



Student Performance Q&A: 2001 AP[®] Latin: Vergil Section II

The following comments are provided by the Chief Faculty Consultant regarding the 2001 free-response questions for AP Latin: Vergil. *They are intended to assist AP workshop consultants as they develop training sessions to help teachers better prepare their students for the AP Exams.* They give an overview of each question and its performance, 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 performance in these areas are also included. Consultants are encouraged to use their expertise to create strategies for teachers to improve student performance in specific areas.

V1

What was intended by the question?

Students were asked to translate literally Book X, lines 451-456, a passage in which Pallas and Turnus prepare to fight and Turnus is compared to a lion attacking a bull.

How well did students perform?

Student performance was mediocre. While most were able to garner some credit, top scores were exceedingly rare, while zeroes and ones were abundant. Threes and fours were the most common scores.

What were the common errors or omissions?

Fatus as 'Fate'; *aequor* as 'sea' (even though it was glossed!); the tense and meaning of *desiluit* proved very difficult for students, which resulted in a variety of inaccurate translations; *comminus* was difficult; the tense of *vidit* was often given as present; the Indirect Statement after *vidit* was handled poorly; students often used parallel construction for *stare* and *meditantem*; however, a surprising number were able to translate *Turni venientis* correctly – often the only point awarded.

Are there common threads of errors?

Vocabulary; tenses of verbs; Indirect Statement; accurate treatment of participles.

What are the general content areas/skill that need improvement?

See above. Many more students should be able to handle an Indirect Statement successfully. One possible accounting for the poor performance could be that some students may not have actually completed the study of the later books.

V2

What was intended by the question?

The students were asked to translate a seven-line passage (2.237-243) as literally as possible.

How well did students perform?

The readers used the full range of scores, although there were more papers in the 0-1 range than were expected.

What were the common errors or omissions?

The most common errors were associating *fatalis* with *armis* rather than *machina*, translating *circum* as a verb form, not linking *ipso* with *limine*, and not recognizing *divum* and *Dardanidum* as genitive plurals. Vocabulary errors included not knowing the meanings of *minans*, *funem*, and *incluta*. *Inlabitur* was often treated as a passive or future verb. *Feta* was rendered as “cheesy” or “fetal” and other incorrect interpretations.

Are there common threads of errors?

The common threads of errors were in careless analysis of the grammatical structure of the sentences.

What are the general content areas/skill that need improvement?

Skills that need improvement are recognition of adjective-noun agreement and emphasis on writing a **literal**, not a **literary** translation.

V3

What was intended by the question?

The question required students to write a well-developed essay contrasting Juno’s positions about the Trojan mission as expressed in her soliloquy in *Aeneid* 1 and as expressed in her reply to Jupiter in *Aeneid* 12.

How well did students perform?

Although the full range of scores emerged, most essays clustered into the 3-4 range, primarily because of difficulties in using the Latin accurately, even in paraphrase. Far too many students received very low scores (0-2 range) because they seemed unaware of the basic structure of the *Aeneid*. Given the prompt in the question and the control of minimal vocabulary, most students should have been able to earn a score of 3. Most demonstrated familiarity with both passages, or at least one of them, and earned some credit by writing about Juno’s hostility to the Trojan mission. Many students handled the second passage better because they knew that, in Book 12, Juno was giving up. Even some of the students without a firm command of the Latin wrote perceptively of Juno’s motives behind her compromise position in the second passage, pointing out how she subtly succeeded in eventually eradicating Trojan culture. But some, focusing upon *bella* in Juno’s soliloquy and *pacem* in her reply to Jupiter, concluded that Juno changed from hostile aggressor to conciliatory peacemaker. Others spent far too much of their energy commenting, with little relevance, on figures of speech in one or both of the passages.

What were the common errors or omissions?

Some students did not deal with the Latin *throughout* each passage or omitted any meaningful discussion of one of the two passages. Many wrote long narratives, digressing about the background of Juno's hostility and including everything they knew about Carthage, the golden apple, the judgment of Paris, Ganymede, and Dido.

