

2016 VCE Latin examination report

General comments

Generally students performed well in the 2016 Latin examination. However, some students found the demands of the examination difficult. This was most evident in the Virgil section, where some students seemed to have little awareness of the ideas and issues raised by the set lines. On the other hand, some low-scoring students performed well on some parts of the unseen passage.

Some students did not answer the shorter questions in complete sentences, despite the instruction given on the front of the examination.

Specific information

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

Section 1 – Translation of an unseen passage

Question 1

For, when Syracuse had been captured, Marcellus had realised that his victory had been prevented many times over a long time by the machines of Archimedes. He was so taken by the man's outstanding knowledge that he forbade him to be killed, putting almost as much glory in saving Archimedes as he did in conquering the Syracusans. But Archimedes, while he was drawing diagrams, with his eyes and his mind concentrating on the ground, because he was too eager to find the answer he was looking for, was not able to give his name to a soldier, who had burst into his house to plunder and, with sword drawn, was asking him who he was. But, having protected the dust with his hands, he said, 'I beg you, do not disturb this.' Then he was slaughtered, as if he had ignored an order from a victor, and with his own blood muddled the lines of his art.

Many students would benefit from using bracketing, as suggested below. They might then avoid some of the worst errors of syntax. Prepositions and the words that they govern are shown in italics. The main clause of the long sentence beginning '*at is*' is shown in bold.

(*captis enim Syracusis*), Marcellus machinationibus Archimedis multum ac diu victoriam suam inhibitam esse senserat. [adeo tamen (*eximia hominis prudentia*) delectatus est] (*ut edixerit*) (*ne occideretur*), paene tantum gloriae (*in Archimede servato*) quantum (*in oppressis Syracusis*) reponens. [**at is**, (*dum*, [*animo et oculis (in terra) defixis*], formas describit), **militi**, [*qui (praedandi causa) domum inruperat (strictoque gladio) (quis esset) interrogabat*], (*propter nimiam cupiditatem*) investigandi id] (*quod requirebat*), **nomen suum indicare non potuit**]. sed, (*protecto manibus pulvere*), 'noli' inquit, 'obsecro, istum disturbare'. deinde, (*quasi neglegens imperii victoris*), obtruncatus est et sanguine suo (*artis suae lineamenta*) confudit.

The unseen translation challenged some students. Some low-scoring students were able to make sense of some of the parts of the unseen. Although there were still mistakes resulting from poor use of the dictionary, it was evident that many students made good use of it.

- *captis – Syracusis*

Ablative absolutes were problematic for many students. Students could have begun by translating this literally as ‘Syracuse having been captured’ and then changed it to idiomatic English by using a temporal clause beginning with ‘when’.

- *Marcellus – senserat*

Most students coped with the indirect statement, whereas some missed the pluperfect tense of *senserat*. A large number of students made *multum* agree with *machinationibus*. The coordinating conjunction *ac* must link *multum* with *diu*. Both are adverbs – the former of degree, the latter of time.

- *adeo – delectatus est*

Many students missed that *adeo* was the signpost word showing that *ut* introduced a result clause. Many translated the perfect passive *delectatus est* incorrectly. When there are passive verbs, either the ablative of the agent or the ablative of the instrument may follow. The words *eximia* and *prudentia* agree and bracket *hominis*, which must be taken with them.

- *ut – occideretur*

The perfect subjunctive *edixerit* indicated that *ut* introduced a result clause. *edixerit* introduced a negative indirect command. Many students translated this incorrectly.

- *paene – reponens*

This part of the sentence required an understanding that *tantum* and *quantum* are correlatives. It was important to pay attention to grammar and word order, as indicated by the bracketing above. Many students neglected to find the correct meanings for *servato*, *oppressis* and *reponens*.

- *at is dum ... describit*

This longer sentence required careful attention in dividing it into its component parts. *at is* shows that the subject has changed from Marcellus to Archimedes. This is followed by the short temporal clause introduced by *dum*.

