

WJEC Level 1 Certificate  
in  
Latin Language and Roman Civilisation

Prescribed source material  
for  
Topic 4: Entertainment and Leisure Summer  
2024, Summer 2025, Summer 2026

This is the official prescribed source material booklet for the  
WJEC Level 1 Certificate in Latin Language and Roman Civilisation

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## Introduction

This booklet is designed to support teaching and learning for Unit 9512 (Roman Civilisation Topics) of the WJEC Level 1 Certificate in Latin Language and Roman Civilisation.

Two topics are prescribed in each examination and candidates are required to answer the questions on one topic. The topic Entertainment and Leisure is set for examination in the summers of 2024, 2025 and 2026.

In the examination, each topic contains two sections. Section A contains several short questions based on one or more sources (stimulus pictures, inscriptions or short passages from Roman authors in translation). Section B will contain four questions, of which candidates should answer two, requiring empathetic responses.

This booklet contains all the sources which may be used in Section A of the Level 1 examination for the topic Entertainment and Leisure. Following each source is a short list of bullet points. These bullet points fulfil two functions:

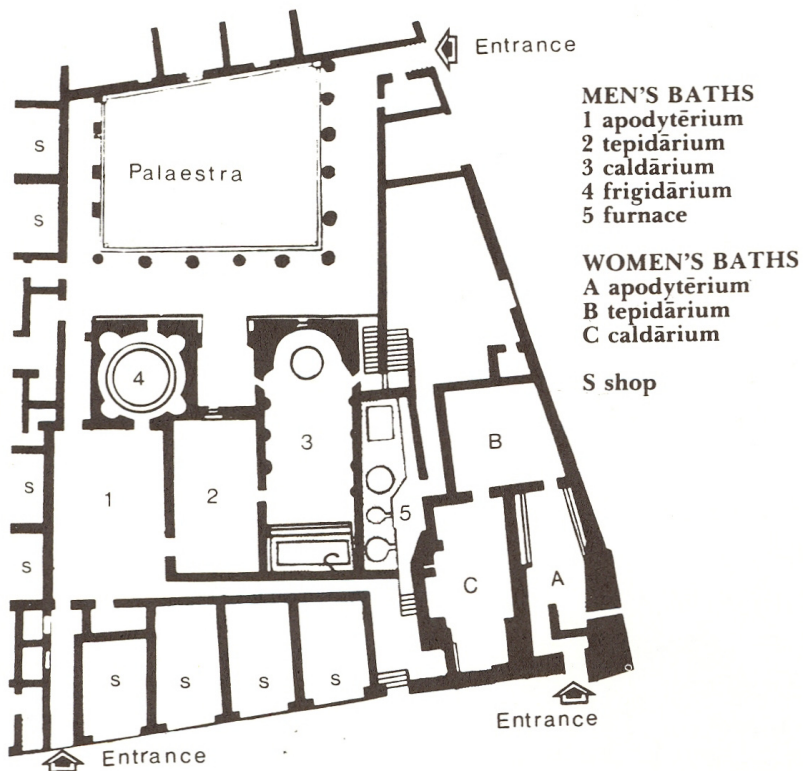
- 1) They give further information about the source which candidates are expected to know;
- 2) They give a flavour of the level of deduction that a candidate may be expected to make from the source.

In each case, candidates need not restrict themselves to the information about, or deductions from, the source given in this booklet. All valid responses will be rewarded.

Should you have any queries regarding the use or status of this booklet, please contact the Subject Officer for Latin at WJEC via [latin@wjec.co.uk](mailto:latin@wjec.co.uk).

## The baths

### Source 1: Plan of the Forum Baths, Pompeii



### About this source:

- Bathers would go first into the **palaestra** (exercise area).
- Then they would leave their clothes in the **apodyterium** (changing room).
- Next they would move to the **tepidarium** (warm room) and sit talking on benches to prepare for the **caldarium** (hot room).
- Finally they could take a cold plunge in the **frigidarium** (cold room).



## Source 2: The palaestra, Stabian Baths, Pompeii



### About this source:

- The bathers entered this part of the baths first to exercise.
- It is a large open, grassy area, surrounded by a colonnade.
- Here they would greet friends and play ball games.
- Other popular sports included fencing with wooden swords, boxing and wrestling.

**Source 3: The hot tub in the caldarium, Forum Baths, Herculaneum**



**About this source:**

- The **caldarium** was the hottest room in the baths.
- At one end there was often a hot bath in which bathers could relax.
- The ceiling has grooves to carry away the condensation caused by the heat.
- Here the bathers could be massaged or scraped clean by a slave.

