2024 NCEA Assessment Report

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

General commentary

All questions require candidates to analyse; explanation alone is insufficient to achieve any standard at Level 3.

Candidates are encouraged to integrate their analysis throughout their response, rather than addressing it at the end as an evaluative conclusion. This creates the depth of analysis required for higher levels of achievement.

Candidates should use the key words of their chosen question to focus and structure their argument / response. If they don't, they will not be answering the question, instead just writing a pre-prepared response. Rather, candidates are strongly encouraged to spend more time choosing the right question and using the planning page to make sure that all aspects of that question will be covered in their answer.

Candidates who wrote in extended paragraph format were able to develop greater analysis than those who wrote smaller, less detailed paragraphs covering multiple points. Candidates are strongly encouraged to focus on quality over quantity, which includes the length of the response, and the number of examples, contexts, or art works used to respond with.

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 – there is always more than one way to answer the question.

Candidates are expected to 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, art work, or historical figure, they must also choose appropriate primary source evidence.

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 2024 assessment specifications: leadership, identity, 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 in relation to the focus of the question.

Commentary

Candidates are encouraged to choose the appropriate question for their text.

Candidates who did not define or explain the focus of their chosen question, e.g. identity, in the context of their text did not achieve as well as those who did.

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.

Texts:

- Most responses were on The Aeneid; we encourage the second half of the text to be explored as well as the traditionally taught Books 1, 2, 4 and 6. Homeric epics and Greek drama were also popular.

- Horace is often not a good choice for this standard as, while it allows for excellent context, it does not have enough content. Responses on Juvenal, Horace, Plato, and Plutarch needed to carefully define how their argument applied to the text – e.g. differentiating the persona / narrator from the author.

- Non-fiction texts were often not as successful as fiction texts, as candidates failed to identify the narrator as a character within the text and mostly wrote a historical recount.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- provided a simple response to the question, though may have omitted some aspects
- provided narrow examples from the text, occasionally generalising aspects of the plot, e.g. The Aeneid Books 1, 2, and 4
- responded to the question selected, though it may not have been the most suitable question for their text
- partially referenced ideas and / or values of the classical world
- provided a simple argument
- treated the characters in fictional texts as though they were real, rather than creations of the author.

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

- answered all aspects of the question, though their responses may have been unbalanced
- demonstrated a developed understanding of the ideas and / or values of the classical world
- showed in-depth knowledge of the text and / or awareness of section(s) of the text
- included a range of examples which were described and analysed with depth
- provided specific examples and quotations, although at times these did not always further their argument
- drew conclusions with understanding
- included some wider context material, but it may have been in a stand alone paragraph.

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

- recognised the relationship between the socio-historical context of the text and the influence this had on its creation
- demonstrated awareness of a wide range of ideas and / or values of the classical world

- included relevant wider context material and integrated it into their response, usually after describing and analysing an example
- produced a well-structured, cohesive argument that was sustained throughout the response
- communicated ideas fluently, with minimal mechanical errors
- selected specific examples from the text that added value to their argument
- made few or no factual or textual errors
- used Greek / Latin terminology with confidence.

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

- provided a plot summary, or description of the features of the question within the text
- did not refer to the ideas or values of the classical world
- showed little awareness of the text and / or included inaccurate details
- lacked specific examples from the text to support their answer to the question
- wrote a pre-prepared response that did not engage with the question.

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 2024 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 in relation to the focus of the question.

Commentary

Candidates who struck a balance between features of the art work and the context in which it was created achieved well. This means that candidates need to give more than situational context of the time, they need to give specific evidence / examples from the art work, not just the art period. Trajan's Column was a prime example of this imbalance.

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 who responded using more than one art work 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. lack of understanding of what naturalism is.

A number of candidates misunderstood what constituted a social activity (Question Three), e.g. war and sacrifice are not.

Roman Art and Greek Vase Painting remain the most popular topics.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- showed an appreciation of key features of the art work
- understood some of the context
- answered an aspect of what the question was asking
- utilised more than one art work
- knew an art work well but didn't answer the question directly.

