

2018 VCE Latin written examination report

General comments

In 2018, some students were well prepared and competent. Others were not well prepared and lacked basic competencies.

Specific information

This report provides 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

The statue was worshipped by the citizens and was visited by all strangers; when I was quaestor, it was the first thing that the citizens showed me. The statue held a bow in its left hand and held out a burning torch in its right. When Verres, that plunderer of all things sacred and religious, saw it, he began to burn with a mad desire, as if he had been struck by that very torch; he ordered the magistrates to take it down and give it to him; he pointed out that nothing else would give him as much pleasure. They, however, kept saying that it would be wrong for them to do this and that they were restrained from doing so by their deep religious feelings and extreme fear of the law; that they had no power in that matter because a very famous general had wanted it to be a reminder of the victory of the Roman people when he had captured the enemy's city.

Previous examination reports have stressed the value of using bracketing to divide up the passage; however, many students did not make use of them. In the passage below, square brackets have been used to surround clauses and phrases, and round brackets surround prepositions and the words they govern.

[colebatur statua (a civibus)],[(ab omnibus advenis) visebatur]; [cum quaestor essem],[nihil mihi (ab illis) est demonstratum prius]. [sinistra manu retinebat arcum], [dextra ardentem facem praeferebat]. [hanc cum Verres, [iste sacrorum omnium et religionum praedo], vidisset], [quasi illa ipsa face percussus esset], [ita flagrare cupiditate atque amentia coepit]; [imperat magistratibus] [ut eam demoliantur et sibi dent]; [nihil sibi gratius futurum ostendit]. [illi vero dicebant sibi id nefas esse], [sessequ cum summa religione tum summo metu legum teneri]; [nihil se in eo potestatis habere] [quod imperator clarissimus [urbe hostium capta] monumentum victoriae populi Romani esse voluisset].

Three issues caused major problems for many students – indirect statements, ablative absolutes and the use of pronouns. Many students began their translations well, but struggled once indirect statement began in the second half of the unseen passage. It was clear that the dictionary was a hindrance rather than a help to many students as students looked up words and found meanings that ignored the grammar and syntax of the words. Students must choose the most appropriate meaning for any word in the passage.

- *colebatur – civibus*

Students who did not score well would have benefited from bracketing the preposition with the noun it governs. Some did not observe the voice and tense of *colebatur*.

- *ab – visebatur*

Here, too, students would have benefited from bracketing the preposition with the noun and adjective that it governs. Many students did not give the correct meaning for *visebatur*.

- *cum – essem*

Many students ignored the first-person ending of the verb *essem*.

- *nihil – prius*

Literal, word-by-word translation would have avoided many mistakes – ‘nothing to me by those men was shown before’.

- *sinistra – arcum*

Many students did not connect this sentence to the introduction. Many students translated the subject of the verb by ‘he’, when the statue is of the female goddess Diana. Poor dictionary skills prevented many students from translating *arcum* as ‘bow’. ‘Arch’, ‘curve’, ‘chest’ and ‘box’ were popular incorrect choices.

- *dextra – praeferebat*

Poor dictionary skills again prevented many students from finding the correct meaning for *facem* – ‘torch’. Some students who could not translate the word correctly here did so in their answers to Question 16a. ‘Face’, ‘appearance’ and ‘shape’ were common incorrect choices.

- *hanc cum Verres ... vidisset*

The feminine demonstrative *hanc* is placed first word to connect back to the previous sentence. Most students translated this temporal clause correctly.

- *iste – praedo*

The demonstrative *iste* agrees with the nominative *praedo*. These two words bracket the enclosed genitives that depend on them. *omnium* needs to be translated as ‘all things’.

- *quasi – esset*

The demonstrative *illa* and emphatic *ipsa* are both ablative feminine singular to agree with *face*. This was another example of the difficulties students faced in translating pronouns. Those who had already mistranslated *facem* continued to produce nonsensical translations.

- *ita – coepit*

Most students translated this clause correctly, but a few had difficulty in finding the correct meaning for *flagrare*.

