

2022 NCEA Assessment Report



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Subject: Classical Studies

Level: 2

Standards: 91200, 91201, 91203

Part A: Commentary

In the 2022 examination candidates were required to select one question from four possibilities. Their ability to choose an appropriate question and respond accordingly was reflected in the quality of responses.

Some candidates continue to pre-prepare answers and invariably struggle to adapt responses to the provided questions.

Classical Studies involves the study of ancient civilisations. Candidates are encouraged to utilise evidence and examples from the ancient context. Links to subsequent civilisations and comparisons to the modern world should not be included in responses unless the question explicitly states that that is the expectation.

Candidates should use Greek / Latin terms accurately, including common words or phrases.

Candidates should also be reminded that essays need to be long enough to develop ideas and answer the question effectively. Brief answers seldom earn higher grades.

Part B: Report on standards

91200: Examine ideas and values of the classical world

Examination

The examination questions were drawn from the themes identified in the 2022 Assessment Specifications: leadership and heroism, social and cultural traditions, religious beliefs, social relationships, and the role of the individual.

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

Candidates who utilised key terminology and quotations judiciously showed a higher level of achievement than those who did not.

Observations

In general, candidates seemed to have a good appreciation of the requirements of this achievement standard. There are some pre-learned responses that echo previous papers and struggle to mesh with the questions presented in the 2022 paper.

Candidates need to ensure they respond to the question that is placed before them. Furthermore, careful consideration of what each different question is asking, and choosing appropriate questions that reflect candidates' knowledge, is important.

Texts need to be chosen carefully to allow candidates to be successful. Not all literary texts allow for candidates to answer questions appropriately. Although historical texts such as Thucydides and poetry such as Sappho are acceptable ancient texts, candidates utilising these texts struggled to identify and explain the ideas and values required.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- demonstrated general knowledge and understanding of the ideas and values, but this was limited and restricted, and sometimes based on incomplete understanding or incorrect assumptions
- tended to provide brief and / or descriptive responses that lacked analysis
- provided narrative and plot summary
- used irrelevant quotations
- referred to aspects of the text but did not analyse the relevance or meaning of those examples
- recounted the text studied and understood the question they were answering
- identified correct examples from the text
- provided a survey of the ideas and values
- viewed the texts from a modern, western perspective, rather than the actual context.

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

- did not demonstrate an understanding of the ideas and values connected to the question or the text
- provided a plot summary with no analysis or attempt to answer the question
- did not interpret the question
- produced pre-prepared responses that did not fit the question
- wrote an insufficient amount
- did not provide enough connection to the text to demonstrate knowledge
- chose the wrong question for their response.

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

- demonstrated informed knowledge and understanding of the relevant ideas and values
- chose a question that was relevant to their studied literary text
- attempted to address all aspects of the question
- demonstrated willingness to try to think beyond the specific text, often trying to make comparisons with other texts to illustrate a point or demonstrate understanding
- utilised multiple examples to back up their ideas on the text, or had a very detailed answer with a lot of evidence from the text
- correctly read the question and were able to apply their knowledge to it
- provided in-depth commentary, for example, they might write about xenia but give a more substantive explanation of its cultural and social importance. Such responses

described specific moments of xenia and the emphasis placed on this cultural expectation throughout the poem.

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

- demonstrated informed and thorough understanding of the ideas and values
- responded to the question in a perceptive way, showing insightful understanding of the relevant ideas and values
- provided a complete response that addressed all aspects of the question, with adequate detail and analysis
- provided relevant quotes and elaborated on them to demonstrate how they helped support the answer
- made comparisons with other texts or relevant historical contexts to support their analysis
- linked their response back to the question consistently
- had clearly studied and practiced responses so that they were able to construct a suitable response to the question
- applied an interpretation to the knowledge that they were discussing and related it to the ancient society and, in some cases, to modern equivalents
- used evidence from the text consistently, and often had secondary-source material included in their answer
- displayed control of the content and linked it to the question regularly. Responses tended to use fewer episodes of the texts to perceptively analyse them, rather than listing a number of episodes as evidence. Some examples were also able to turn the question around to successfully argue their case. There was far greater use of primary-source evidence in these responses.

91201: Examine the significance of features of work(s) of art in the classical world

Examination

The examination questions were drawn from the features of works of art as identified in Explanatory Note 5 of the Achievement Standard: form and function, style, techniques, artistic and / or historical context, and influence on other cultures.

The questions required candidates to examine the significance of the features of one or more chosen classical art works or buildings. Candidates who engaged directly with the question, selecting relevant evidence and detail from the art work(s) or building(s) in their response were most successful.

Successful candidates in this standard tended to find a balance between engaging with the question and providing relevant evidence from the art work(s) or building(s).

Observations

Without a balance between responding to the question and providing relevant evidence, it is difficult to draw sound conclusions about the work of art or architecture.

It is for this reason that pre-prepared essays are not successful. Candidates should ensure they write responses as the questions direct, and not respond to the essay statement they

hoped for. Some candidates wrote on topics from previous years. These were tenuously linked to this year's questions, which meant that candidates wrote limited explanations of how the question related to the art work(s) or building(s) chosen.

Other candidates wrote a detailed analysis of the classical world, rather than explaining how the art work(s) or building(s) demonstrate the ideas in the question selected. The art work(s) or building(s) chosen must be from the classical world; anything other than passing connection to later periods detracts from candidates' ability to draw in-depth conclusions about ancient art and architecture.

