



**General Certificate of Secondary Education**

**Classical Civilisation**

**Centre-assessed Coursework**

**Report on the Examination**

*2007 examination – June series*

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Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

## Centre-assessed Coursework

### *General Comments*

Congratulations are due, as ever, to those candidates who have demonstrated by their hard work and dedication how much they have gained from a study of this subject. Much credit is due, of course, to their teachers, whose commitment to the subject and to their candidates is truly remarkable. They produce, year on year, tasks which encourage the candidates to demonstrate a command of factually accurate and relevant knowledge alongside understanding and insightful analysis, accompanied by lively and original personal response. This year was no different.

The civilisation topics (Paper 2) were more popular this year, with the study of *Roman Social Life* and *The Roman Conquest of Britain* the most popular. Virgil's *Aeneid* was the most popular of the literary topics.

The archaeological topics again seemed to cause the most problems. The specification for *Pompeii and Herculaneum*, for example, does not allow for a study of Roman social life that does not focus on Pompeii and Herculaneum and have a base in the archaeology of the sites.

Similarly, the specification does not allow marks to be awarded in *The Roman Conquest of Britain* for information on the invasions of Caesar in 55 and 54 BC, nor on the futile attempt of Caligula in the next century. It clearly states that the study should start with the Claudian invasion of 43 AD. Nor does it include Hadrian's Wall. Neither is the Virgil topic the correct place for the study of Bronze Age arms, armour and warfare and the relative merits of Hector and Achilles according to Homer's *Iliad*.

The titles for the assignments generally asked for an answer in essay form, and the clearer, more directive ones enabled candidates to communicate knowledge and understanding of the classical world well. It should be remembered that the Coursework Advisers are available at any time to help and advise centres who are in any way uncertain as to the appropriateness of their assignment titles and mark schemes.

Inclusion of schemes of work and course materials are extremely helpful to the moderators and allow them to understand exactly the task set for the candidate. Similarly, the provision of mark schemes is very helpful, but it does raise the problem of some schemes which are overly prescriptive. These, unfortunately, do not allow for individual choice and response and often lead to assignments which are somewhat standardised and sterile.

Care should be taken to link any illustration used in assignments into the text as relevant evidence. Many illustrations are simply lifted from the internet, and as such should be acknowledged in the bibliography, as requested on the *Candidate Record Form*.

Most centres marked out of 100 plus Quality of Written Communication, with very few using half marks. Marking in this way makes it difficult for even the most able candidates to perform well. Centres are reminded that, from 2008, all centres will be required to mark out of 100 and half marks will not be allowed. It is pleasing that most centres are already fulfilling these revised criteria.

Annotation was generally good, allowing the moderators to see how and where the marks had been awarded. There was much less confusion of category (b) and (c) marks this year. Most centres now ensure that the two categories are not used in the same assignment, or if they are, that the assignment is subdivided. Unfortunately, there were occasions when category (c) marks were awarded for understanding (i.e. category (b) work) where there were no category (b) marks available in the assignment. This, unfortunately, led to marks being adjusted. Candidates score best when they are aware of how many marks are available and in which categories for each assignment. Also, candidates need to know how to earn marks in each category.

There were fewer instances of marks being awarded for repetition across the assignments this year. This shows that teachers are taking great care to set up their coursework in such a way as to avoid such repetition.

Most centres coped well with the demands of administration. There were fewer errors in addition and in transferring marks from the assignment to the *Candidate Record Form* and *Centre Mark Sheet* than in previous years. There were some centres which failed to ensure that the Head of Centre had signed the *Centre Declaration Sheet*, but most sent in all *Candidate Record Forms* duly signed by the candidates. Some samples arrived a little late, but all were received by the end of the moderation period.

Most samples were carefully packed up and arrived safely. It would be helpful if all diaries and other bulky materials were attached to the work of each candidate; if this is not possible, it would be appreciated if these items were clearly labelled and assigned to the relevant candidates.

Finally, the moderators would like, once again, to congratulate all the candidates who worked so hard to produce interesting assignments which show that their interest in this subject has been aroused and inspired. The moderators would also like to thank all their teachers for their commitment, to commend their ability and to state their hope that the good work will continue.