#### Source 4: Strigils and oil bottles



#### About this source:

- These items were used for cleaning bathers in the hot room (**caldarium**).
- First a slave worked the oil into the skin.
- Then he removed the oil and dirt with a strigil, a blunt metal scraper.
- Finally the bathers rinsed down in cold water.

### Source 5: Seneca describes the atmosphere in the baths

I'm surrounded by every sort of racket. I'm living at the moment above a public baths. Just imagine all the different noises! They are enough to make me hate my own ears! There are some athletic gentlemen down below doing their exercises – whirling their arms around with lead weights in their fists. I can hear them grunting and groaning and all sorts of whistles and squeaks as they breathe in and out. I can hear somebody enjoying a cheap rub down and the smack of the masseur's hand on his shoulders. If his hand comes down flat it makes one sound; if it comes down hollowed, it makes another. Add to this the noise of a brawler or thief being arrested down below, the racket made by the man who likes to sing in the bath or the sound of those who hurl themselves into the water with a tremendous splash. Next I can hear the screech of the hair-plucker, who advertises himself by shouting. Finally, just imagine the cries of the cake-seller, the sausage-man, and the other food-sellers as they advertise their goods round the bath, all adding to the din.

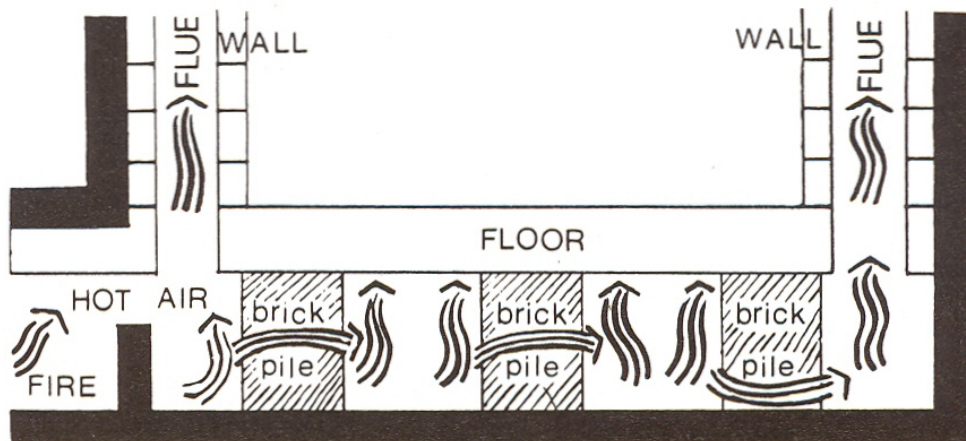
Seneca, *Letters*

#### About this source:

- A visit to the baths was a chance to socialise as well as to get clean.
- Romans met their friends at the baths during the afternoon to chat and do business.
- Bathers could take exercise and buy snacks.
- Other facilities on offer included massage and hair-plucking.



## Source 6: The hypocaust in the Stabian Baths



### About this source:

- A wood-burning furnace, stoked by enslaved people was placed below floor level.
- Air from the furnace circulated between the brick pillars, which supported the floor.
- The hot air heated the floor and the tank of water for bathing above it.
- Flues in the walls enabled heat to pass up through them as well.

## The theatre

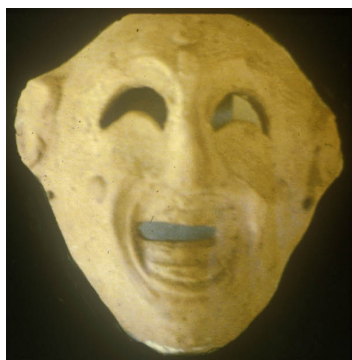
### Source 7: The Outdoor Theatre, Pompeii



#### About this source:

- The semi-circular shape meant that everyone could see the stage.
- Seats were made of stone so spectators often brought cushions.
- The best seats at the front were reserved for town councillors and other important guests.
- To keep spectators cool a large awning was suspended across most of the theatre.

### Source 8: A mask from the theatre



#### About this source:

- Masks were made of linen, covered in plaster and then painted.
- Characters were instantly recognised by their masks.
- Masks helped to magnify the sound of the voice.
- Female characters, always played by male actors, could be identified by their masks.



### Source 9: A pantomime actor with his mask



#### About this source:

- Pantomime was a mixture of opera and ballet performed by one masked actor, who mimed all the parts.
- He was accompanied by an orchestra and a chorus which sang the lyrics.
- Plots were usually serious and taken from Greek mythology.
- Pantomime actors needed skill and stamina. They had a large following of fans.



### Source 10: Pliny writes about Quadratilla's troupe of actors

At the most recent sacerdotal games, after her pantomime actors had been entered in the opening event, when Quadratus and I were leaving the theatre together, he said to me: "Do you know that today I have seen my grandmother's freedmen dancing for the first time?"

