

Assessment Report

New Zealand Scholarship Classical Studies 2022

Standard 93404

Part A: Commentary

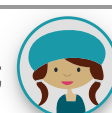
Responses to the Classical Studies Scholarship examination again demonstrated the importance of critical thinking and analysis. Candidates who focused on the question and directed their knowledge to produce a cogent and clear answer were rewarded. The integration of primary sources remains essential. While there was less evidence of coaching candidates in the production of a pre-determined answer, the recitation of material based on questions from previous years is not the pathway to success. Candidates must engage with the questions asked.

For some candidates, the definition of key terms was an issue. Some who did define key terms failed to gain scholarship since they failed to consider how to unpack them – for example, what constitutes morality for the Romans? What does an ‘agreed’ conclusion look like for Socrates?

Section A

Historical topics

Candidates did not need to cover a huge range of events to be successful; some of the best focused on a few episodes in detail. Candidates frequently did not read the questions carefully and answer all aspects. For example, in question 1; the pursuit of empire was often ignored, or the discussion of narcissism became



the sole approach. Some candidates failed to consider the 'why' of the questions, for example, discussing how Augustus made changes but not the reasoning behind it, and then falling back on a recital of historical events.

Literary contexts

Many candidates responded with a narrow interpretation of the question, showing a lack of breadth and depth in their knowledge. In the Iliad context, there was often an imbalance in approach, for example in question 7 candidates might have focused on the gods and forgot to frame an answer around the hero, or in question 8, focused on death rather than on death and heroism. This could also be seen in the Aristophanes context in question 9, where the question was posed in part on a comedy of situation – many forgot and wrote a discussion on characters. Also the focus on a single play and an inability to connect it to others demonstrates a lack of understanding of Aristophanic comedy as a whole. In question 11, some candidates produced simple and partial descriptions or comparisons when the question asked for critique. Candidates also tended to ignore the Homeric side of this question, or just mentioned it in passing. As an essentially intertextual epic, an awareness of its antecedents would be expected at this level. In question 12 *pudor* was often not well defined or discussed. Many candidates answering on the Aeneid were constrained by only having a knowledge of Books 1, 2, 4, and 6.

Art contexts

Dates and eras were a major problem, particularly for vase-painting; candidates should know that the 5th century BCE relates to the period 499 to 400 BCE. In general, many answers were weak on the technical / stylistic details (details of anatomy and drapery for question 13, details of architecture for question 15) and tended to fall back on generalised statements. There were also issues with the definition of terms – for example, the term 'striation' was not well understood or defined. On a positive note, it was good to see some Roman art candidates able to discuss, or at least mention, Greek antecedents. Candidates were generally stronger on the thematic questions, but in question 16, duty and responsibility was often ignored and the response became a breakdown of artistic symbolism within individual artworks.

Section B

Poor responses were all too often one-sided and both narrow and anachronistic in view, especially in the gender question. Weaker candidates took a subjective approach of righteous indignation; that often led to a very narrow approach to the sources that demonstrated both a lack of nuance and of a well-rounded

understanding of multiple aspects of life in the ancient world. Nonetheless there were some very impressive close analyses of the topics, especially those who recognised and explored the ambiguity that was, of course, present in all of the sources.

Part B: Report on Performance

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship with **Outstanding Performance** commonly:

- considered the question carefully and defined key terms
- developed an imaginative / creative response and a structure that was not only logical, but fluent and engaging
- applied a sophisticated, nuanced approach to create clear and convincing arguments that were sustained and well-developed
- applied a critical and balanced discussion, often utilising multiple theories and making well-informed judgements based upon evidence
- embedded textual and contextual evidence to help reinforce analysis
- in Section B, produced a detailed and insightful close read of the sources and appropriate and thoughtful inclusion of additional material / contextual points
- wove multiple resources together in either a thematic or reinforcing approach that demonstrated an additional sophistication.

Candidates who were awarded **Scholarship** commonly:

- offered a planned and coherent structure to the essay
- framed their responses around the question in a focused and consistent manner
- took a balanced approach and were aware of ambiguity in the question
- defined key terms, or at least showed evidence of working from a definition
- balanced detailed textual / artistic / historical knowledge with focused and relevant analysis
- displayed a good knowledge of context and source issues and didn't let explaining that get in the way of the main focus of the question

- applied appropriate secondary sourcing to help substantiate their argument, but didn't let it dominate their own analysis
- sustained their argument / structure throughout the response
- in Section B, applied contextual knowledge to and stayed focused on the sources provided.

Candidates who were **not** awarded Scholarship commonly:

- did not read the question carefully, or didn't answer the question on offer
 - did not respond to the question, or attempted a pre-planned essay that was a regurgitation of memorised material with little to no tailoring to the question on offer
 - committed errors of fact
 - did not understand or could not define key terms
 - had a poor understanding of time periods
 - leaned towards paraphrase and description rather than analysis
 - took an approach that was narrow, anachronistic, or one-sided
 - had either little or a confused understanding of significant concepts within questions
 - demonstrated a lack of scholastic insight and originality in their responses, often throwing in erudite terms or secondary sourcing without knowledge or understanding
 - did not manage time well: either failed to finish all three questions, or answered the third question in a rushed or partial way
 - in Section B, did not engage in a close read of the sources, but dumped information from the context.
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