

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

H408

For first teaching in 2017

H408/33 Summer 2023 series

Contents

Introduction	3
Paper 33 series overview	4
Section A overview	5
Question 1	5
Question 2	5
Question 3	5
Question 4	6
Question 5	7
Question 6	7
Question 7*	8
Section B overview	9
Question 8*	9
Question 9*	10

Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

Would you prefer a Word version?

Did you know that you can save this PDF as a Word file using Acrobat Professional?

Simply click on **File > Export to** and select **Microsoft Word**

(If you have opened this PDF in your browser you will need to save it first. Simply right click anywhere on the page and select **Save as . . .** to save the PDF. Then open the PDF in Acrobat Professional.)

If you do not have access to Acrobat Professional there are a number of **free** applications available that will also convert PDF to Word (search for PDF to Word converter).

Paper 33 series overview

H408/33, Politics of the Late Republic, is one of four available components in OCR's A Level Classical Civilisation Component Group 3 Beliefs and Ideas.

The examination aims to assess candidates' knowledge, understanding of, and engagement with classical literature and ideas about principle and pragmatism in the politics of Rome in the 1st century BCE.

To do well in the extended responses, candidates are required to deploy detailed knowledge in the service of insightful discussion of the issues raised by the questions.

Candidates who did well in this paper were those who were able to make mature judgements, based on sound factual knowledge, about the political careers of Cicero, Cato, Pompey, Caesar and others, and the parts they played in the events of the 1st century BCE.

Generally, candidates were well prepared to suggest reasons why Caesar might be said to have brought his assassination on himself, to compare and contrast the ideas and actions of Cicero and Cato, and to discuss the relationship between individuals and factions at Rome in the first century BCE.

It should be noted that while this examination is not designed to test candidates' mere recall of events and their dates, nevertheless, when discussing matters such as individuals' political relationships, causes and consequences are rarely sensibly discussed without due observance of correct chronology.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • displayed detailed and accurate knowledge of events, and their causes and consequences, at Rome in the 1st century BCE • displayed detailed and accurate knowledge of the prescribed literary sources • responded to all aspects of each question attempted • selected appropriate material as evidence in support of reasoned argument • made appropriate use of secondary scholarship • drew reasoned and convincing conclusions in response to questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • displayed limited knowledge of events, and their causes and consequences, at Rome in the 1st century BCE • displayed limited knowledge of the prescribed literary sources • omitted or misunderstood some aspects of some questions • made little reference to or use of secondary scholarship • presented a narrative account of events with little engagement or analysis in response to questions requiring discussion OR • presented a generally discursive response with little basis in accurate factual knowledge or evidence on which they based their ideas and conclusions.

Section A overview

Section A consisted of:

- 5 marks for fact and knowledge-based questions, concerning Cicero's opening remarks to the jury in his prosecution of Verres, and the career of Julius Caesar.
- Two short extended writing questions, worth 10 marks each, in response to a passage from Cicero's *'in Verrem'*, and a stimulus sentence about Caesar's unconstitutional dictatorship.
- A longer discussion (20 mark) of actions and ideas of Roman politicians, in this case, Cicero and Cato.

Question 1

Source A

Cicero's speech against Verres in 70 BC, *In Verrem* 1.47–48

1 Who is Cicero referring to when he says 'you' in line 2 in **Source A**? [1]

The majority of candidates knew that Cicero was decidedly not addressing Verres here, but rather the senatorial class. More specifically, the jury of the extortion court consisting of as it did exclusively of members of the senate.

Question 2

2 State **two** of the 'terrible vices' (line 6) for which Verres is being prosecuted. [2]

The majority of candidates scored full marks.

Although strictly speaking Verres is on trial only for extortion, Cicero does go to some lengths in his speech to impugn the character of the accused by suggesting that he is guilty of much more besides. In this sense, Cicero 'prosecutes' Verres for bribery, theft of artworks, the failure properly to defend his province, etc.

Question 3

3 Explain how convincing Cicero is in presenting the importance of this trial in **Source A**. [10]

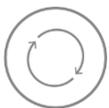
Question 3 was generally well done. Centres and candidates were aware that marks were given according to both AO1 and AO2 aspects of responses. Responses which merely quoted from the passage, without proper explanation of how Cicero's words convinced his audience of the importance of the trial, were not likely to be rewarded beyond Level 3. Nor was it enough merely to quote a phrase from the text, followed by the magic words, 'this shows the importance of the trial'. It should also be noted that the question did not ask how Cicero made clear Verres' guilt.

