examples.

Overall, candidates tended to have a good base knowledge of the artwork(s) they wrote about but did not always apply this to the question appropriately and did not address 'to what extent'. E.g., Question Four – many candidates discussed innovation but not in relation to space.

Candidates may argue the negative / reverse of a question, if appropriate, e.g., Question Three – that an artwork did not celebrate peace and prosperity because of these [x, y, z] reasons.

Most responses were on Roman Art, Greek Vase responses were considerably fewer. The most common art works were the Colosseum, Prima Porta, Ara Pacis Augustae, Bust of Commodus, and Kleophrades and Exekias vases.

## Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- responded well using one artwork or used several lacking in depth
- provided some specific examples as supporting evidence
- addressed part of the question
- used key words from the question in their response
- provided more explanation than analysis

- understood the nature of historical / artistic context
- began their responses by writing a lot of information about the artwork / artist / emperor, which was irrelevant and of not value in the context of their chosen question
- drew basic conclusions.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not answer the question – for example, many candidates simply discussed the historical / mythological background / wider context
- provided very little relevant / specific evidence from an artwork
- wrote answers that were too brief
- did not use correct art-specific terminology
- chose the wrong artwork(s) for the question and / or misunderstood the question
- provided evidence from too many art works and so their answers were superficial.

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

- showed depth of knowledge and understanding of their chosen artwork and were able to use lots of relevant and specific evidence from this to answer the question effectively
- showed knowledge and appreciation of the context (historical / artistic / mythological / social / political) that was relevant to the question
- wrote a detailed and sustained response
- chose artwork(s) wisely so that they could answer their chosen question well
- drew sound supported conclusions.

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

- wrote perceptively so their answers showed insight into the classical world
- evaluated successfully, i.e., responded explicitly (or implicitly for E7) to the part of the question that asks ‘to what extent’
- used one artwork and analysed in detail

- thought carefully about the demands of the question and chose artwork(s) appropriately
  - demonstrated excellent knowledge and understanding of their chosen artwork(s)
  - provided analytical responses that showed a higher level of thinking
  - used extensive and relevant evidence consistently
  - began directly responding to the question without giving irrelevant introductory information and were methodical from start to finish
  - showed excellent understanding of the relevant terminology and used it wisely to enhance responses
  - drew developed conclusions that were supported by specific, well-chosen evidence.
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## 91396: Analyse the impact of a significant historical figure on the classical world

### Examinations

The examination included four questions, from which candidates were required to select one to respond to. The questions covered the themes specified in the 2021 assessment specification: leadership, freedom, ideology and conflict.

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 'the extent to which' in relation to the focus of the question.

Alexander the Great and Augustus continue to remain popular, with over 60% of candidates using Alexander, followed by Augustus and then Socrates. Other figures used were Julius Caesar, Cleopatra, Hannibal, Marc Antony and Alcibiades (these totalled 20 at the most combined).

Candidates who attempted to respond to questions with a narrow or prepared focus were significantly less successful than those who could adapt their knowledge to the context of the question.

As stated in Part A, candidates often did not answer 'to what extent...'

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Those discussing Alexander the Great tended to just focus on his Policy of Fusion and not his broader campaigns. Candidates often discussed why their significant historical figure took risks or caused conflict but didn't discuss what the risks or conflict were, or discussed events in isolation without explaining the conflict it caused.

## Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- answered the question with simple use of key words linked to some evidence
- demonstrated a basic understanding of the socio-political context of the time
- relied on narrative explanations for their evidence
- recalled events that were not well related back to the question
- provided too much unnecessary biographical / background information about the significant figure without using it to help answer the question
- used some superficial or implied primary-source examples to support their ideas, but often lacked attribution
- drew conclusions related to the question, but the extent aspect of the question was implied.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not complete their response or wrote a very short answer that did not analyse their chosen significant figure with enough depth
- wrote generally or vaguely about a significant figure and did not address any of the questions, e.g., this is everything I know about Augustus
- provided examples that were not relevant or were inaccurate
- were unable to demonstrate understanding of the socio-political context of the time
- responded using a prepared context that did not answer the question.

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

- used a structure that was logical and coherent and supported the development of their response



- wrote a convincing analysis in parts, though often not from the start to the end of their response
- used a good range of primary-source evidence that related to their chosen question and could attribute at least some of the examples to the author
- acknowledged and discussed multiple viewpoints that related to the social and cultural contexts of their chosen significant figure
- drew conclusions that specifically responded to the question, often supported by examples.

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

- demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the historical figure and their socio-political environment in the context of the question
- analysed in depth the complexities of the extent aspect of the question
- had complex use of attributed primary- and secondary-source evidence throughout the response that included discussion of limitations and / or bias
- used primary-source evidence to inform the response as well as to support argument(s)
- took a broad approach to their response and could relate the smallest of events to the bigger picture
- demonstrated strong awareness of the wider context of the chosen significant figure, such as why certain decisions were made, external influences, individual motivations for decisions / actions.

## [Classical Studies subject page](#)

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