

2025 NCEA Assessment Report

Subject:	Classical Studies
Level:	2
Achievement standard(s):	91200, 91201, 91203

General commentary

The 2025 Level 2 examinations across the three achievement standards required candidates to select one of four available questions.

Candidates who engaged with the specific questions and appropriate context, rather than providing a general plot summary or narrative, consistently reached the higher grades.

While many candidates demonstrated a wide range of text, art work, and socio-political knowledge, the continued use of pre-prepared responses remains a challenge. Achievement was often limited when a candidate failed to adapt their pre-learned material to the specific parameters of the question. Conversely, candidates who utilised the planning space to map out their arguments showed a much higher level of response.

The integration of primary evidence remains essential. The most successful responses used quotes and key terminology as the foundation for their analysis.

Report on individual achievement standard(s)

Achievement standard 91200: Examine ideas and values of the classical world

Assessment

The examination included four questions from which candidates were required to select and respond to one. The questions covered the themes specified in the 2025 Assessment Specifications. Questions covered a combination of ideas and values.

Commentary

Most candidates had a good understanding of their chosen texts. A wide range of texts were used this year, including *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*, *Antigone*, *King Oedipus*, *The Argonautica*, *The Aeneid*, *Lysistrata*, *The Trojan Women*, and Horace. Candidates who used Sappho's poems struggled to write in sufficient detail at Merit and Excellence level, given the themes used for the exam.

Candidates must read the questions carefully and need to be careful about their choice of content to address the question. Candidates need to ensure that they are commenting on classical ideas and values, as per the standard. Some candidates used modern values, e.g., Antigone as a hero, for a significant portion of their response.

Candidates who made use of the planning space generally wrote more effective answers.

Candidates need to make use of the spellcheck function to aid with effective communication of their ideas.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- demonstrated some knowledge and understanding of the ideas and values, although this was often limited and restricted
- wrote responses that contained some inaccuracies or factual errors
- seemed to have pre-prepared an answer and simply deployed it to the question that seemed to fit it best
- tended to provide brief and / or descriptive responses which lacked analysis
- referred to examples from the text but did not analyse the relevance, significance, or meaning of those examples.

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

- demonstrated an informed knowledge and understanding of the relevant ideas and values, usually with depth
- chose a question that was relevant to their chosen literary text
- attempted to address all aspects of the question
- used specific words from the question within their response and often reiterated those words to demonstrate the relevance of their answer
- demonstrated a willingness to try to think beyond the specific text, often trying to make comparisons with other texts to illustrate a point or demonstrate understanding
- provided evidence for the text, in the form of short quotations, description, or Greek or Latin terminology.

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

- responded to the question in a perceptive way, showing an insightful understanding of the relevant ideas and values
- demonstrated an informed and thorough understanding of the ideas and values
- provided a complete response that seemed to address all aspects of the question, with adequate detail and analysis
- provided relevant quotes and elaborated upon them to demonstrate how they helped support the answer
- made comparisons with other texts, relevant historical contexts, or appropriate analysis by classicists to support their analysis
- consistently linked their response back to the question
- analysed the text in relation to the wider socio-historical or literary context.

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

- provided a plot summary with no analysis or attempt to answer the question
 - had limited knowledge of the chosen text
 - wrote responses that contained factual errors or inaccuracies
 - did not understand what the question asked them to do
 - produced pre-prepared responses that did not fit the question.
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Achievement standard 91201: Examine the significance of features of work(s) of art in the classical world

Assessment

The examination questions were drawn from the features 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. Questions covered a combination of features of art works. The questions required candidates to respond utilising one or more art work(s).

Commentary

Candidates who used the correct terminology for the subject created stronger essays. For example: Pose instead of stance or body language, drapery instead of costume, column instead of pillar. Candidates need to be very clear on what is a stylistic technique, and what is narrative.

Candidates who wrote on more than one art work generally did not respond with sufficient depth and detail, so struggled to reach higher grades. Some candidates wrote long introductions that did not answer the question. Candidates must focus on answering the question rather than telling the story.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- wrote about only one building or art work that was well-suited to their choice of question
- wrote a response that showed some good knowledge and understanding
- provided some specific relevant evidence and use it in a way that supported their ideas
- answered both parts of the question (candidates at times focused on one part of the question but still responded to the other part)
- provided some specific relevant evidence, though evidence was not often explained, was vague, or not linked to a main idea.

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

- showed depth of knowledge and understanding of their chosen art work or building
- responded to both parts of the question analytically. For example, they explained their ideas clearly, instead of simply describing or storytelling
- provided relevant and specific evidence to answer both parts of the question
- linked evidence back to their main idea(s) and so their responses showed an ability to think and make relevant connections.

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

- wrote perceptively so their answers showed insight into the art and architecture of classical world, but ensured it was relevant to the question
- chose the question that best suited their knowledge and applied it effectively to their chosen art work or building
- demonstrated excellent knowledge and understanding of their chosen art work
- provided analytical responses that showed an ability to think and make connections
- used extensive and relevant evidence from their art work
- consistently linked their evidence to their ideas and explained both ideas and evidence effectively and in detail
- wrote fluently with clear structure and avoided errors

- showed excellent understanding of the relevant terminology and used it wisely to enhance responses
- focused on the question and used the wording from the question to write only relevant responses.

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

- chose the wrong art work or building for the question (often because they did not understand the terminology)
- did not answer the question and instead discussed general information relating to the art work. Some wrote about topics unrelated to the classical world, such as the Renaissance
- wrote answers that were too brief or superficial
- wrote in sentences without structure, instead of paragraphs
- did not provide relevant primary evidence from their art work or building
- included obvious errors or unconnected analyses.

Achievement standard 91203: Examine socio-political life in the classical world

Assessment

The examination questions were drawn from the themes identified in the 2025 Assessment Specifications: citizenship and society, culture and identity, empire and power, and social and political conflict. Questions covered a combination of themes and concepts.

Commentary

Popular political topics that allowed candidates to develop their ideas to an Excellence level were the formation of the Delian League and the Fall of the Roman Republic.

This year, candidates sometimes chose inappropriate questions for their subject knowledge.

Candidates who did the best for political questions had teaching concentrating on preparing to write about causes, consequences, and context with equal preparation.

Primary source evidence was used most successfully when incorporated into the argument. Perception often developed out of the analysis of the values behind specific quotes.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- gave straightforward, undeveloped answers that addressed the question, although these might have contained some errors or lacked detail in areas
- used explanations that were simplistic and to the point
- used key words from the question
- demonstrated understanding that included some relevant detail
- used minimal references to primary source material or correctly used Greek/ Latin terms
- used primary source material that was relevant to the context in general rather than to the specific point being made
- provided extensive background to a context rather than focusing on responding to the given question
- included excessive narrative that did not directly respond to the requirements of the question
- used rote learned answers and managed to twist them to answer the questions tangentially

- had good arguments with limited reference to sources.

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
- displayed 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:

- displayed discernment in their selection of points
- showed excellent 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 consequences
- wrote responses that were focused, providing depth and breadth to their answers, devoid of unnecessary narrative.

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
 - failed to provide specific examples
 - used Greek / Latin / technical terms incorrectly or not at all.
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