

Scholarship

2011 Assessment Report

Classical Studies

COMMENTARY

The examination paper for Scholarship Classical Studies followed the same format as in previous years, and candidates appeared to have no difficulty in following instructions. A greater number did not write three essays, but this seemed to be the result of lack of knowledge rather than time pressure. Very few misread or misinterpreted the wording of questions, although some omitted parts of questions (e.g. neglecting to discuss Philip in Question Three, Alexander the Great) and some did not define terms in their introduction (e.g. not clarifying what they understood by 'belief' in Question One, Roman Religion).

Four topics continue to attract large numbers of answers: Virgil (356), Alexander the Great (276), Art of the Roman Empire (251), and Greek Vase Painting (244); two topics were answered by very few candidates: Juvenal (28) and Greek Science (18).

Each essay in the examination is marked out of 8, and it is important that candidates sustain their performance across three answers. Successful candidates provided evidence of in-depth understanding of primary and secondary source material and produced thoughtful, well-structured essays, focused on the specific questions asked. Those who failed to reach the standard tended to describe or narrate, rather than analyse evidence, and found it difficult to present a cogent argument and/or write accurately in English.

Candidates are advised to think carefully about the specific requirements of questions before they begin writing. Some may find it helpful to underline key words in order to ensure that their responses are relevant and comprehensive. This approach is especially useful when questions are broadly focused and require candidates to draw on their knowledge of the topic as a whole, rather than discrete sub-topics.

SCHOLARSHIP WITH OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:

- had detailed, in-depth knowledge of subject matter
- produced carefully planned, well-structured essays
- answered the question set directly, clarifying terms at the outset
- incorporated relevant evidence into their arguments, drawing on wide background reading
- provided a balanced discussion, recognising the strengths and weaknesses of primary and secondary sources as appropriate
- wrote fluent answers with a degree of literary flair.

SCHOLARSHIP

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

- considered the wording of questions carefully, taking all aspects into consideration
- showed some evidence of background reading and used this wider knowledge of the topic to build a coherent argument
- established the direction of their argument in an introductory paragraph and stayed on topic
- cited primary source material and secondary sources with a degree of accuracy in their discussion

- wrote clearly and precisely in essay format.

OTHER CANDIDATES

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

- did not answer three questions or failed to answer all parts of a question
- did not plan their essays, straying off topic or jumping about within their argument
- were neither selective nor analytical in their use of evidence, relying heavily on generalisations and narrative
- made repeated errors of fact or definition and/or introduced subjective, unsubstantiated discussion
- were unable to communicate their ideas in accurate English.