- *animo – defixis*

This second ablative absolute was generally translated better than the first. Some students had difficulty in choosing the best meaning for *animo* and *terra*.

- *militi ... interrogabat*

The dative *militi* is the indirect object of the infinitive *indicare*. *interrogabat*, the second verb in the relative clause, governs the indirect question *quis esset*.

- *qui – inruperat*

Most students were able to translate this part of the relative clause, which contained *causa* with a gerund to express purpose.

- *strictoque gladio*

-que added to *stricto* serves to coordinate the two verbs *inruperat* and *interrogabat* in the relative clause. The ablative absolute *stricto gladio* is a very common one in Latin, but some students found it challenging.

- *propter – requirebat*

The preposition *propter* governs the accusatives *nimiam cupiditatem*. The genitive of the gerund (*investigandi*) is linked to *cupiditatem*. The object of *investigandi* is *id*, which is the antecedent of *quod*. Some students seemed to ignore the rules of grammar and syntax.

- *nomen – potuit*

Most students encountered little difficulty here.

- *sed ... noli – disturbare*

This sentence required the structure to be carefully analysed. There is an ablative absolute followed by direct speech containing a direct command. Although most students coped with the direct speech, some found the parenthetical *obsecro* (I beseech) and *istum* problematic. It is masculine accusative singular, the object of *disturbare* and refers back to *pulvere*.

- *protecto manibus pulvere*

This ablative absolute was very poorly handled by the majority of students. Many students incorrectly translated the plural *manibus* as though it were linked with the singular past participle *protecto*. The word order is also typical of Latin, as the instrumental ablative *manibus* is enclosed by the past participle and the noun to which it belongs.

- *deinde ... obtruncatus est*

Most students translated this part of the sentence correctly.

- *quasi – victoris*

Students who translated this phrase incorrectly had difficulty in finding the correct meaning for *imperii* (order, command).

- *et sanguine – confudit*

sanguine suo are an instrumental ablative. *lineamenta* is the object of *confudit*. The question is where to fit the genitives *artis suae* into the sentence. Genitives often are connected with other nouns. Are they connected to *lineamenta* or *sanguine*? The answer is to *lineamenta* (the outlines/features of his art/skill).

Section 2 – Comprehension, interpretation and analysis of the prescribed seen text

Part A – Comprehension and analysis of the prescribed seen text

Some students did not follow the instructions on the examination to answer in complete sentences. Students wrote responses of an appropriate length for the question's mark allocation. Some students translated the necessary lines rather than specifically responding to the question asked.

Question 2a.

Juno is the subject.

Most students answered this question correctly, with only some mistakenly thinking that it was Allecto.

Question 2b.

She is said to inspire terror because of her violent opposition to the Trojans. This is clear from the preceding lines where Juno summons Allecto to help her stop Aeneas.

Students scored full marks for any answer that linked the reason for Juno to be feared with her opposition to Aeneas and the Trojans.

Question 2c.

Juno is very angry that all her attempts to wipe out the Trojans have failed (lines 293–309). She promises that, if she cannot stop Aeneas and Lavinia from marrying, their marriage will come at the cost of much blood spilt on both sides (309–322).

This context question referred to the lines preceding the passage. One mark each was awarded for identifying the two separate ideas. Most students answered this question well.

Question 3

Dear to Allecto's heart were the sadness of wars (line 3), anger, treachery and vicious accusations (line 4).

Students could choose any two of these ideas. If students provided more than the specified number of answers (two), only the first two were assessed.

Question 4

The sisters of Allecto are Tisiphone and Megaera.

Students could provide either of these for one mark. Just over half the students provided the correct answer.

Question 5

Allecto's mother is Night.

A large number of students did not answer this question correctly.

Question 6

Allecto can turn loving brothers to fight against each other and bring hatred to their household; she can bring whips and the torches of funerals into a house; she has a thousand ways of causing harm.

