



Course report 2024

National 5 Latin

This report provides information on candidates' performance. Teachers, lecturers and assessors may find it useful when preparing candidates for future assessment. The report is intended to be constructive and informative, and to promote better understanding. You should read the report in conjunction with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

We compiled the statistics in this report before we completed the 2024 appeals process.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2023: 338

Number of resulted entries in 2024: 384

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

A	Number of candidates	346	Percentage	90.1	Cumulative percentage	90.1	Minimum mark required	70
B	Number of candidates	28	Percentage	7.3	Cumulative percentage	97.4	Minimum mark required	60
C	Number of candidates	9	Percentage	2.3	Cumulative percentage	99.7	Minimum mark required	50
D	Number of candidates	0	Percentage	0	Cumulative percentage	99.7	Minimum mark required	40
No award	Number of candidates	1	Percentage	0.3	Cumulative percentage	100	Minimum mark required	N/A

We have not applied rounding to these statistics.

You can read the general commentary on grade boundaries in the appendix.

In this report:

- ◆ 'most' means greater than 70%
- ◆ 'many' means 50% to 69%
- ◆ 'some' means 25% to 49%
- ◆ 'a few' means less than 25%

You can find statistical reports on the [statistics and information](#) page of our website.

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Question paper 1: Literary appreciation

All questions functioned as intended. There were no questions which were more or less demanding than anticipated. Most candidates managed their time well.

Candidates were expected to select and answer questions on two authors. It was reassuring to see that most candidates managed to do this well and that high standards in the level of candidate responses have been maintained.

Most candidates coped well with the demands of the questions and the skills which were being assessed. It was pleasing to see how positively and confidently most candidates responded to the question paper, regardless of their level of ability. The range of questions allowed the more able candidates to engage fully with the texts and also ensured that the less able candidates could still demonstrate their learning too.

All five authors were chosen, and most candidates performed consistently well across all five sets of questions. Although there were fewer candidates opting for Cicero and Virgil, most responded to the questions in these two sections very well. There was a marked improvement in the quality of responses to the Virgil questions.

In all sections, most candidates gave well-structured answers enhanced with developed points. Unexpected yet equally valid answers in all sections seem to reflect the high level of candidate engagement. Many candidates went well beyond the minimum responses required and were clearly eager to give creative, detailed, and insightful answers.

There were no adjustments made to the grade boundaries for this paper.

Question paper 2: Translating

The Translating passage called 'A Roman Invention Lost Forever' was adapted from Petronius *Satyricon* 51.

The following accidence and syntax were sampled:

- ◆ nouns, adjectives, adverbs
- ◆ regular verbs
- ◆ irregular verbs: sum, possum
- ◆ pronouns
- ◆ possessive adjectives
- ◆ indicative and subjunctive moods
- ◆ present infinitive
- ◆ purpose clause
- ◆ direct speech, indirect command, direct question
- ◆ temporal clauses

Most candidates were confident enough to tackle all the challenges of the question paper, attempting every part of the passage. All candidates made it to the end of the story. There was no weak area of performance in the passage.

There was accurate use of the wordlist. The candidates' English style was clear and fluent. There was evidence that candidates used the English links to guide their responses.

There were no adjustments made to the grade boundaries for this paper.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper 1: Literary appreciation

Section 1 — Catullus

- ◆ Question 1(b): Most candidates demonstrated a very good knowledge of Catullus' attitudes to love and life as expressed in Poem 1.
- ◆ Questions 5(a) and (b): Most candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the events and emotions surrounding Catullus' visit to his brother's grave.
- ◆ Question 6(b): Many candidates produced creative and original answers when considering Asinius' reaction to Catullus' threats.
- ◆ Question 7: Most candidates gave confident and valid answers when discussing the culture question about Roman humour, showing real engagement with this topic.

Section 2 — Ovid

- ◆ Question 9: Many candidates could give full and accurate details about Crete.
- ◆ Question 11: Most candidates successfully discussed whether Icarus was badly behaved or not by answering a combination of 'yes' and 'no'. They showed real engagement with this question.
- ◆ Question 14: Most candidates answered this Roman culture question about work in the countryside in ancient times very well indeed. They discussed jobs and tools, as well as making other valid deductions purely based on the line reference itself, which was very pleasing to see.

