

Chief Reader Report on Student Responses: 2017 AP[®] Latin Free-Response Questions

• Number of Students Scored	6,647			
• Number of Readers	32			
• Score Distribution		Exam Score	N	%At
		5	832	12.5
		4	1,291	19.4
		3	2,091	31.5
		2	1,531	23.0
		1	902	13.6
• Global Mean	2.94			

The following comments on the 2017 free-response questions for AP[®] Latin were written by the Chief Reader, Mary C. English, Professor of Classics and General Humanities, Montclair State University. They give an overview of each free-response question and of how students performed on the question, including typical student errors. General comments regarding the skills and content that students frequently have the most problems with are included. Some suggestions for improving student preparation in these areas are also provided. Teachers are encouraged to attend a College Board workshop to learn strategies for improving student performance in specific areas.

Question #1**Task:** Translation: Vergil**Max. Points:** 15**Mean Score:** 7.77***What were responses expected to demonstrate in their response to this question?***

The question assessed the student's ability to translate a passage from Vergil's *Aeneid* into English as literally as possible.

- Responses to Q1 were expected to demonstrate knowledge of Latin vocabulary, Latin morphology, Latin grammar and syntax, and an understanding of the differences between Latin and English usage that make translating a Latin passage challenging (Curriculum Framework, pp. 10-11, pp. 19-22, and p. 54).

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- Responses to Q1 demonstrated that the students were familiar with the required reading for this section of the syllabus (*Aeneid*, Book 1).
- Responses to Q1 demonstrated that students were generally able to apply their knowledge and facility of Latin vocabulary, Latin morphology, and Latin grammar and syntax to produce literal translations of this passage.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segment 2: wrong tense for <i>erat</i>; <i>nobis</i> often omitted from translation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aeneas <u>was</u> the king <u>for us</u>. • <u>Our</u> king <u>was</u> Aeneas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segment 3: <i>quo</i> not rendered as an ablative of comparison 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>than whom</u> no other person was more just in piety nor greater in war and arms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segments 5 and 6: <i>iustior</i> and <i>maior</i> were not rendered as comparative adjectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • than whom no other person was <u>more just</u> in piety nor <u>greater</u> in war and arms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segment 10: difficulty rendering <i>quem virum</i> with accuracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the fates protect <u>this man</u> • If the fates protect <u>which man</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segment 11: difficulty rendering <i>vescitur aura aetheria</i> with accuracy (despite the gloss) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If <u>he feeds upon a heavenly breeze</u>

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Throughout the school year, students should receive ample practice in literal translation, and teachers should assess their work with the same precision required on the AP exam.
- Students should also take full advantage of the glosses, which provide not only the dictionary meaning but also the declension identifier for nouns and the conjugation identifier for verbs. (The gloss for *vescor* not only indicates that the verb is deponent but also reminds the student that the ablative case often follows *vescor*, as it does in this passage with the phrase *aura aetheria*.)
- Students should be encouraged to proofread their work at the end of the exam, making sure that they have accounted for every word in the passage and that they have double-checked the tense, voice, and mood of the verbs, as well as the case and number of the nouns.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- Use and apply the Scoring Guidelines throughout the AP year and in years leading up to the AP experience so students are familiar with how their response will be scored.
<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-latin/exam?course=ap-latin>
- Use examples of student performance to provide concrete examples of strong, good, and fair performance and have students apply the scoring guidelines so they can improve their performance.
- Refer to the AP Latin Course and Exam Description posted on AP Central.
<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/pdf/ap-latin-course-and-exam-description.pdf?course=ap-latin>
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Question #2

Task: Translation: Caesar

Max. Points: 15

Mean Score: 7.23

What were responses expected to demonstrate in their response to this question?

The question assessed the student's ability to translate a passage from Caesar's *Bellum Gallicum* into English as literally as possible.

- Responses to Q2 were expected to demonstrate knowledge of Latin vocabulary, Latin morphology, Latin grammar and syntax, and an understanding of the differences between Latin and English usage that make translating a Latin passage challenging (Curriculum Framework, pp. 10-11, pp. 19-22, and p. 55).