- *imperat – dent*

Many students were able to translate this indirect command. Choosing the correct meaning of ‘pull down’ for *demoliantur* was important, as to translate as ‘demolish/destroy’ did not make sense. Some students translated the present subjunctive *dent* from the verb *do* as ‘teeth’, as if it came from the noun *dens, dentis*. Students should be aware that a verb usually comes last word in a clause. The *-nt* ending of *dent* was a third-person plural verb. The verb is in an indirect command that uses subjunctives. The present subjunctive is used for *demoliantur*. They should then have worked out what present subjunctive might have *dent* as the third-person plural. A present subjunctive ending in *-em, etc.*, is first conjugation. This process should have led them to *do, dare* = to give. The pronouns caused difficulty for some students. The feminine demonstrative *eam*

takes the place of *statuam*. Students must remember that the reflexive pronoun *se* refers back to the subject of the verb introducing an indirect speech construction.

- *nihil – ostendit*

This is where major problems began for many students, as the last four lines of the passage contained indirect statement. The accusative and infinitive construction is one peculiar to Latin. In English the statement is invariably introduced by the conjunction ‘that’. The accusative subject becomes an English nominative and the infinitive a finite verb.

The verb introducing the indirect statement is *ostendit*. *nihil* is the accusative subject of the statement and *futurum* (with *esse* understood) the infinitive. The neuter comparative *gratius* agrees with *nihil*. The reflexive *sibi* refers back to the subject of *ostendit*. A literal, word-by-word translation would have shown the meaning of the sentence – ‘nothing to him more pleasing being about to be (allowing for students not recognising the fact that *esse* of the future infinitive is left out here, as often) he made known’.

- *illi – nefas esse*

The demonstrative *illi* refers back to *magistratibus* and should be translated as ‘they’. Again the reflexive *sibi* refers back to the subject of the verb introducing the statement. The demonstrative *id* – ‘that thing’ – is the accusative subject, *esse* is the infinitive and *nefas* is in apposition to *id*.

- *seseque – teneri*

The reflexive *sese* also refers back to the subject of the verb *dicebant*, the imperfect tense of which should be translated as ‘they kept on saying’. The infinitive *teneri* is present passive and needs to be translated by the imperfect indicative passive. *cum ... tum* means ‘both ...and’. The genitive plural *legum* is confined to *metu* and does not apply to *summa religione*. A small number of students translated *legum* as ‘pulse’ or ‘bean’ as if it came from *legumen* rather than thinking of the genitive plural of the very common Latin word *lex*, *legis* = ‘law’.

- *nihil – habere*

This continuance of the indirect statement proved difficult for many. The reflexive *se* refers back to the subject of *dicebant*. *nihil* is the accusative object of *habere*. The genitive *potestatis* (literally ‘of power’) goes with *nihil*. The words *in eo* should be translated as ‘in that matter’.

- *quod ... voluisset*

The conjunction *quod* introduces the reason for their lack of power in this matter. ‘Emperor’ cannot be a correct translation of ‘*imperator*’, as there were no emperors in Rome until Augustus.

- *urbe – capta*

This ablative absolute was mistranslated by many students. The two ablatives *urbe* and *capta* act like a bracket around the genitive *hostium*. This means that ‘enemy’ must be taken with the ablative absolute and not elsewhere, as many students did.

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

Part A – Comprehension and analysis of the prescribed seen text

Question 2

The sister is Juturna.

Almost all students answered this question correctly.

Question 3

Lausus, someone his own age, had come to meet Pallas when he was causing havoc among the Rutulians. Juturna advised Turnus to take the place of Lausus.

succedere means 'to take the place of'. This is borne out by what Turnus says to Lausus in lines 3–5. Many students thought that it meant 'to come to the aid of'.

Question 4a.

Ipse parens refers to Evander, Pallas' father.

Almost all students answered this question correctly.

Question 4b.

Turnus wishes that he was present to see him kill his son.

Most students answered this question correctly.

Question 5

The arrogant nature of Turnus is stressed by the use of *superba* (arrogant) in line 7 and *tyranni* (tyrant) in line 10. His size is emphasised by *corpusque per ingens* (over the huge body) in line 8.

Students were awarded one mark for each characteristic correctly identified. Students are reminded that, if a question asks for two responses and they give more than two, only the first two will be assessed.

Question 6

Spolia opima were awarded to a Roman commander who killed an enemy general in single combat. (They would be appropriate for Turnus if he killed Pallas.) There were only three instances of their award in Roman history. The award, therefore, was very rare.