Section 3 — Virgil

- ◆ Question 20(b): Many candidates gave full and imaginative answers when discussing why the Greeks went to the island of Tenedos.
- ◆ Question 22: Many candidates found plenty to say when discussing this language question about the ways in which Virgil emphasised how strongly Laocoon felt.
- ◆ Question 23(b): Many candidates gave very creative answers to this 'what if....' question, showing a real understanding of the twists in the story.
- ◆ Question 27: Many candidates showed a considerable level of creative thinking when discussing whether Dido would have believed Aeneas' version of events or not. They had lots of ideas of their own to suggest.

Section 4 — Pliny

- ◆ Question 29(b): Many candidates gave very full answers to why they thought the ghost was shaking the chains.
- ◆ Question 31: Most candidates gave considerable analysis when discussing the effect of language in creating a tense atmosphere.
- ◆ Question 32: Most candidates went into great detail when describing the holiday resort of Hippo in this Roman culture question.
- ◆ Question 34(a): Most candidates handled this question about the friendship between the boy and the dolphin very well.
- ◆ Question 34(b): Many candidates wrote at considerable length about animal behaviour to support their explanation as to why a second dolphin appeared.

Section 5 — Cicero

- ◆ Question 39: Most candidates gave very thorough responses about the jury's reaction and gained the full four marks.
- ◆ Question 41: Most candidates were able to give full answers about Roman law courts in this culture question.

Question paper 2: Translating

Many candidates handled most blocks with confidence and care to ensure accuracy or near-accuracy.

Block 2: Most candidates accurately translated the superlative adverb *diligentissime* ('very hard').

Block 3: Most candidates accurately translated the purpose clause *ut* + subjunctive (+ 'in order to').

Block 6: Most candidates accurately translated the irregular perfect tense *fecit* ('he made').

Block 8: Many candidates accurately translated the perfect passive *admissus est* ('he was allowed in').

Block 9: Most candidates successfully translated *in* + accusative ('onto') and did not confuse it with *in* + ablative ('in').

Blocks 10, 17 and 18: Most candidates accurately translated the direct speech.

Blocks 19 and 20: Most candidates worked out the punchline to the story.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper 1: Literary appreciation

Section 1 — Catullus

- ◆ Question 4(a): Many candidates generalised too much about what Catullus told himself to do and missed out on marks by not showing enough knowledge of the Latin text itself.
- ◆ Question 4(c): Some candidates responded with vague answers. It was apparent that they did not know the content of the line reference.

Section 2 — Ovid

- ◆ Question 12: Some candidates did not read this question carefully enough and as a result did not focus on what was asked, to discuss the dangers Daedalus warned Icarus about. Instead, they gave the list of Daedalus' instructions.
- ◆ Question 16: Some candidates' responses were based on the wrong line references when describing what happened after Daedalus saw the feathers in the sea.
- ◆ Question 17: Most candidates did not explain the links between Talus and the partridge and did not make it clear that Talus had been turned into the partridge. There was too much re-telling of the content of Extract 3 rather than explaining the links between Talus and the partridge, which was what the question was asking.

Section 3 — Virgil

- ◆ Question 21: Some candidates did not realise that Thymoetes and Capys offered completely different advice and answered the question as if the two characters gave the same advice.

- ◆ Question 25: Some candidates answered this question based on an English extract by copying out word-for-word the parts of the English text that had bloodthirsty content. Some others made a list of bloodthirsty details with no attempt at answering the question ‘in what ways...?’. To gain full marks, there needs to be some discussion.
- ◆ Question 26: This Roman culture question asked candidates what they could learn about war in the ancient world from reading this story. Some candidates made points about war in general without any specific reference to the text.

Section 4 — Pliny

- ◆ Question 28(a): Although the question included the fact that the ghost was wearing chains and asked for other details instead, some candidates included the chains.
- ◆ Question 33(a): Some candidates did not refer to the correct reference when describing the events of the next day, and so missed out on the marks.
- ◆ Question 33(b): Some candidates did not read the question carefully enough and discussed the boy’s reaction to the dolphin, instead of discussing the reasons why the boy’s reaction changed.

Section 5 — Cicero

- ◆ Question 37: Some candidates found it difficult to suggest why the statue had been difficult to steal.
- ◆ Question 42(a): Some candidates gave a list of the bad treatment received by Sopater without discussing the ways Cicero emphasised the bad treatment.

Question paper 2: Translating

There was no block which candidates found particularly demanding. However repeated errors were found in the following blocks:

Block 1: A few candidates omitted *in Roma*.

Block 2: A few candidates translated the imperfect *laborabat* (‘was working’) as the pluperfect (‘had been working’).

Block 3: A few candidates translated the imperfect *sperabat* (‘he was hoping’) as the present participle (‘hoping that ...’), possibly because there was no subject given.