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- Responses to Q2 demonstrated that the students were familiar with the required reading for this section of the syllabus (*Bellum Gallicum*, Book 5).
- Responses to Q2 demonstrated that students were generally able to apply their knowledge and facility of Latin vocabulary, Latin morphology, and Latin grammar and syntax to produce literal translations of this passage.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Segment 1: difficulty rendering the ablative absolute (<i>consilio eius probato</i>) with accuracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• (with) his plan having been approved• after/since his plan had been approved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Segment 2: <i>etsi</i> omitted	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>even though</u> Caesar
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Segment 3: difficulty recognizing the challenging vocabulary (e.g., <i>deiectus</i> was often omitted, <i>trium</i> rendered as "third" not "three") and rendering the phrase with accuracy (e.g., <i>trium legionum</i> not recognized as a genitive)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Even though Caesar, <u>disappointed by the expectation of three legions</u>...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Segment 4: wrong tense for <i>redierat</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Caesar <u>had returned</u> to two.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Segments 8 and 11: remembering the difference between <i>in</i> + ablative (Segment 8) and <i>in</i> + accusative (Segment 11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>in</u> swiftness (Segment 8)• <u>into</u> the boundaries of the Nervii (Segment 11)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Segments 14 and 15: difficulty recognizing and rendering indirect questions with accuracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• what things are being done at the camp of Cicero (Segment 14)• in how much danger the situation is (Segment 15)

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Throughout the school year, students should receive ample practice in literal translation, and teachers should assess their work with the same precision required on the AP exam.
- Teachers should develop strategies for helping their students commit to memory the less familiar and/or more challenging vocabulary words on the AP syllabus (e.g., *etsi*, *deiectus*, *celeritas*).
- Teachers should also devote time to reviewing the major elements of Caesar’s prose style and the most advanced constructions that appear frequently in Caesar. Students should practice translating in context ablatives absolute, indirect questions, and other subjunctive clauses.
- Students should learn to mark the words in the passage that are glossed so that they can use those glosses to their full advantage during the exam.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- Use and apply the Scoring Guidelines throughout the AP year and in years leading up to the AP experience so students are familiar with how their response will be scored.
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Question #3**Task:** Essay**Max. Points:** 5**Mean Score:** 2.69***What were responses expected to demonstrate in their response to this question?***

The question assessed the student's ability to comprehend, analyze, and contextualize two thematically related passages from Vergil's *Aeneid*.

- Responses to Q3 were expected to demonstrate clear and coherent arguments about Latin texts and Roman culture; overall comprehension of Latin readings outlined in the course syllabus; and analysis of the effects of language usage and stylistic features in Latin texts (Curriculum Framework, pp. 14-15, pp. 22-25, and pp. 56-57).

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- Responses to Q3 demonstrated that the students were familiar with the required readings for this section of the syllabus (*Aeneid*, Books 2 and 6).
- Responses to Q3 demonstrated that students were generally able to apply their knowledge of the course readings and their overall translation skills to develop well-articulated arguments about these Latin passages.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students often wrote about the characters of Dido and Helen in general and failed to discuss/reference the specific Latin passages on the exam. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students demonstrated excellent recall of the specific context of each passage and Aeneas' subsequent reaction to meeting Helen (Passage A) and Dido (Passage B).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students often dealt with single words or short phrases of Latin rather than with entire clauses or sense units. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students cited enough complete Latin sentences or sense units to show substantial knowledge of BOTH passages.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students forced a comparison between the passages when the prompt did not call for it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students clearly presented Aeneas' reactions to BOTH characters and focused on the unique responses Aeneas had to these women.