Most students were able to identify three of Allecto's skills.

Question 7

Juno asks her to shatter the peace and sow the seeds of war so that young men want weapons, demand them and grab them.

Students were awarded one mark for identifying the request to shatter the peace and one mark for what it would cause the young men to do. Most students were able to identify the correct answer.

Question 8

Allecto goes to the palace of Latinus and to the chamber of Queen Amata (lines 342–343).

Most students easily identified both Latinus's palace and Amata. Some, however, incorrectly identified Turnus as the answer. The lines (342–343) gave the response.

Part B – Interpretation of the prescribed seen text

Students are advised to heed the wording of the question. Questions asking about the use of words require students to discuss the words that Virgil has chosen to use, not discuss techniques. Questions about word order may, however, invite discussion of techniques, as may questions about the sounds created by words involve discussion of techniques.

Questions 10 and 12a., which asked for the identification of a technique, only required students to name the technique. If, however, a question asks for an explanation, responses must include why the line(s) contains an example of that technique.

To scan a line correctly students needed to mark on the length of each syllable, show where each foot ended, indicate where the main caesura was and show any elisions. These questions assessed students' knowledge of the rules about length of syllables and other basic rules that apply to the scansion of a Virgilian hexameter.

Question 9

Key words in lines 1–3 were *crimine caedis*, *igni*, *terrorem ingeminat*. At a time when the herdsmen are inflamed with accusations of murder (*crimine caedis*), Turnus is there to increase their fearful thoughts by claiming that the Trojans are being invited to share the kingdom, while he was being driven out. Perceptive students commented on the three passive infinitives, which make Turnus and the Latins the victims of the actions of the Trojans. The charges of murder refer to the killing of Almo and Galaesus. *igni* (fire) is almost certainly metaphorical for passion/anger. In the *Aeneid* fire is often a destructive element. Turnus doubles their panic (*terrorem ingeminat*) by the claims he makes. The effect of these words is to show how explosive the situation is and how easily Turnus is able to fan the flames.

Students' responses to this question often lacked specific reference to the words in these lines.

Question 10

It is litotes because it says 'not ... lightweight' rather than 'has great influence'.

About half of the students scored full marks for identifying the technique and explaining it clearly. Incorrect identifications included apostrophe, chiasmus, metaphor, synchisis, juxtaposition, pathos, transferred epithet, hyperbaton and anaphora. Although the expected answer was 'litotes', 'assonance' of the letter 'e' was accepted.

Question 11

Martem is not metonymy as the name of the god of war is not used to mean 'war' here. The people are exhausting the god himself with their shouts for war.

Marks were awarded provided that the student gave a good explanation for it being metonymy.

Question 12a.

It is a simile.

Question 12b.

The rock stands firm (*immota*) as it resists the great crash of the waves (*pelagi ... magno veniente fragore*) and with its mass (*mole*) holds fast against the roaring waves (*multis circum latrantibus undis*). A discussion of the sense of 'barking' and what that might mean (barking hounds around their prey) was acceptable. The surrounding rocks (*scopuli*) and reefs (*saxa*) around the rock roar (*fremunt*) in vain (*nequiquam*) and the seaweed (*alga*) lashes (*inlisa*) its sides as the waves move it back and forward. Even though the rock is being battered by the violence of the storm, it stands firm against all that is thrown against it, just as Latinus tried to resist the calls for war. The words that Virgil uses create a vivid picture to show how Latinus resists the overwhelming forces of his people.

Most students correctly identified the simile. Students were less able to write good responses to explain how the words in the passage enhanced the picture of Latinus, who was resisting his

people's calls for war, being like a rock or a cliff being battered by the sea. Approximately a quarter of students scored full marks for this question.

Question 13a.

quāē sē|sē mū|tīs // cīr|cūm lāt|rāntībūs| ūndīs *ae* is a diphthong – one long syllable.