Exemplar 1

Cicero is very convincing in presenting the importance of the trial because he suggests that this is the trial to rectify the jury's lost reputation. Cicero uses hyperbole when saying, 'it will be established whether very guilty or very rich men are able to be condemned' when senators are acting as judges'. Here, he suggests that the law courts are a cesspit of corruption and bribery and thus, by finding Verres guilty, they can restore their lost reputation. Moreover, he

Exemplar 1 demonstrates the correct level of AO1/AO2 response required. This response went on to make several more equally well-argued points, firmly based in knowledge and understanding of the text.

Assessment for learning



Many candidates assumed that this was yet another exercise in identifying Cicero's rhetorical techniques and showing how convincingly he secures a conviction. Responses that focused on how Cicero demonstrates Verres' guilt were not given marks. The question concerned Cicero's elevation of the trial beyond the matter of Verres himself, as was clear to candidates who took time and care to read the question.

Question 4

In 48 BC Julius Caesar proclaimed himself dictator with no fixed term of office, ignoring the political constitution of the time.

4 Name the individual who Caesar defeated in the civil war of 48 BC.

[1]

The vast majority of candidates scored full marks.

Question 5

5 State **one** official religious office which Caesar had previously held.

[1]

Caesar held many and various offices, most of which made an appearance in response to this question. Several, however, were secular and impermissible here.

Question 6

6 Explain how Caesar's actions after the civil war may have resulted in his assassination.

[10]

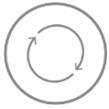
The second of the 10 mark extended responses is always more challenging than the first. Candidates must generate for themselves the AO1 knowledge and understanding of, in this case, Caesar's actions after the Civil War, on which to base their AO2 arguments and analysis. In this case, candidates must both recall that Caesar became 'dictator for life' and explain why this was likely to have provoked his assassination.

Exemplar 2

Throughout this time Caesar minted coins with his face on them, a rather large measure of political propaganda and in 44bc coinciding with his proclaimed Dictator perpetuo 'meaning Dictator Forever' had started to circulate coinage with this title. Naturally Caesar's power seemed to grow beyond a constitutional measure that he trampled on all constitutional sensibilities resulting in fear and paranoia of Roman people of threat about abolishment of constitution and re-establishment of Monarchy. Additionally,

Exemplar 2 demonstrates how a candidate effectively demonstrates both AO1 knowledge of Caesar's actions and AO2 analysis of how these contributed to his assassination.

Assessment for learning



Question 6 asked candidates to explain how Caesar's actions may have resulted in his assassination, not to weigh up to what extent they agreed that they did. Candidates were neither expected nor required to suggest that 'on the other hand', various other factors were more important.

Question 7*

7* 'Cicero was a man of ideas, Cato was a man of action.'

Assess to what extent you agree with this opinion.

You may use **Source A** as a starting point in your answer.

[20]

Candidates who gave the best response to this question were those who took an orderly approach, taking each of Cicero and Cato in turn, and discussing first his ideas, then his actions (or vice versa), and to what extent each character lived by one or the other. Examiners were pleased to note that candidates generally understood that writing speeches (and even letters) can surely be considered 'actions', every bit as much as sharing the hardships of one's men while serving as military tribune. Likewise, Cato's stoicism was well represented in the cohort, every bit as much as the concepts of *concordia ordinum* and *cum dignitate otium*. Higher scoring candidates also recognised that the question suggested a false dichotomy. Both Cato and Cicero were (to a greater or lesser extent) men of ideas and both were capable of effective action when required, whether on the battlefield, or in the courthouse or Curia.

Misconception



Cicero did not immediately take sides in the Civil War. He can therefore be characterised as 'indecisive'. However, he was active. His efforts to broker a peaceful solution to the conflict between Caesar and his enemies deserve to be seen as more than cowardice or dithering.

Section B overview

Section B offered optionality in the form of a choice between two topics for discussion, each worth 30 marks.

For AO2 marks in this section, the marking grid refers to 'secondary sources, scholars and/or academic works'. In the first instance, the overall quality of the response determined the level to which it was given. Thereafter the position within that level was adjusted depending on each candidate's use of modern scholarship and quality of written communication.