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Teachers should encourage students to read and translate the Latin in both passages before they outline their essay. By doing so, they can tie their arguments to specific citations in the Latin passages. Citing only individual words is rarely the basis for meaningful analysis, and students should be reminded that they need to grapple with significant sections of the Latin, and the nuances therein, to attain the higher scores on this question.
- Although reference to stylistic devices and word order can enhance a particular argument, students should avoid basing their entire analysis on them. Instead, they should focus on what is happening in the passages and the specific Latin citations that help explain Aeneas' reactions to his encounters with Helen and Dido.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- Use and apply the Scoring Guidelines throughout the AP year and in years leading up to the AP experience so students are familiar with how their response will be scored.
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- Refer to the exam information page for additional essay tasks from previous years.
<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-latin/exam?course=ap-latin>
- Review the online module on preparing Latin students titled *Reading and Comprehending Latin Texts: Developing Students' Literacy Skills*. <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/resources/ap-world-language-culture-interactive-online-modules?course=ap-latin>

Question #4

Task: Short Answer: Vergil

Max. Points: 8

Mean Score: 4.56

What were responses expected to demonstrate in their response to this question?

The question assessed the student's ability to explain various semantic, grammatical, stylistic, and cultural features of a passage from Vergil's *Aeneid*.

- Responses to Q4 were expected to demonstrate overall comprehension of passages on the course syllabus, knowledge of Latin vocabulary in context, recognition of specific grammatical constructions, recognition of specific references to Roman culture, and accurate scansion of dactylic hexameter (Curriculum Framework, pp. 8-9, pp. 16-19, and p. 58).

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- Responses to Q4 demonstrated that the students were familiar with the required readings for this section of the syllabus (*Aeneid*, Book 6).
- Responses to Q4 demonstrated that students were generally able to recognize advanced Latin constructions, Latin vocabulary in context, and references to Roman culture.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subquestion 1: some students had difficulty identifying the speaker of the passages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anchises• father of Aeneas
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subquestion 3: some students were unfamiliar with the term "mood"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• pluperfect subjunctive
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subquestion 6: many students were unfamiliar with the concept of scansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dactyl, spondee, spondee, dactyl, dactyl, spondee/long-anceps

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Throughout the academic year, students should be given ample practice in this type of question and the types of skills it assesses. Teachers should ask their students reading comprehension questions after they translate a particular passage from the syllabus. They should also have their students identify the major grammatical constructions elucidated in that same passage.
- In addition, teachers should make sure that they familiarize their students with the principles of scanning dactylic hexameter and that frequent assessment of this skill is woven into their syllabi.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- Use and apply the Scoring Guidelines throughout the AP year and in years leading up to the AP experience so students are familiar with how their response will be scored.
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Question #5**Task:** Short Answer: Caesar**Max. Points:** 7**Mean Score:** 3.86***What were responses expected to demonstrate in their response to this question?***

The question assessed the student's ability to explain various semantic, grammatical, stylistic, and cultural features of a passage from Caesar's *Bellum Gallicum*.

- Responses to Q5 were expected to demonstrate overall comprehension of passages on the course syllabus, knowledge of Latin vocabulary in context, recognition of specific grammatical constructions, and recognition of specific references to Roman culture (Curriculum Framework, pp. 8-9, pp. 16-19, and p. 59).

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- Responses to Q5 demonstrated that the students were familiar with the required readings for this section of the syllabus (*Bellum Gallicum*, Book 1).
- Responses to Q4 demonstrated that students were generally able to recognize advanced Latin constructions, Latin vocabulary in context, and references to Roman culture.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subquestion 2: some students had difficulty recognizing the cultural practice to which <i>sub iugum missum</i> refers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • military defeat or surrender
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subquestion 3a: students had difficulty translating <i>facultate</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (with) <u>the opportunity</u> having been given • since <u>the opportunity</u> had been given
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subquestion 6: students failed to remember where Caesar sent the Helvetians later in Book 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caesar sent them back home.

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Throughout the academic year, students should be given ample practice in this type of question and the types of skills it assesses. Teachers should ask their students reading comprehension questions after they translate a particular passage from the syllabus. They should also have their students identify the major grammatical constructions elucidated in that same passage.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- Use and apply the Scoring Guidelines throughout the AP year and in years leading up to the AP experience so students are familiar with how their response will be scored.
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