

Scholarship

2009 Assessment Report

Classical Studies

COMMENTARY

The examination paper for Scholarship Classical Studies provided three questions on each of ten topics, with a range of question types. Three topics attracted large numbers of responses: Virgil, Greek Vase Painting and Alexander the Great; two topics, Greek Science and Juvenal, were answered by fewer than 50 candidates. In general, Question 3 – based on provided source material – was chosen less often, but did elicit some exceptionally well-argued essays.

Some candidates appeared unaware of the need to take care in choosing questions, and to pay close attention to the wording of questions, and not write all they know about a topic. Although there was no designated space for planning in the Answer Booklet, it would be normal that they work out in advance how they intend to structure their argument, and note down some of the key ideas they may wish to include to ensure that answers are explicitly relevant. A clear introduction, outlining the way in which the essay will develop, was helpful.

Successful candidates wrote clearly and fluently, and included evidence from both primary and secondary source material into their essays. Outstanding candidates gave evidence of extensive background reading and produced essays of exceptional perception and maturity. Of those who did not reach the standard, some answered too briefly (in a page or two), some told the story rather than analysed it, and some just gave factual detail acknowledging their source as a study guide. Many essays showed a poor grasp of chronology and topic specific terminology, and some were simplistic in approach, not meeting the requirements of the question set.

SCHOLARSHIP WITH OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:

- showed imagination, flexibility and lateral thinking in their interpretations of, and responses, to the questions
- showed that they had an in-depth and precise knowledge of subject matter, including names of sources
- incorporated pertinent comparisons from a range of sources, drawing on extensive reading beyond that required for level 3
- dealt with the full scope of questions set, and referred to topic knowledge to address all parts of essay questions in a balanced way
- considered different and, if appropriate, contrary points of view
- acknowledged the limitations of source material in some areas.

SCHOLARSHIP

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship but not Scholarship with Outstanding Performance commonly:

- responded accurately to the wording of questions
- answered questions directly, adapting their own knowledge as necessary
- planned their essays before beginning
- presented information cogently
- correctly used an introductory paragraph to establish the direction of their essay
- demonstrated evidence of wide reading and used this broader knowledge in their essays
- supported their arguments with appropriately referenced primary and secondary source evidence

- wrote fluently and precisely.

OTHER CANDIDATES

Candidates who were not awarded Scholarship or Scholarship with Outstanding Performance commonly:

- did not refer to the resource material included in the third question for all topics
- included irrelevant material, writing generalisations about topics
- did not answer all parts of the question
- made errors of fact, or misinterpreted words in the questions e.g. compassion (Virgil), role reversal (Aristophanes), ornamentation (Greek Vase Painting)
- gave generalisations without support
- did not cite supporting evidence or authoritative secondary sources
- completed only two essays instead of three as required
- did not use accurate English.