Discussion of the context of the work (mythological / societal / political / historical) should be done in relation to the features of the art work(s) or building(s), not in a lengthy narrative within the response. Some description or background is useful, but candidates must try to tie it into their examination of art or architectural features. In most cases, one or two sentences on the context within the introduction is sufficient.

Essays that were well structured tended to unpack the questions appropriately. Those who did so fully and provided primary-source evidence from one or two works were able to achieve at higher levels.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- demonstrated accurate knowledge and drew general conclusions as to the significance of the chosen work
- attempted to answer the question, but were limited in some aspect
- produced an unbalanced response that may have only partly addressed the question
- covered many pieces of art or architecture without relating them well to the statement. This weakened the amount of detail given and reduced the possibility of providing an in-depth response
- described a myth or context in detail, but did not focus enough on the work(s) of art or building(s).

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

- provided a limited / general explanation of the features of the chosen work, but not enough specific explanation for this level
- demonstrated limited understanding of the work due to the shortness of response
- produced a longer response that may have had some accurate information, but included significant irrelevancies
- focused on the historical / mythological / political context of the work, and did not examine in enough depth the features of the work itself in relation to the context
- chose a question that did not fit well with their knowledge and tried to mould the question to suit them.

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

- addressed all parts of the question, although treatment could be slightly unbalanced
- provided consistently detailed analysis of one or two works of art or buildings

- identified and explored art-historical terminology in a way that allowed deeper explanation and conclusions to be drawn
- integrated the essay statement successfully to showcase knowledge of the art or architecture
- showed some insight, but this was limited or detracted from the conclusions drawn.

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

- demonstrated consistently solid content knowledge
- showed skills in engaging with the examination questions to demonstrate their knowledge and insight
- alluded to a pertinent art-historical debate around the work(s) and essay question
- incorporated critical viewpoint(s) using primary and / or secondary sources to do so, and drew perceptive conclusions based on evidence
- included knowledge about art works or buildings in relation to one another in a way that was relevant to the essay question
- focused on one piece in depth, but made comparisons with earlier and later works to draw perceptive conclusions about visual appeal
- focused on one or two works in depth and drew perceptive conclusions as to the historical / political / mythological significance of the work.

91203: Examine socio-political life in the classical world

Examination

The examination questions were drawn from the themes identified in the 2022 Assessment Specifications: citizenship and society, culture and identity, empire and power, and social and political conflict.

Primary-source material and subject-specific terminology is an expectation of the standard, and all candidates should be encouraged to at least use Greek or Latin terms in their answers.

Popular topics that allowed candidates to develop their ideas to an Excellence level were Solon's reforms, the role of women in both Greece and Rome, and the fall of the Roman Republic / establishment of the Principate.

Observations

Candidates are encouraged to make sure that their answers are based firmly within the Classical context. Consistent attempts to draw parallels between the past and present, particularly in reference to question 2, moved candidates away from answering the question of how women strengthened their classical civilisations.

Higher grades were awarded to candidates who could move past generalisations and refer to both the broader picture and specific exceptions to show a wider awareness of context

(for example, referring to Livia or Aspasia as women who had influence within the lives of politically influential men).

Candidates must make sure that they are answering the question that best suits their knowledge. For instance, Question 3 asks candidates to demonstrate understanding of a crisis and the causes of that crisis. Some candidates either failed to describe what the crisis was, or gave equal or greater attention to consequences of a crisis as opposed to the causes.

Candidates who responded at higher levels made sure to incorporate primary-source evidence into their arguments. Separate paragraphs within essays that addressed the limitation of sources invariably did not lead to higher grades. Awareness of the limitations of primary-source evidence is not perceptible unless integrated into an argument that is relevant to the question being answered.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- gave straightforward answers that addressed the question
- used explanations that were simplistic and to the point
- demonstrated understanding that included some relevant detail
- answered the question without developing their answers
- used minimal references to primary-source material or correctly used Greek / Latin terms
- used primary-source material that was relevant to the general context
- provided extensive background to a context, rather than focusing on responding to the question
- developed strong arguments with limited reference to sources.

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

- provided limited or no primary-source evidence
- under-developed their explanations
- misread the question
- chose the wrong question to suit their knowledge
- wrote in generalisations
- provided brief or irrelevant responses to the question
- used pre-prepared answers, rather than responding to the specific requirements of the question
- provided no specific examples
- used Greek / Latin / technical terms incorrectly or not at all.

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

- provided a range of primary-source material, but may not have been able to maintain a consistent use of evidence
- discussed their primary sources, but did not consistently analyse them
- showed a good deal of knowledge, but did not link this to a wider context to enable perception

- focused heavily on narrative, at the expense of depth, missing the opportunity to analyse the specifics of the question and, therefore, show perception
- chose to display depth of knowledge in areas that only tangentially answered the question
- made good use of primary sources.

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

- showed knowledge, understanding, and interpretation of the question and context
- addressed the limitations of sources where appropriate
- incorporated primary-source evidence consistently and elaborated on its significance where appropriate
- addressed all aspects of the question in detail, providing developed conclusions that showed insight
- linked their answers to a wider social context or long-term causes and consequences
- wrote responses that were focused and devoid of unnecessary narrative, and provided depth and breadth to their answers.