Block 6: Some candidates missed out the word *hoc* (‘this’), possibly because they could not find it in the wordlist.

Block 7: Many candidates were unable to cope with *quam* (‘which’) and did not link it to the previous block.

Block 9: Some candidates could not work out the subject of *proiecit* (‘he threw’), so they turned into the passive voice instead and wrote ‘the cup was thrown’.

Block 10: A few candidates did not recognise the irregular verb *erat* (‘was’).

Block 12: No mark was lost if *erat* was a repeated error.

Block 17: Some candidates could not handle *aliquis scit* (‘who else knows...?’) and instead gave the translation as ‘who else well-known...?’.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper 1: Literary appreciation

Candidates must be prepared to answer questions on all parts of the prescribed texts and to expect a range of command words and different types of questions, including questions on use of language and Roman culture, worth varying marks.

Candidates must ensure that every question in the section is answered and to check that there are no further questions overleaf.

It is important that candidates refer to the correct line references as given in the question rubric. Candidates' responses which stray beyond the lines cannot gain marks.

Candidates will always gain marks for developed points up to the maximum available. They do not need, for example, to make three separate points in an answer to a question worth three marks. An answer with two points, one of which is developed, can also gain three marks. A developed point however needs to include something new, and not just a re-wording of a point already made.

Candidates may choose to answer a combination of 'yes' and 'no' to a 'do you agree...?' type of question, where appropriate. This is acceptable and to be encouraged, especially if the question is worth a lot of marks.

To answer a question that asks, 'in what ways ...?', candidates may choose to focus on use of language or content or both.

When answering a question on an English extract, candidates should answer in their own words. They will miss out on marks by simply copying out the English translation.

Bullet points are acceptable, so long as they are sufficiently expanded. Single words are not normally enough to demonstrate knowledge.

Question paper 2: Translating

Centres are reminded that the list of prescribed grammar is available in the National 5 Latin Course Specification on the [Latin subject page](#) of SQA's website. Every year the Translating passage will sample a range of accidence and syntax from this list. Any other accidence or syntax not on this list will be glossed. Accurate application of grammar rules will always be rewarded.

Candidates are advised to check the specific English meaning of any given Latin word in the wordlist. This will ensure that they have the appropriate meaning in the context of the story. There should be time available for this. However, if a candidate does give another correct meaning using their own knowledge, that would of course be acceptable.

Candidates should be encouraged to check for any omissions, especially the small words that can easily be overlooked.

Candidates should read the English title and the English links carefully as these are designed to direct the candidates through the passage and can give helpful clues to the action in the narrative.

Appendix: general commentary on grade boundaries

SQA's main aim when setting grade boundaries is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

For most National Courses, SQA aims to set examinations and other external assessments and create marking instructions that allow:

- ◆ a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional grade C boundary)
- ◆ a well-prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional grade A boundary)

It is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject, at every level. Therefore, SQA holds a grade boundary meeting for each course to bring together all the information available (statistical and qualitative) and to make final decisions on grade boundaries based on this information. Members of SQA's Executive Management Team normally chair these meetings.

Principal assessors utilise their subject expertise to evaluate the performance of the assessment and propose suitable grade boundaries based on the full range of evidence. SQA can adjust the grade boundaries as a result of the discussion at these meetings. This allows the pass rate to be unaffected in circumstances where there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more, or less, difficult than usual.

- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more difficult than usual.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been less difficult than usual.
- ◆ Where levels of difficulty are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

Every year, we evaluate the performance of our assessments in a fair way, while ensuring standards are maintained so that our qualifications remain credible. To do this, we measure evidence of candidates' knowledge and skills against the national standard.

During the pandemic, we modified National Qualifications course assessments, for example we removed elements of coursework. We kept these modifications in place until the 2022–23 session. The education community agreed that retaining the modifications for longer than this could have a detrimental impact on learning and progression to the next stage of education, employment or training. After discussions with candidates, teachers, lecturers, parents, carers and others, we returned to full course assessment for the 2023–24 session.

SQA's approach to awarding was announced in [March 2024](#) and explained that any impact on candidates completing coursework for the first time, as part of their SQA assessments, would be considered in our grading decisions and incorporated into our well-established

grading processes. This provides fairness and safeguards for candidates and helps to provide assurances across the wider education community as we return to established awarding.

Our approach to awarding is broadly aligned to other nations of the UK that have returned to normal grading arrangements.

For full details of the approach, please refer to the [National Qualifications 2024 Awarding — Methodology Report](#).