Students found this question difficult. Many responses included generalities rather than a specific answer.

Question 7

The Arcadians are the followers of Pallas or Evander. Their king, Evander, had come to Italy from Arcadia in Greece.

Question 8a.

Pallas prays to Hercules.

Almost all students correctly identified Hercules.

Question 8b.

Evander had been a generous host of Hercules when he was driving the Oxen of Geryon back to Greece. Hercules freed Evander's people from the monster Cacus, which had been terrorising them. Cacus made the mistake of stealing some of the cattle and hiding them in his cave. Hercules killed Cacus and recovered the cattle. Hercules is also renowned for his strength, and Pallas may hope that Hercules will give him strength for his fight with Turnus.

Students tended to be able identify the idea of Evander's hospitality and the idea of Hercules's strength, but were less aware of the link between Hercules and Evander.

Part B – Interpretation of the prescribed seen text

Question 9

This is an example of oxymoron, as water (*lymphis*) does the opposite of drying (*siccabat*). Students also suggested that it is juxtaposition, the placing of words next to each other for effect, paradox, which is akin to oxymoron, or antithesis, the arrangement of contrasting words, all of which were accepted.

As the question asked for an explanation, only one mark could be given to a student who merely identified the technique.

Question 10

Dēpēn|dēt gālē|(a) ēt // prā|tō grāvī|(a) ārmā quī|ēscūnt The main caesura should be in the third foot, but the second or fourth foot was accepted.

The line tests the basic rules, including elision. Although some students missed one or both elisions, the scansion of verse in this question and Question 12 was generally well done.

Question 11

Ingentem atque ingenti is an example of repetition. It is not anaphora, where repetition occurs at the start of phrases or clauses. *Vulnere victum* is an example of alliteration. Students also suggested chiasmic order, assonance and enclosed word order, all of which were accepted.

As the question only asked the students to identify the techniques, no explanation was needed. The question clearly limited students to the five words in line 10.

Question 12a.

flēntēs| īngēn|(em) ātqu(e) // īn|gēntī| vūlnērē| vīctūm

It could be argued that there is no caesura in this line, as it coincides with an elision in the third foot. Students who marked the caesura there or did not give a caesura at all were given full marks.

āgnō|vīt lōn|gē // gēmī|tūm praē|sāgā mǎ|lī mēns ae is a diphthong – one long syllable

A caesura in the second or fourth foot was accepted.

Question 12b.

The heavily spondaic line (first four feet) reflects the slow procession of those carrying the body of Lausus. It might be said that it also reflects the pathos of the scene.

Most students gave a correct answer. Students who merely wrote that the line was spondaic were not awarded a mark.

Question 12c.

The line ends with a monosyllable, which is a rarity in hexameter verse.

Most students identified the correct answer.

Question 13

Students were expected to discuss some of the following words used by Virgil in Mezentius's lamentation:

- the constant words that stress the relationship of father and son – *nate* (14, 19), *genui* (16), *genitor* (16) and the constant use of the contrast between the first person (e.g. *me* [14, 15] and the second person (e.g. *tua* [16, 17] and *tuum* [19])
- the words that help stress the sense of self-recrimination – *vivendi...voluptas* (14), *ut ... dextrae* (15), *per vulnera servor* (16), *morte tua vivens* (17), *alte vulnus adactum* (18), *tuum maculavi crimine nomen* (19)
- the words that suggest that he is paying the price for his former sins in lines 20–22
- words that express sadness such as *heu* (17), *misero* (17), *infelix* (18)

The tone of these lines is one of sadness, regret and self-recrimination. Students had to identify the tone as distinct from the content. They also had to concentrate on Virgil's choice of words, not metre and techniques. Students were not expected to cover all the suggested points.

Question 14

Mezentius states that he has been saved (*servor*) because Lausus has been wounded (*tua per vulnera*) so that he is living because of the death of Lausus. Normally wounds might be considered to cause death rather than save someone from it. This is seen as a paradox.

This question proved to be difficult for some students.

Question 15

This is an example of a metaphor as you cannot literally 'stain a reputation'.

More than half the students could not identify the metaphor, a word not used in its literal sense. Some marks were given to those who suggested alliteration or enclosed word order. Incorrect suggestions included chiasmus and metonymy.