Pliny, *Letters*, VII.24

#### About this source:

- Plays were performed at religious festivals such as the sacerdotal games. This would have been a public holiday.
- Some wealthy people like Quadratus' grandmother had their own private theatres.
- Actors were generally freedmen.
- Dancing was an important part of the pantomime actor's performance.

**Source 11: An actor playing the part of an enslaved person is sitting on an altar**



**About this source:**

- The enslaved person is seeking sanctuary on the altar.
- The actor may be taking part in a comedy, a vulgar farce or a short one act play about Italian country life.
- These short plays used a few familiar characters who were recognised by their strange masks.
- Two such characters were Manducus, a greedy clown, and Pappus, an old fool.



**Source 12: A relief showing a scene from a comedy**



**About this source:**

- Comedies like the one shown here had familiar characters, complicated plots and witty dialogue.
- On the left of the scene a father sees his son coming home drunk from a party but is prevented by an enslaved person from intervening.
- On the right another enslaved person is propping up the drunken son.
- In the centre is a musician playing the double pipes.

## The amphitheatre

### Source 13: The amphitheatre at Pompeii



#### About this source:

- This oval shaped building had no roof.
- Rising tiers of stone seats surrounded the arena.
- The entrances at opposite ends were for the gladiators to enter, in pairs. On the long side was a special box for the sponsor of the show.
- The building held about 20,000 people.



**Source 14: The interior of the Colosseum, Rome**



**About this source:**

- The sandy floor of the arena, which soaked up the blood of the victims, has disappeared.
- There was a wall around the arena for the safety of the spectators.
- In the centre are the remains of underground passages and the cages where the animals were kept.
- The animals passed along the narrow passages and were brought up into the arena by lifts.

### Source 15: A retiarius



#### About this source:

- The **retiarius** was armed with a trident and a net.
- He wears a shoulder guard on his right shoulder.
- Gladiators fought in pairs, and the contest between the **secutor** and the **retiarius** was the most popular because of the difference in their armour.
- The **secutor** was heavily armed, but the crowd admired the nimbleness and skill of the **retiarius**.

### Source 16: A graffito recording a fight between a Thracian and a murmillio

Victor: Pugnax from Nero's school: 3 times a winner (Thracian)

Perished: Murranus from Nero's school: 3 times a winner (**murmillio**)

#### About this source:

- Gladiators were enslaved persons, condemned criminals, prisoners of war or free volunteers.
- They lived in a barracks or school under a professional trainer.
- A Thracian was armed with a curved sword or dagger and a round shield.
- A **murmillio** carried a sword and a rectangular shield. He wore a helmet with a crest shaped like a fish.

## Source 17: An equal contest between two gladiators

As Priscus and Verus each drew out the contest and for a long time the fight between them was equal, discharge for the men was often sought with loud shouts. But the emperor himself obeyed his own law (the law was that the fight continue without shields until a finger was raised). But an end was found for the even contest. The emperor sent wooden swords to both and palms of victory to both. Valour and skill got their reward. This has happened under no emperor but you, Caesar: when two fought and each of them was a winner.

Juvenal, *Satires*

### About this source:

- Sometimes the defeated gladiator was spared if he had fought well.
- He first had to raise a finger to ask for mercy.
- The wooden sword was a high honour and meant that the gladiator need never fight again.
- A palm branch was usually given to the victor. He might also receive gifts of money from his admirers.



