



**General Certificate of Education**

**Classical Civilisation**

**CIV1F The Life and Times of Cicero**

**Report on the Examination**

*June examination - 2009 series*

**This Report on the Examination uses the [new numbering system](#)**

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## **CIV1F The Life and Times of Cicero**

### **Section One**

The number of answers to Option A, on a passage from *Against Verres 1*, vastly outweighed those to Option V, based on the last of the prescribed letters, from Cicero to Plancus.

#### **Option A**

Answers to Questions 01 and 02 were disappointing, with only half the candidates knowing more than two details of Verres' alleged criminal activities throughout his entire career. Many candidates were more familiar with the atrocities Cicero describes in *Verrines V* than the accusations he makes in the prescribed text, which suggested they had derived their information from secondary material rather than the primary source set for study. In Question 03, too, many candidates were uncertain of the relevant facts relating to *Against Verres 1*, some locating the trial either a decade earlier during Sulla's dictatorship or a decade later when the first triumvirate was being formed.

However, candidates were on surer ground when evaluating the success of the case in Question 04 and were able to demonstrate both knowledge of the details and the ability to construct an appropriate argument. Nevertheless, there was some confusion with *pro Roscio Amerino*, as in Question 03.

#### **Option B**

The factual question that was answered best was Question 07, the majority of candidates knowing that Decimus Brutus was one of Caesar's assassins. In Question 08 most candidates realised that Plancus defected to Antony, but few knew that initially he responded positively to Cicero's appeal. On the whole, Question 09 was fairly well done and marks were slightly higher than those for Question 03, but some candidates assumed Antony was acting constitutionally while Decimus Brutus, as one of the conspirators, was in the wrong.

The quality of the work on Question 10 was better still, and a significant improvement over the general standard of Question 04. Although candidates were sometimes vague about Cicero's conduct towards Octavian, for the most part they were secure on his behaviour towards Antony and the content of the *Philippics*.

### **Section Two**

More candidates chose to discuss Cicero's relationship with Caesar in the years 60 to 44 BC (Option D) than to assess how principled Cicero was in the preceding period 67 to 61 BC (Option C).

#### **Option C**

Many candidates had a sound grasp of the issues and a clear view of Cicero's background and stated political position. However, in some cases judgements were weakened because of inadequate reference to specific details and the intrusion of some anachronisms.

## **Option D**

In general candidates scored more highly on this question than on Option C. Most took the view that the two men had common interests but were politically opposed. What marked out the stronger essays was the ability to identify and explain shifts in their relationship during the 15 years covered by the question with argument supported by significant details, including where appropriate references to the prescribed correspondence, for example at the start of the Civil War. Weaker answers tended to demonstrate only sketchy knowledge of the situation between the end of the Civil War and Caesar's murder, and to be unsure about the sequence of events, particularly with regard to the dinner party Cicero describes in one of the prescribed letters.