**A LEVEL 20-mark Questions – Planning Guide**

Potential issues

Examiner’s report:

* ‘Many otherwise excellent candidates produced responses, which were below what was expected.’
* ‘It was clear that candidates did not have enough time left to dedicate to the 20 mark question.’

**Allow the full 30 minutes for this question.**

N.B. the exemplar L5 answer (19/20) is 3 typed sides long. The exemplar L4 answer (16/20) is 5 sides of dense average size handwriting.

* ‘Many candidates seemed unclear as to which texts to base their answer on.’

**The 20-mark question is on the Group 2 texts only (Apuleius (prose) and Ovid (verse)).**

* ‘Many candidates did not refer enough to the prescribed English texts.’

**Build up detailed references for each theme. Each individual point you make should be supported by at least three detailed references, from both the Latin and the English sections.**

Planning Priorities

* Essay planning should focus on:
* dissection of question;
* definition of key terms;
* how to structure answer;
* finding evidence from the text (Latin and English) to support arguments.
* Timings in the examination (2 hours):
* short answer questions – 12 mins. x2 = 24 mins.
* translation questions – 5 mins. x2 = 10 mins.
* 15-mark questions – 28 mins. x2 = 56 mins.
* **20-mark question – 30 mins.** = 30 mins.
* Strategies and timed practice to help you stick to these timings.

The characteristics of a L5 (17-20/20) answer appear to be as follows:

1. An **introductory paragraph**:

* defining the **key terms** in the question;
* identifying the **scope of the discussion** and any **considerations**;
* indicating clearly what your **argument** will be in **direct answer to the question**;
* laying out a **clear structure** for your answer.

N.B. Candidates appear to be penalised if they do not follow through on areas for discussion promised in the introduction.

1. Very **detailed knowledge** of the prescribed texts, especially the prescribed English texts, but using **the most relevant examples** to support the argument.

N.B. Detailed, relevant, specific examples from the text appear to attract ticks. Quotation in English or even Latin from the text to support arguments appears to be credited (although there is no specific requirement for this in the specification).

1. The ability to draw on **examples from across the whole text**.

N.B. Lower achieving candidates focused too much on one area at the expense of others: the examiner wants to see **breadth and depth of knowledge** of the text.

1. An **analysis of the style** of the author’s writing is desirable where relevant to the question - e.g. in Verse - the use of epithets and similes in *Aeneid* X to glorify war or otherwise.
2. The inclusion of **historical or cultural detail** where relevant to the question or argument, but not at the expense of displaying detailed knowledge of the text ‘as a work of Latin literature’. See note below.

Overall, a **structured argument** supported by **specific, detailed and relevant examples** from across the prescribed Group 2 texts appear to be key to success in this question.

Things to note

**Proportion of English prescribed text examples**

It is not specified what proportion of the essay should cite examples from the English text; however, the examiner states: ‘Candidates at the higher levels displayed a **very detailed knowledge of the English texts**… Lower ability candidates were content with [broad generalisations]’.

It seems a fair assumption that the examiner is looking for a **balance of examples** (in equal parts?) from across **both the Latin and English prescribed texts** to demonstrate your knowledge of the texts.

The nature of the question will probably dictate which sections provide the most relevant number of examples, but clearly the highest scoring answers show detailed knowledge of both sections. The examiner seems particularly fond of direct quotation from the text in the L5 exemplar.

**Historical Background**

Candidates gained marks when producing evidence from the social, cultural and historical context **where relevant**. However, the examiner stresses that this is a **literature paper** and that ‘extended displays of historical knowledge cannot compensate for a lack of knowledge of the prescribed literature’. In fact ‘many candidates achieving the highest scores did not necessarily introduce such historical background’ (Prose Literature). However, in the Verse Literature exemplars, omission of the Augustan or Iliadic context (*Aeneid* X) was often cited as an area for improvement to achieve a higher score.

**Secondary Sources**

The examiner stresses that these are not a requirement of the paper, however credit may be given to these ‘if they introduce relevant historical background’.

**Use of Group 1 texts in the answer**

The examiner is clear that answers should be based on Group 2 texts. However, the examiner states that ‘some use of the Group 1 texts can be permitted on the grounds that it shows wider historical and background knowledge’. Candidates who did use Group 1 texts tended to be lacking in detailed knowledge of the required texts.