### Source 18: A beast fight (venatio)

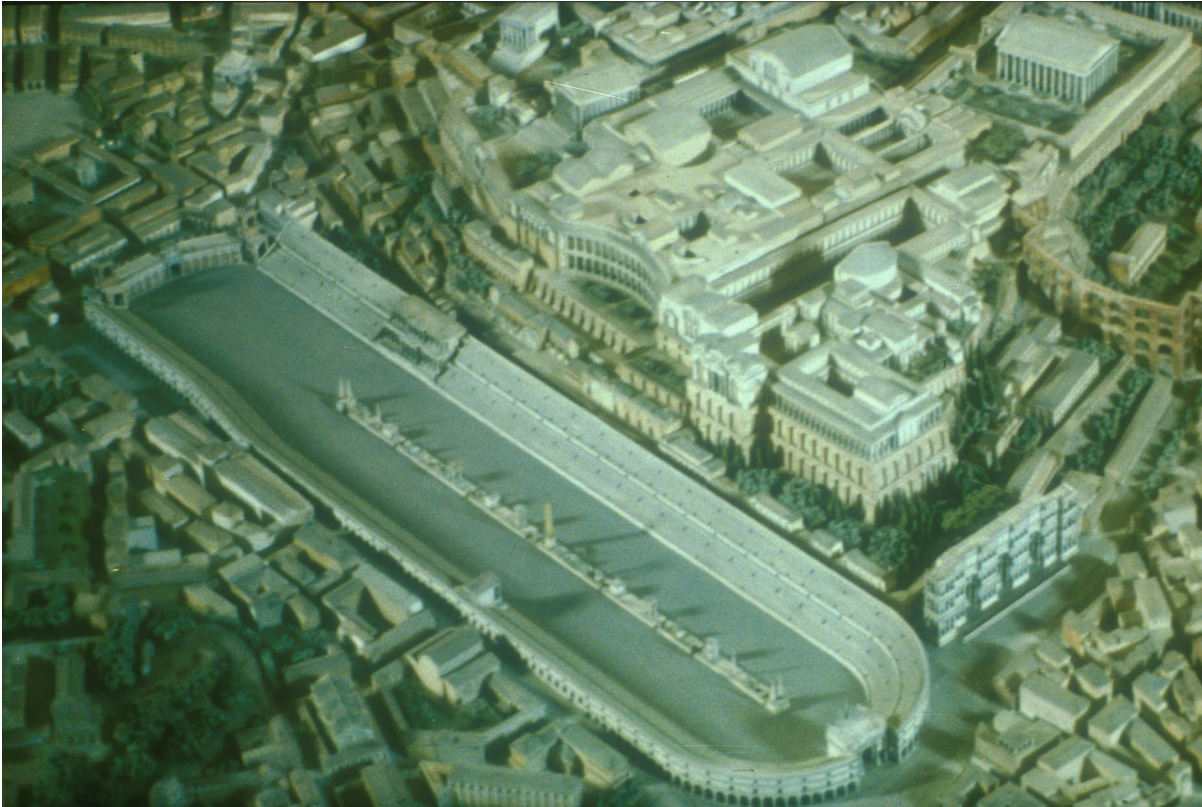


#### About this source:

- This shows a specially trained beast fighter (**bestiarius**).
- He wears light clothing so that he can move quickly.
- He fights a deer, a bull and an ostrich, instead of the more exciting lions and wild boar.
- Animals were released from cages below the arena and the fight ended when they were all dead.

## The Circus Maximus

Source 19: A model of the Circus Maximus



### About this source:

- The gates from which the chariots started the race can be seen at the back on the left.
- Down the centre of the track is a barrier or platform (**spina**) around which the chariots raced.
- The official box for the sponsor of the races is on the far side of the track.
- The Circus Maximus could hold 250,000 spectators.



## Source 20: A mosaic showing the Circus Maximus



### About this source:

- The chariots are racing around the track.
- There were 24 races in a day's programme. Each consisted of 7 laps totalling about 5 miles and lasting 15 minutes.
- Turning posts (**metae**) marked each end of the central platform. Here three are visible at the left hand end.
- Each time the chariots completed a lap, one of the 7 wooden or marble eggs, which had been hoisted above the central platform, was lowered.

### Source 21: A crash during the race



#### About this source:

- The charioteer on the left has fallen from his chariot.
- He may have taken the bend around the turning post too fast.
- While racing, a charioteer had the reins wound tightly round his body.
- He carried a knife to cut himself free in the event of a crash.

## Source 22: The excitement at the races

All Rome is at the Circus today – the din shatters one’s eardrums – I deduce the Greens have won. It’s all right for the young – they enjoy the noise, and risky bets – and sitting next to a pretty girl.

Juvenal, *Satires*, 11

### About this source:

- Chariot racing was the most popular form of public entertainment in Rome.
- Money changed hands over bets.
- There were 4 teams competing regularly – Greens, Reds, Blues and Whites. Charioteers wore tunics in the team colour.
- Individual teams consisted of one, two or three chariots, each with four horses.

### Source 23: Pliny dislikes the Circus Maximus

I have been spending all this time with my writing tablets and papers in most welcome peace. You will say: 'How could you in the city?' The races were on and I never had the slightest interest in this. There is nothing new, nothing different in them. To have seen them once is enough. I am all the more surprised that so many thousands of grown men desire so childishly to see horses racing and men standing in chariots.

If they were attracted by the speed of the horses or the skill of the men there would be good reason. Now they support and worship a bit of cloth, and if the racing colours were swapped in the middle of the race they would transfer their support and enthusiasm, and quickly desert those drivers and horses whom they recognise from afar and whose names they shout out.

Pliny, *Letters*, IX.6

#### About this source:

- The city of Rome was quiet as everyone was at the Circus. It was a public holiday.
- Pliny was a writer who took advantage of the quiet to get on with his work.
- The 'bit of cloth' is the charioteer's tunic, which was the colour of his team.
- Pliny thinks that people would support any charioteer who was wearing the colour they supported.