

Scholarship

2013 Assessment Report

Classical Studies

COMMENTARY

The standard of candidate responses in the Classical Studies Scholarship examination was very similar to previous years. The best candidates were able to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of an extensive range of primary and secondary source material and to communicate this understanding with clarity and conviction. Those who had difficulty producing work of quality provided inaccurate or irrelevant evidence, failed to read the requirements of the question carefully or did not sustain an analytical approach, drifting into narrative.

Questions in Section A did not deviate dramatically in format, scope or style from previous years, although in some contexts they were necessarily more open-ended to cater for a greater range of literary texts and works of art, reflective of the Level 3 papers. All questions produced answers of impressive quality, although aspects of questions were sometimes neglected by weaker candidates (e.g. Augustus Q4, Aristophanes Q7 and Virgil Q9). A small number also ignored the reference to 5th century vase painters in Q12.

While there was no significant change in the quality of responses in 2013, the contexts that candidates chose to answer on did shift, with a marked increase in the number of essays on Augustus and a drop in the number answering on Aristophanes, Socrates and Greek Vase Painting.

The compulsory resource based question in Section B worked very well. Most students chose to answer in essay format, but some very good candidates chose the paragraph approach. Successful candidates showed an impressive ability to produce an in-depth analysis of source evidence they had not specifically studied, drawing on their wider knowledge of course material. They made explicit and sustained reference to the resources provided and – in the best responses – drew perceptive conclusions about the insight they provided on conflict or religion/ideology in the classical world. Some candidates were also able to make telling comparisons between documents. Candidates who gained a low mark in this section tended to summarise or retell the content of the literary evidence and describe, rather than analyse, the images provided.

SCHOLARSHIP WITH OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:

- wrote well-structured essays in clearly (and sometimes elegantly) expressed formal English
- demonstrated in-depth knowledge of content, based on wider reading
- selected accurate and compelling evidence
- showed originality and/or flair in developing their argument
- answered all parts of the question lucidly and convincingly.

SCHOLARSHIP

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

- wrote formal responses using established essay structure in clear English
- demonstrated sound knowledge of content, based on wider reading
- supported their argument with a range of relevant evidence

- provided a balanced discussion, recognising the strengths and limitations of primary source material
- answered all parts of the question.

OTHER CANDIDATES

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

- failed to write clearly and/or structure their argument effectively
- revealed significant gaps in their knowledge of the topic under discussion
- made little or no reference to primary source material
- did not sustain an analytical approach, drifting into narrative or unsubstantiated generalisation
- answered only a part of the question.