

ACL/NJCL NATIONAL LATIN EXAM REPORT 2008

In 2008, more than 150,000 students applied to take the thirty-first National Latin Exam. Participation in the Exam has increased each year since its inception in 1977, when approximately 6,000 students enrolled. Students from all fifty states participated this year, as did students from eleven foreign countries, including Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Italy, Mozambique, New Zealand, Poland, United Kingdom and Zimbabwe. This year for the first time, students from Brazil also took the NLE.

During the second week in March, over 135,000 students took the National Latin Exam in their own schools, and it was administered in 16 colleges and 15 elementary schools. 272 homeschools also participated. The breakdown of awards for each exam (the number correct out of forty) is shown below, above each category.

LEVEL	TOTAL	PERFECT	GOLD	SILVER	MAGNA	CUM	TOTAL AWARDS
Intro	16,923	356	4,969 ribbons, Cert.of Outst. Achievement for 34-40 2,844 Cert. of Achievement for 31-33				7,813
Latin I	51,492	604	36-40 6,311	33-35 6,556	31-32 5,134	29-30 5,858	23,859
Latin II	33,628	279	36-40 3,714	32-35 5,638	30-31 3,269	28-29 3,377	15,998
Prose III	17,298	94	35-40 2,044	32-34 2,343	30-31 1,869	28-29 1,971	8,227
Poetry III	3,108	6	30-40 500	27-29 423	25-26 346	24 188	1,457
Prose IV	2,915	19	36-40 357	33-35 439	31- 32 365	30 187	1,348
Poetry IV	7,256	25	34-40 956	31-33 966	29-30 797	27-28 857	3,576
Latin V	2,431	26	36-40 361	34-35 195	32-33 231	30-31 239	1,026
Latin VI	311	9	37-40 59	35-36 43	33-34 28	30-32 43	173
Totals	135,362	1,418	14,302	16,603	12,039	12,720	55,664

There were 1,062 perfect papers in Latin I-VI. A congratulatory letter has been sent to the principal of each school with copies for the student, the Latin teacher, and the student's permanent record. In addition, a special hand-lettered certificate was sent to each of these students.

The 5 students who have three years of perfect papers, and the 1 students who have four years of perfect papers are being sent the Carter Stubbs Drake Goad Memorial book award in addition to the special certificate.

In the Introduction to Latin Exam, which was taken by 16,923 students, 7,813 students won awards. As the average number correct on this Exam was 30, students who scored 31-33 correct out of forty received Certificates of Achievement, and scores of 34-40 received Certificates of Outstanding Achievement and purple ribbons. The 356 students who answered all 40 questions correctly were sent a special congratulatory letter from the NLE Committee.

There were 1,204 seniors who won gold medals on the Latin III-IV Prose, III-IV Poetry, or the Latin V-VI Exam. These students are eligible for one of the twenty-one \$1000 scholarships, including one from an anonymous donor. In addition, a \$2000 scholarship will be awarded for post graduate study leading to the teaching of Latin/or Greek at the elementary, intermediate, or high school level. These Scholarship awards and those for the National Greek Exam will be announced by NLE Scholarship Chair, Ephy Howard, at the ACL Institute at the University of New Hampshire in Durham, NH, in June. The National Latin Exam Scholarship Committee, formed in 1983, consists of Ephy Howard, Chair, and members Conrad Barrett, Judith de Luce, Gaylan DuBose, Edith Foster, Sara T. Gibson, and Sue Gillen. Linda S. Montross serves as the Scholarship Liaison. The scholarship recipients from 2007, 2006, and 2005, are eligible for an additional \$1000 if they continue their study of Latin and/or Greek. In 2007, the National Latin Exam awarded \$47,500 in scholarships.

The Maureen O'Donnell *Oxford Classical Dictionary* Award, given to students who win four gold medals, is being sent to 537 students this year in recognition of their outstanding achievement. The 77 students who have won five gold medals will be sent special book awards.

In September, the National Latin Exam office sent the application for the 2008 National Latin Exam to teachers who participated in the 2007 NLE. The postmark deadline for the 2009 NLE application is January 16, 2009. The price for the 2009 exams is \$4.00 per exam, \$6.00 foreign, \$10.00 minimum order, plus a \$10 charge for postage and handling.

Upon receipt of the application and payment, a postcard was sent from the NLE office to the teacher, verifying the number of applicants and informing the teacher that the exams and answer sheets would be mailed to the Exam administrator or principal by February 20, 2008, by the United Parcel Service.

Clement Testing Service mailed out the exams, answer sheets and instructions and scored the returned answer sheets. The company mailed out the results, awards, exam answers, and a congratulatory letter to the teacher by April 20, 2008. A copy of the congratulatory letter for the principal was included in this package. The national percent correct for each question is included as well as the percent correct on each question for the individual school. Both percentages are being provided in order to help teachers and students assess strengths and weaknesses.

The 2008 PERFECT PAPER and GOLD MEDAL winners will be published in *Torch U.S.*, the publication of the National Junior Classical League.