A very high proportion of students scanned this line correctly. Technically there are caesuras in the first, second, third and fourth feet. The main caesura will usually come in the third foot, but it could be argued that the caesura comes in the second foot, so that *multis* goes with *latrantibus undis*.

Question 13b.

The heavily spondaic line attempts to reflect the solidity of the rock.

Only half the students identified the correct answer.

Question 14a.

cōnsīlī| (um) ēt sāē|vāē // nū|tū lū|nōnīs ē|ūnt rēs Both *ae* are diphthongs – one long syllable.

Half the students scanned this line correctly, with many students missing the elision of the *um* of *consilium*. Several scanned the consonantal 'l' at the start of *lunonis* or treated the 'eu' of *eunt* as a diphthong rather than as two syllables. The need for a dactyl in the fifth foot should have shown this.

Question 14b.

It is very rare for a monosyllable to end a hexameter. The monosyllabic ending produces conflict between ictus and accent contrary to the usual rule of coincidence in the last two feet. Very few students answered this question correctly.

Question 15

procella is a metaphor, since Latinus's people are not being carried away by a storm, but by the anger inspired by Juno.

Metaphors are different from similes, but are a very common feature of Virgil's work. Incorrect identifications included metonymy, synecdoche, simile, pathetic fallacy, personification and hendiadys. Many students did not score any marks for this question.

Part C – Analysis of themes and ideas from the prescribed seen text

Question 16a.

The passage is full of words that inspire terror. Students should have been able to discuss the significance of some/all of the following words or groups of words: *exarsit in iras; subitus tremor occupat artus; deriguere oculi; tot Erinys sibilat hydris tantaque se facies aperit, flammea torquens lumina; geminos erexit crinibus anguis; verberaque insonuit; rabido ... ore; dirarum; bella manu letumque gero; facem; atro lumine fumantis fixit sub pectore taedas; ingens ... pavor; rumpit; ossaque et artus perfundit toto proruptus corpora sudor, arma amens fremit, saevit amor ferri; scelerata insania belli; ira super*. The nature of the simile in lines 18–22 could have been discussed. This question required students to focus on the vocabulary of the passage, but does not preclude the discussion of techniques such as a simile.

Acceptable points

She burst into flames with anger (*exarsit in iras*) is very strong and links anger to fire. The ‘trembling’ (*tremor*) is ‘sudden’ (*subitus*) and ‘seizes hold’ (*occupat*). Turnus trembles with fear; it comes upon him suddenly and violently takes hold of him. He is transfixed by the terrifying appearance of Allecto (*deriguere oculi*), as she discloses herself in her real size (*tantaque se facies*), with large numbers of snakes hissing on her (*tot sibilat hydri*). Her flaming eyes (more imagery of fire) look around quickly (*flammea torquens lumina*), two snakes (destructive in the *Aeneid*) stand up in her hair (*geminos erexit crinibus anguis*) and she cracks her whip (*verberaque insonuit*), a weapon designed to punish those who resist. Her anger is shown by the way in which she is raving (*rabido*) in what she says. She clearly identifies herself as one of the Furies (*dirarum*) and makes it very clear that she is stirring up war, which will bring death (*bella manu letumque gero*). Her action is violent and frightening as she throws a burning torch, which lodges in Turnus’ breast and pours out dark smoke (*facem, atro [always destructive in the Aeneid] lumine fumantis fixit sub pectore taedas*). Great panic (*ingens pavor*) bursts in upon (*rumpit* – a strong word) his sleep and brings him out of his stunned state. He breaks out in a sweat, which chills him to the bone (*ossaque et artus perfundit toto proruptus corpora sudor*). The result is that in his madness he shouts for weapons (*arma amens fremit* – students might see the similarity to Aeneas in 2.314). He has lost control of his mind (*amens*). *fremo* is a strong word. *amens* is taken up in line 17. His love for weapons and fighting rages within him (*saevit amor ferri*). He is seized by a criminal madness for war (*scelerata insania belli*). His anger takes control (*ira super*).