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

Question 16a.

The tone of Juno's speech is one of invective and angry indignation in response to Venus's plea to Jupiter to have pity on the Trojans and especially Ascanius. The frequent rhetorical questions and use of the first person sounds indignant. She uses irony too, when she begins by saying that Venus is suggesting that Turnus has no right to defend his land (*patria ... terra*, line 2) against the Trojans (*Troiam ... nascentem*, lines 1–2) even though he too has divine parentage (*Pilumnus avus ... diva Venilia mater*, line 3), perhaps even more divine than that of Aeneas. She goes on to ask what gives the Trojans the right to attack the Latins, to bring their land (*arva aliena*, line 5), the land of someone else, under Trojan control, plunder it and carry off their women (*quid ... pactas*, lines 4–6). *quid soceros* (line 6) is probably sarcastic, as normally a father-in-law chooses a son-in-law, not vice versa. She accuses the Trojans of pretending to offer peace when they are carrying arms (*pacem ... arma*, line 7). She bitterly asks why it is permissible for Venus to offer Aeneas help but not for her to help Turnus and the Rutulians (*tu potes ... nefandum est*, lines 8–11). She resorts to untrue assertions to try to reinforce her case (lines 8–10). She throws back Venus's words at her

(*Aeneas ignarus abest*, line 12) with a wish that Aeneas will stay away somewhere where Venus already holds sway (*ignarus ... Cythera*, lines 12–13) rather than involving the Trojans in conflict with a warlike people (*quid ... temptas*, line 14). Line 12 is witty, as she quotes Venus's excuse that Aeneas is absent and knows nothing and turns it into a wish. She finishes by indignantly asking who was responsible for the Trojan War. Was it her fault or that of Paris (*Dardanius ... adultery*, line 19), who, inspired by Venus and Cupid, carried off Helen from Sparta? (*nosne ... bella*, lines 15–20). That, she says, was the time that Venus should have feared for her people, not now (*tum ... iactas* lines 21–22).

Students had to identify a correct tone for the speech. Some students, who did not quote the Latin of the passage (in brackets), scored only partial marks, even if their answer was correct in other respects. Students were expected to write in English and to show that they knew which words in the Latin passage supported their points. If they were quoting a line or lines as a whole, it was acceptable to give the first and last words or the line references.

Question 16b.

The second part of the question proved to be challenging, because it seemed that students did not read the question carefully. The question focused on Turnus, and Turnus alone. It also asked students to use evidence from Books 10 to 12, not just 10 and 12. The question wanted students to discuss the idea that what Turnus does in the last three books of the *Aeneid* brings him either suffering or good fortune. While an argument can be made that fate has predetermined the outcome of the epic and that, therefore, whatever Turnus does, he cannot alter fate (nor can the goddesses acting on his behalf) and avoid death, this begs the question of whether what he does in the last three books brings him suffering or good fortune. As the following suggested points show, a clear case can be made that Turnus's actions in the last three books bring him suffering. Some students did argue that some of his actions brought him good fortune, such as his victory over Pallas, but such good fortune is short-lived and is overshadowed by his suffering.

For Book 10, students could discuss the behaviour of Turnus in Book 10, especially the Pallas episode. They were likely to concentrate on lines 495–505, especially lines 500–505, where the comment is made that men are ignorant of fate when carried away by success and that the time will come when Turnus will wish that he had not killed Pallas and will hate the spoils that he has taken. Some mentioned Jupiter's comment to Hercules in lines 467–472 about fate, when he remarks that the role of the brave man is to enhance his reputation while alive and his statement that Turnus's time is up. Some commented on the way in which Turnus is whisked away from the battle by Juno, but this is not relevant, as it does not reflect Turnus's own actions. They could, however, make a brief comment on Turnus's reaction when he realises that he has been stranded on the ship and taken off to the coast near Ardea. The focus of the question was, however, his actions and whether they bring him good fortune or suffering.