The states with the greatest number of students taking the 2008 Exams:

Massachusetts	12,214
New York	10,913
Virginia	10,729
Pennsylvania	9,090
Texas	8,803
New Jersey	8,753
Ohio	7,378
California	7,347
Connecticut	6,065
Georgia	5,526

The states with the greatest % increase in number of students taking the 2008 Exams:

New Mexico	182%
South Dakota	36%
Nevada	32%
Alaska	13%
Missouri	13%
North Dakota	12%
West Virginia	12%
Vermont	9%
Arizona	8%
Michigan	8%

The members of the NLE Advisory Committee: David Volk, Chair (ND), Michael Bales (Canada), Nancy Czupik (OH), Debra Heaton (MA), Liane Houghtalin (VA), Joan Jahnige (KY), Susan McDonald (FL), Stephen Lee Pearce (LA), Tom Sienkewicz (IL), James Updegraff (CA), and Sandra Woodward (UT), are meeting at the 2008 ACL Institute to review and discuss the 2008 exam. The members of this Committee represent the various geographic areas of the country, middle and high schools, colleges, and public and private schools.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals has voted to place the National Latin Exam on the Advisory List of National Contests and Activities for 2008-2009. This list will be distributed to all secondary schools in the United States in September of 2008.

The 2008 exam is similar in format to the 2007 exam. For the Introduction to Latin, Latin I, II, III/IV Prose, and III/IV Poetry exams, there are 40 multiple-choice questions on grammar, comprehension, mythology, derivatives, literature, Roman life, and history. The Latin V-VI exam contains two Latin passages as the basis for 40 multiple-choice questions on grammar, comprehension, historical background, classical literature, and literary devices. The time limit for the exams is 45 minutes.

The Writing Committee, consisting of: Jane H. Hall, Co-Chair; Mark Keith, Co-Chair; Joe Davenport; Sally Davis; Elizabeth Heimbach; Ian Hochberg; Betty Merrill, Newsletter; Linda Montross; Christine Sleeper, Liaison; and David Winn began writing the exams in the spring of 2007. By the middle of August all began the difficult task of reviewing each exam with respect to the level of difficulty, accuracy, and content. After several revisions, the exams were sent to consultants Michael Bales, Sheila Dickison, John Donohue, Kathy Elifrits, Kevin Gushman, Ruth Haukeland, Edith Kovach, David Perry, and Wallace Ragan, for their in-depth critiques. Acting upon their suggestions, the Committee made further revisions. After a final reading and revision, 173,000 copies of the exams were printed.

The 2008 exam required eleven working sessions averaging two hours each to complete the work associated with the exams. In addition to the general working sessions, each Committee member spent countless hours taking care of specific tasks such as writing exam questions, correspondence, word processing, record keeping, publicity, ordering supplies, writing newsletter articles, etc. The NLE Office Manager Janine Kutty, Administrative Assistant Ellen Smith, Data Entry Specialist Rose McCreary, and student aide Liz Scott tended to numerous NLE matters such as registering schools for the exam, processing exam fees, answering daily phone calls and e-mails, handling bookkeeping, mailing newsletters, postcards, Awards Letters, and Perfect Paper Certificates.

The tip sheet which was sent out with the application continues to have a very positive effect. Many more applications came in December, and there were not as many frantic calls about needing more exams and/or answer sheets.

Copies of the four previous exams and the National Latin Exam Syllabus are available for purchase from the American Classical League office in Oxford, Ohio for \$9.00, or online at the NLE Web Site www.nle.org

The NLE again asked teachers to indicate on the 2008 application if their schools were on semester block schedule. We published the findings last year in the Fall Newsletter and hope to expand those results this year. The findings are in the Spring Newsletter.

The philosophy of the National Latin Exam is predicated on providing every Latin student the opportunity to experience a sense of personal accomplishment and success in his study of the Latin language and culture. This opportunity exists for each individual student since, in the National Latin Exam, he is not competing with his fellow student on a comparative basis, but is evaluated solely on his own performance on the exam. The basic purposes of the NLE are to promote the study of Latin and to encourage the individual student.

The NLE-sponsored Latin news program, entitled **FORUM ROMANUM**, twenty-four ten-minute programs presented entirely in Latin by qualified Latin language speakers, continues to receive enthusiastic reviews from Latin teachers across the nation. **FORUM ROMANUM** is available on DVD and Video which are available from the American Classical League Teaching Materials & Resource Center. John Donohue, author of the series, has written an activity book to accompany **FORUM ROMANUM** which is also available from the TMRC in Oxford, OH.

The NLE web site, which is maintained by Cindy Caltagirone, contains the 2008 exams, the syllabus, and the newsletters. Members of the various committees connected with the NLE and **FORUM ROMANUM** scripts are posted on the site. The address for the web site is www.nle.org. The National Latin Exam is located at the University of Mary Washington, 1301 College Ave, Fredericksburg, VA 22401; Tel 1-888-378-7721; email: nle@umw.edu The Committee wishes to extend a special thank-you to all the hardworking Latin teachers and their students who have helped to make the National Latin Exam a success.