



General Certificate of Education

Classical Civilisation

CIV1F The Life and Times of Cicero

Report on the Examination

2011 examination – January series

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CIV1F The Life and Times of Cicero

Option A

Of the short factual questions, Question 01 was the best answered with about three-quarters of the candidates producing an accurate answer. In Question 04, a similar percentage recognised the importance to Caesar of Cicero's oratorical skills, but a relatively small number knew the other offer, apart from the one mentioned in the passage, that Caesar made to him. In Questions 02 and 03, it was rather disappointing that only just over half the candidates were able to demonstrate accurate knowledge of the context of the letter quoted with some reference to Pompey or his troops in the former and to the first triumvirate in the latter.

At the top end in Question 05 there were some excellent answers which supported thorough assessment of the importance of tribunes after the reforms of 70 BC with a range of well-explained examples. However, many answers were more patchy and showed only a vague understanding with few, if any, clearly identified examples.

Answers to Question 06 were generally much more successful, and nearly half the candidates reached Level 4. Most candidates made some attempt to cover the central issues and to address the exact terms of the question. The best responses considered the whole period and tempered their judgements with analysis of the difficulties and constraints Cicero faced. Weaker answers showed some imprecision in the sequencing of events and spent more time on Cicero's consulship of 63 than was necessary to reach a judgement on his exile relevant to the terms of this particular question.

Option B

This set of questions, based on a passage from a later period in Cicero's career, attracted a smaller number of candidates. Recall of the knowledge required for the short factual Questions 07 to 10 was generally more accurate than for Questions 01 to 04, although in Question 10 only three-fifths of the candidates could give a detail of Caesar's rapid success, and in Question 09 a larger number had difficulty finding a second reason for Caesar's quarrel with Pompey.

In Question 11, evaluation of the passage, a letter from Caesar, was generally better than analysis of tribunes' power in Question 05. The improvement was not so marked in the percentage of candidates reaching Level 4, but it was very noticeable in the far greater proportion of candidates gaining Level 3. Although these answers lacked enough coherent argument and reference to precise detail to take them into Level 4, sometimes addressing content or tone rather than both, they nevertheless showed some understanding of Caesar's verbal tactics and provided some supporting knowledge from either the text or other knowledge.

Marks for Question 12 tended to be slightly lower than those for Question 06. Although candidates usually made some attempt to keep the focus on the key issues of Cicero's rashness and judgement, they often deployed insufficient detail and explanation to justify their views, probably because they were less familiar with a period from the later part of Cicero's career.

Option C

This was more popular than Option D by an even larger margin than Option A over Option B, and on the whole it produced slightly better informed and structured arguments. Although some candidates gave scant attention to the precise focus of the evaluation – in some cases perhaps

because they did not grasp the full implications of manipulating events – most avoided a simple narrative survey, and several produced very fine analysis indeed that showed insight into the nature of Roman politics at the time. There was some confusion between the Roscius and Verres trials, and in general detail became sparser as the period went on, Cicero's failure to manipulate Pompey in 62 BC being frequently omitted despite its prominence as an issue in the first of the prescribed letters.

Option D

Answers to Question 14 showed similar strengths and weaknesses to those to Question 13. There was again confusion among some between Verres and Roscius, and a tendency to fade out before reaching the later part of Cicero's career. However, the best answers showed a detailed knowledge and understanding of Cicero's procedure, methods and techniques in his preparation for and delivery of *Against Verres 1*, and reached an overall conclusion after continuing the argument with some understanding of how effective a few of his other speeches were.