Many students failed to recognize the exact context of the first passage. Evidently misled by Juno's description of Minerva's vengeance upon Ajax and the Argive ships or because of the proper name *Oilei*, these students thought that here Juno was entreating Aeolus. Some of them, recognizing the feminine intensive *ipsa*, believed that Juno was herself hurling Jupiter's thunderbolt and destroying ships. Some students, mistaking the tense of the verb in *bella gero*, wrote essays about Juno's deadly plans to create havoc among the Trojan refugees in the future. The negative phrasing, *ne ... neu*, in the second passage resulted, in many essays, in confusion about whose culture would vanish. In addition, many did not make use of line 1 of the second passage (Juno's declaration that she yields and leaves the fighting), and almost all skipped lines 2-3 (Juno's preface to her requests in the awareness that fate does not control them).

Are there common threads of errors?

Many students based their essays on a few scattered words or phrases in one or both of the passages rather than upon the Latin *throughout* each. This prevented them from earning scores in the highest (5-6) range. It also drew them astray in numerous directions. For example, *Iovis* in the first passage led some to conclude that Jupiter himself was hurling the thunderbolt, and *mutare* in the second passage prompted discussions about a change in Juno's attitude toward the Trojan people. Whether they cited appropriate Latin or not, many students wrote lengthy accounts of the background of the Trojan War with little relevance to the question of Juno's attitude to the Trojan mission in the passages cited.

What are the general content areas/skills that need improvement?

Students must improve vocabulary mastery and translating skills instead of relying simply upon proper names or other isolated Latin words or phrases. They must develop the ability to use appropriate citations from *all* parts of the Latin passages to support their analyses or interpretations. Students should avoid the use of lengthy introductions and conclusions as well as the inclusion of information extraneous to the question. In reviewing, students should also devote attention to the narrative structure of the poem. In addition, they should avoid discussions about figures of speech or sound patterns unless the question specifies that these may be considered in the answer or unless the figures *significantly* underline the points they are making. Finally, in general, students should make better use of the reading period by working carefully through the Latin throughout the passages and then outlining their responses before attempting to write their essays.

V4

What was intended by the question?

Students were asked to discuss more than one effect of Dido's suicide on Anna, and use evidence drawn from the Latin throughout the passage.

How well did students perform?

For a straightforward question, student responses were generally in the 3-4-5 range. The full range of scores was used, but there seemed to be fewer 6s than expected.

What were the common errors or omissions?

The source of the majority of errors was lack of control of the Latin, particularly the confusion of similar vocabulary items (*querar/quaero, sprevisti/speravisti, ferro/fero, rogas/rogas*) and of verb endings (pluperfect subjunctives; *extinxit*). Other errors stem from an overemphasis on rhetorical effects or on recapitulating the events of Book 4. Students also needed to cite Latin from the beginning to the end of the passage, and to show plural effects.

Are there common threads of errors?

Students generalized about the predictable effects of suicide rather than reading the text. They also failed to cite the Latin properly to support their points.

What are the general content areas/skills that need improvement?

Include stronger basic Latin skills. Students need to follow directions more carefully, both as to what the question asks and how to cite Latin properly.

V5

What was intended by the question?

In this question students were asked to comment on the ways in which the future is revealed to Aeneas. They were asked to “concentrate” on the parts read in English and to discuss two significant examples of how, in other ways than by means of ghosts, Aeneas is helped to understand his mission.

How well did students perform?

Candidates performed mostly in the mid-range. There were few 6s but also very few blank or two- or three-line responses.

What were the common errors or omissions?

Citing parts of the epic that were read in Latin, especially Mercury in book IV and Venus’ appearance at Carthage. Numerous students commented specifically on ghosts.

Are there common threads of errors?

Students confused names of places and characters in ways that could not be untangled by the context of their discussion. Many responses focused on plot summary rather than analysis, or failed to relate the parts of the plot that were recounted to Aeneas’ emergent understanding of his mission.

What are the general content areas/skill that need improvement?

Candidates should have a more precise knowledge of the work as a whole and should be able to make cogent arguments binding specific incidents to their places within the structure of the epic. Students should be given practice writing this type of essay as part of their preparation for the AP Exam.