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

- answered in depth but were unbalanced in approach; were able to give very good specifics about the art work(s) itself
- showed knowledge of the context in which the art work(s) was created and made appropriate artisitic / historical / religious links
- included specific evidence in their answer and utilised examples from art work(s) effectively
- incorporated quotes that were relevant to the question and response
- gave in-depth analysis and discussion of the features of art work(s)
- wrote in a structured manner.

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

- answered all parts of the question
- evaluated / analysed the features of the art work(s) effectively
- had a comprehensive appreciation of the features of the art work(s)
- wrote in a clearly structured and logical manner
- linked other art works into their discussion, but primarily focused on one art work
- demonstrated perceptive analysis by linking features of the art work(s) and the context in which it was created
- consistently wove contextual detail into their answer
- addressed the "extent" part of the question with relevant evidence and quotes
- chose the correct art work(s) for the question and addressed all aspects of the question
- made appropriate comparisons to other works or contexts.

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

- failed to answer the question or chose the wrong question to answer for their chosen art work(s)
- only gave one aspect of the art work, e.g. for the Colosseum only wrote about the seating, or about the battles themselves and nothing else (generally for Question Three)
- gave too much 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
- attempted to fit a prelearned response into a question
- used an art work that wasn't in context eg. Michelangelo's David
- may have had an appreciation of the context but provided little substance or examples about the art work(s) itself.

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 2024 assessment specifications: leadership, ideology, status, 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 in relation to the focus of the question.

Commentary

It was pleasing to observe less forcing of pre-learnt responses into questions and authentic use of evidence and examples to directly answer a chosen question.

Generally, candidates used a good range of primary source evidence. Some candidates wrote a paragraph regarding the reliability of source material; however, comments were often too generalised, or the discussion integrated throughout their response was under-developed.

Popular significant historical figures were Alexander the Great – with the Policy of Fusion featuring often, and Octavian / Augustus – often focusing on physical conflicts and relationships. A small number of candidates responded with Socrates and an ideology focus. Other historical figures in responses included Julius Caesar, Pericles, Marcus Aurelius, and Marc Antony.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- wrote a simplistic answer to the question with basic understanding of the socio-political context of the time
- did not address the "extent" part of the question, or it was implied
- provided 2–3 points to support their answers
- gave responses that focused more heavily on narrative than analysis
- provided primary source evidence in the form of quotations / paraphrasing or implied primary source evidence demonstrated through reference to dates, names, and places
- demonstrated understanding of the significant figure and their impact within the context of the question, though may have included some minor inaccuracies.

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

- provided specific details that linked to the question
- explored the wider socio-political / cultural context
- drew strong conclusions in relation to the question, supported by specific examples
- explored different viewpoints, such as the viewpoints of sources or person(s) in the context
- used relevant primary source evidence, integrating it well with clear and accurate attribution
- structured the ideas in their response
- utilised classical concepts to demonstrate the depth of understanding within their discussion.

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

- thoughtfully used primary source evidence (quotes and paraphrasing) throughout their discussion
- sometimes included secondary source evidence
- discussed the "extent" part of the question, and showed both sides of the "argument"
- showed critical analysis and evaluation related to the question or sources (e.g. limitations of sources, critiquing of events, critiquing of people)
- drew strong conclusions related to the question, supported by their chosen examples
- discussed the effect of the wider socio-political context
- referred to the question / key words often
- considered different perspectives, acknowledging the nuances of classical events and figures
- sometimes grouped specific examples by theme rather than dissected as individual events.

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

- did not answer the question properly or provide primary source evidence (quotes or paraphrasing)
- wrote too little – their response was very short, vague, or too brief
- did not write about a significant historical figure, but rather a mythological figure (e.g. Aeneas, Demeter)
- relied heavily on narrative that wasn't related to the question
- provided irrelevant examples
- were unable to show a basic understanding of the socio-political context of the time.