For Book 11, it was expected that students would at least make reference to the debate between Turnus and Drances. (At the beginning of Book 11, a Latin embassy, led by Drances, came to Aeneas to ask for a truce to bury the dead. They say that they would be in favour of peace and that it is Turnus who prevents it. Aeneas claims that the issue should be settled by a duel between Turnus and him. A truce of 12 days is granted.) Latinus, when he has received the news that Diomedes will not come to help, says that it is time for peace and offers to grant the Trojans some land on which to settle. In support of this suggestion, Drances places the blame for the Latin losses firmly on Turnus's pride. He suggests that, if he is determined to continue his pursuit of Lavinia's hand in marriage, he should face Aeneas in a duel to settle the issue rather than risking the lives of more Latins. Turnus, who has returned obviously from Ardea during the days of the truce, replies angrily (lines 376–444). He rejects Drances's accusation of cowardice and the proposed settlement with the Trojans. He is all in favour of continuing the fight, because he considers that surrender is cowardice. He volunteers to meet Aeneas in a duel to settle the issue. So Turnus, by continuing the hostilities and consenting to a duel, does something that will bring him suffering. While they are

debating the issue, news comes that Aeneas and his forces were coming to attack. Turnus's response is that of a man of action, as he rushes out urging his followers to take up arms and follow him to repulse the Trojans and Etruscans. Here again, his action leads towards his death. Peace and compromise are rejected in favour of a continuation of war.

Perceptive students might have mentioned Turnus's plan to ambush Aeneas as he comes through a pass, while Camilla takes on the Etruscan cavalry (lines 522–531). When news comes of the death of Camilla and the defeat of her forces, he abandons his ambush in a frenzy (because Jupiter wills it) to rush back to the city, just as Aeneas enters the pass where he would have been ambushed – an opportunity missed (lines 896–915).

Students were expected to discuss the events of Book 12 and especially the last lines, where Aeneas, when he catches sight of Pallas's belt, in anger and in revenge for the death of Pallas, kills Turnus. There were other points that could be made from Book 12. At the beginning of Book 12, the Latins are losing the battle and Turnus comes to Latinus to arrange a truce so that he can meet Aeneas in a duel. When Latinus suggests a solution, Turnus becomes angrier and tells Latinus to let him risk his life for glory (line 49). He even rejects the plea of Amata, as he is fixated on marrying Lavinia and burns with an even greater desire for war (lines 54–80). The description of him preparing for the duel enhances the picture of a man thirsting for war with images of fire (lines 101–102) and the simile of the bull (lines 103–106). When Juturna encourages the Rutulians to break the truce in defence of Turnus, Aeneas is wounded by a stray arrow and withdraws. This encourages Turnus to renew the fight and he embarks on an *aristeia* (lines 324–382). Again he chooses the option of war. Juturna whisks Turnus away from the battle and Aeneas, but he realises what is going on and is unwilling to face the dishonour of running away from the fight and Aeneas. When Saces has brought news of the disaster facing the Latins and the death of Amata, Turnus tells Juturna that he can no longer avoid the inevitability of fate and must face Aeneas, even if it means that he will die (lines 676–680). Turnus chooses to jump down from his chariot and burst through the fighting to stop it so that the duel can take place (lines 681–696). His impetuous nature is illustrated by the simile, which shows the unstoppable force of his progress (the boulder in lines 684–696). Students did argue that Turnus is really a sacrificial puppet used by Juno and, as such, he is not really responsible for his own actions, but this was not the focus of the question.

Students needed to say whether they thought that Jupiter's assertion is correct when considering what happens in Books 10–12. The question was phrased 10–12 rather than 10 **and** 12 to allow for use of the Drances episode in Book 11. Many students simply discussed the scene of the death of Pallas and the last lines of Book 12. Above are provided as many examples as possible from Books 10–12 of Turnus's actions that lead to his death, or, in other words, 'what he does brings him suffering'. A careful reading of Books 10–12 will have shown that Turnus, like a Homeric warrior, has a hunger for war, pursues glory through fighting and fears being shamed for cowardice. Students were not expected to cover all of this, but it shows the possible points that they could have made. Students were assessed on the validity of their argument, its cohesiveness and the quality of the supporting evidence that they used to support their case.

Students struggled to address this question. There were many answers that obviously relied on essays written during the year on issues such as fate, *pietas* and the role of divine intervention. Many students chose to write about others, such as Aeneas, Pallas, Lausus and Mezentius, even though the question was directed at Turnus alone. Students should avoid including irrelevant information. A good introduction will signal to the assessor what approach the student is taking in answer to the question.