Examiners acknowledged in candidates' responses all references to secondary and/or modern (post-Gibbon) scholarship. They also note that not all of these necessarily support in a meaningful way the arguments being made by candidates. While it is probably true that at Rome in the 1st century BCE '*amicitia*' was a 'weapon of politics' (Syme), for AO2 credit at A Level, examiners would require more than passing allusion such as this. A minimum of two modern scholars should be referenced.

Examiners are pleased to report this year that many candidates did engage more with the ideas, rather than merely the catchphrases of Bispham, Beard, and others.

Question 8*

8* 'The period of the Late Republic was like a stage play with only two groups of actors: the *populares* and the *optimates*.'

Evaluate how far you agree with this statement.

[30]

This question was the more popular by far than Question 9. No centre can seriously approach the period without an examination of the senate and the factions that developed there, from the Gracchi to the Ides of March.

It is good to see that candidates were generally sensitive to the fact that the '*optimates*' and '*populares*' were not exactly equivalent to modern political parties. Candidates who went out of their way to explain what they understood to be the differences between the Roman and the modern systems of government sometimes wasted valuable time.

While there is an argument to be made that history is driven by tidal, economic forces rather than by the actions of individuals, and that the factions were indeed 'the only two groups of actors'. Most candidates took the equally defensible view that more important than the '*optimates*' and '*populares*' in the 'drama' that was 1st century Roman politics, individuals stood out. Cato was generally (and not wrongly) taken as a representative of the '*optimates*', Caesar of the '*populares*', although candidates who gave higher level responses understood that if Caesar 'represented' anyone, this was most often Caesar. There was much discussion of the extent to which Pompey moved between the factions and Cicero seemed to float above them. Some candidates recognised the triumvirate as a third 'group of actors'. All of which was rewarded as good AO2 analysis, while AO1 marks were readily available for all evidence presented in support of these views.

Some candidates engaged in detailed exegeses of the 'stage play' simile, drawing parallels between the Roman factions and the Greek chorus, and imagining the individuals as tragic heroes. This was not required.

Question 9*

9* 'Cicero's letters in no way reflect his true beliefs.'

Evaluate how far you agree with this statement. Include reference to Cicero's letters in your answer.

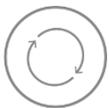
[30]

This question was less popular than Question 8, perhaps because candidates (rightly) understood that success here would require detailed knowledge of the primary source material. Some candidates did indeed display an extremely impressive knowledge of Cicero's letters, their dates, content, to whom they were addressed, etc. The majority of candidates understood that context often dictated Cicero's willingness or otherwise to express his 'true beliefs', and many saw that flattery and highly wrought rhetoric could obscure these. Some candidates (again, rightly) discussed the 'nature of the evidence', and the problem of our reliance largely on Cicero as a source for Cicero.

Candidates often fell into the trap of begging the question. For example, many candidates explained that Cicero's letter to Pompey in 62 did not reflect his true beliefs because Cicero merely wanted to establish political '*amicitia*' with Pompey. Their evidence for this? Cicero's letter to Pompey in 62.

The most successful responses to the question were those that displayed a good knowledge not only of the primary source material, but also of other evidence for Cicero's 'true beliefs', namely his actions. The most fruitful discussions were those around how far what Cicero did was consistent with what he wrote.

Secondary source material and 'scholars'



As stated in the Section B overview, that in 30-mark essays, the final AO2 mark is determined, first, by deciding the level of the response, according to its overall quality. Then, within the level, according to the candidate's use of modern scholarship. Mere 'name dropping' or tagging catchphrases will not secure the top mark in the level. Candidates are encouraged to use modern scholarship in support of their own arguments, to engage with the scholars they have read.

However, it must be acknowledged that in their efforts to 'engage', A Level candidates will seldom convincingly disagree with or 'take to task' the likes of Syme, Scullard, Beard and the rest.

Exemplar 3

and the populares were another group. Holland talks about the separation of the two factions and the connections of Caesar with the populares. This portrays two singular groups that divided Rome and its politics and that even while there are front runners they are still ~~in~~ in either one group or the other.

Alternatively, the Civil War may be seen not as Optimates versus populares but two individual men fighting for their ambition. Beard says that the Civil War was not ~~Caesar~~ ^{Caesar versus the} versus the Republic, rather it was a battle for who would become emperor - Caesar or Pompey. This further highlights that some key individuals were separate from the groups and therefore the Late Republic can't

Exemplar 3 suggests a useful technique. The candidate has identified an issue on which different scholars take different views. The candidate sets them against each other, and, in the end, takes sides, demonstrating an engagement with modern scholarship, which has been used in support of the candidate's own argument.