Virgil uses vivid language and imagery to show the terrifying nature of Allecto, whom Juno has summoned to stir up war between the Latins/Rutulians and the Trojans – the snakes on her body, her blazing eyes, her cracking whip, her raving, her use of the torch to inflame Turnus. The contrast with the terrified, shivering Turnus breaking out in a cold sweat is dramatic. How could Turnus possibly resist the force of such a fury? He gives in to her attack and loses his sense of reason as he takes up weapons of war, a war that is criminal and mad. There are verbs with strong force. The use of images of the destructive element of fire for anger helps to emphasise the destruction that will follow. The simile in lines 18–22 continues the idea of the force of fire (*flamma, aestu, fumidus, vapor ater*). Added to this is the idea of the destructive nature of water (*undantis, exsultant latices, alte spumis exuberat amnis, unda*). Most significant is the use of *furit* – seethes, with connotations of madness, fury, anger and lack of control. There are also words that evoke sounds (*sibilat, verbera, fremit, magno sonore*).

Because students are expected to quote from the passage and include Latin in brackets, lack of Latin quotations or partial responses in Latin and English could not score more than five marks, irrespective of the quality of the response. The Latin quoted in brackets is evidence for the points being made in the English response. Students must address the question asked and not rely solely on pre-learned material. Irrelevant information such as the events of Book 2 and the Laocoon episode, Dido, Carthage, Rome and the Judgment of Paris, were clear indicators of this.

Question 16b.

Students’ answers depended on the way in which they viewed Turnus. Students were expected to state whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement. Although the question could be answered from within Book 7, it was possible to refer to other books in the second half of the *Aeneid*.

Most students agreed with the quotation and went outside Book 7, especially to Books 10 and 12, to make their case. Most agreed that Turnus should be pitied because Juno uses Allecto to terrorise him and drive him to war, and tended to mention his initial reluctance.

The portrayal of Turnus in the *Aeneid* is complex. He is an anachronism, as his values are those of the Homeric warrior rather than the new-age man required in the Roman world, a man of *pietas*.

Virgil describes him as a warrior obsessed with honour, so much so that it makes him a poor leader as his actions are governed by his desire for personal glory rather than success for his troops (as is evident in 9.756–761; 10.668–670; 10.677–679; 12.668–670). He shows no real respect for the gods, even praying to his spear for success. Virgil makes clear that his desire to recover Lavinia goes against fate, divine will and portents (7.583–584; 10.621ff; 12.791ff). His behaviour in Books 9 and 10 does much to destroy any sympathy we may feel for him, especially when he kills Pallas and for the way in which he addresses the dying Pallas. Importantly the question remains as to whether we feel sorry for him or are in sympathy with him in the final book of the epic. *Pietas* can hardly be ascribed to Turnus. He is in the grips of *furor* – the force that opposes *pietas* and Aeneas' mission. The flaws in his character may mean that we do not pity him. Some students acknowledged this, but concluded that he should be pitied as Juno sacrifices him to achieve her purpose. She is indeed a pitiless goddess.

Only a few students were awarded high marks for their responses that addressed the quotation, presented a cogent argument for the stance taken and were supported with relevant information from either within Book 7 or from the whole of the second half of the *Aeneid*. Students needed to make their stance clear and, especially, to state whether Turnus is to be pitied. The mean mark for this question was very low. Although the question invited discussion of the *Aeneid* as a whole, the passage was crucial to the question, as it is the moment at which Juno, through the demonic forces of Allecto, takes control of Turnus so that she can use him in her attempt to prevent or delay the success of Aeneas' mission. Some students concentrated too much on the events in Books 10 and 12 by ignoring the importance of Book 7, and some relied on pre-learned information. Some students did not address the issue of pity at all, and others encountered difficulty in determining what information should be included in their responses to each part of the question. Students should always plan their responses before they begin writing them. Merely retelling the story does not amount to an answer. The extended-response questions assess higher order skills, such as analysis.