Supporting you

Teach Cambridge

Make sure you visit our secure website [Teach Cambridge](#) to find the full range of resources and support for the subjects you teach. This includes secure materials such as set assignments and exemplars, online and on-demand training.

Don't have access? If your school or college teaches any OCR qualifications, please contact your exams officer. You can [forward them this link](#) to help get you started.

Reviews of marking

If any of your students' results are not as expected, you may wish to consider one of our post-results services. For full information about the options available visit the [OCR website](#).

Access to Scripts

For the June 2023 series, Exams Officers will be able to download copies of your candidates' completed papers or 'scripts' for all of our General Qualifications including Entry Level, GCSE and AS/A Level. Your centre can use these scripts to decide whether to request a review of marking and to support teaching and learning.

Our free, on-demand service, Access to Scripts is available via our single sign-on service, My Cambridge. Step-by-step instructions are on our [website](#).

Keep up-to-date

We send a monthly bulletin to tell you about important updates. You can also sign up for your subject specific updates. If you haven't already, [sign up here](#).

OCR Professional Development

Attend one of our popular CPD courses to hear directly from a senior assessor or drop in to a Q&A session. Most of our courses are delivered live via an online platform, so you can attend from any location.

Please find details for all our courses for your subject on **Teach Cambridge**. You'll also find links to our online courses on NEA marking and support.

Signed up for ExamBuilder?

ExamBuilder is the question builder platform for a range of our GCSE, A Level, Cambridge Nationals and Cambridge Technicals qualifications. [Find out more](#).

ExamBuilder is **free for all OCR centres** with an Interchange account and gives you unlimited users per centre. We need an [Interchange](#) username to validate the identity of your centre's first user account for ExamBuilder.

If you do not have an Interchange account please contact your centre administrator (usually the Exams Officer) to request a username, or nominate an existing Interchange user in your department.

Active Results

Review students' exam performance with our free online results analysis tool. It is available for all GCSEs, AS and A Levels and Cambridge Nationals.

[Find out more](#).

Need to get in touch?

If you ever have any questions about OCR qualifications or services (including administration, logistics and teaching) please feel free to get in touch with our customer support centre.

Call us on
01223 553998

Alternatively, you can email us on
support@ocr.org.uk

For more information visit

 **ocr.org.uk/qualifications/resource-finder**

 **ocr.org.uk**

 **facebook.com/ocrexams**

 **twitter.com/ocrexams**

 **instagram.com/ocrexaminations**

 **linkedin.com/company/ocr**

 **youtube.com/ocrexams**

We really value your feedback

Click to send us an autogenerated email about this resource. Add comments if you want to. Let us know how we can improve this resource or what else you need. Your email address will not be used or shared for any marketing purposes.



I like this



I dislike this

Please note – web links are correct at date of publication but other websites may change over time. If you have any problems with a link you may want to navigate to that organisation's website for a direct search.



OCR is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge.

For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored. © OCR 2023 Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England. Registered office The Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8EA. Registered company number 3484466. OCR is an exempt charity.

OCR operates academic and vocational qualifications regulated by Ofqual, Qualifications Wales and CCEA as listed in their qualifications registers including A Levels, GCSEs, Cambridge Technicals and Cambridge Nationals.

OCR provides resources to help you deliver our qualifications. These resources do not represent any particular teaching method we expect you to use. We update our resources regularly and aim to make sure content is accurate but please check the OCR website so that you have the most up to date version. OCR cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions in these resources.

Though we make every effort to check our resources, there may be contradictions between published support and the specification, so it is important that you always use information in the latest specification. We indicate any specification changes within the document itself, change the version number and provide a summary of the changes. If you do notice a discrepancy between the specification and a resource, please [contact us](#).

You can copy and distribute this resource freely if you keep the OCR logo and this small print intact and you acknowledge OCR as the originator of the resource.

OCR acknowledges the use of the following content: N/A

Whether you already offer OCR qualifications, are new to OCR or are thinking about switching, you can request more information using our [Expression of Interest form](#).

Please [get in touch](#) if you want to discuss the accessibility of resources we offer to support you in delivering our qualifications.