

**AS LEVEL**

**Examiners' report**

# **CLASSICAL CIVILISATION**

**H008**

For first teaching in 2017

**H008/11 Summer 2023 series**

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## 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.

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## Paper 11 series overview

On the whole, candidates had been well prepared and were most markedly making the transition from GCSE Level to A Level standard. Timing was not an issue in this unit and there were very few rubric errors.

<b>Candidates who did well on this paper generally:</b>	<b>Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• explained why their chosen examples were relevant</li><li>• answered the questions and strayed away from making irrelevant points.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• did not include a detailed knowledge of the epics</li><li>• did not include a range of examples from the whole of the epic.</li></ul>

## Option 1: The *Iliad*

Not as popular as the *Odyssey* option, but the majority of candidates were still able to express their enthusiasm, understanding and knowledge of the epic in the prescribed time.

### Section A overview

Candidates possessed a useful knowledge of the epic and the majority of questions were answered in this section. Timing was also not an issue and candidates had been well versed on how to tackle the array of question types.

#### Question 1

- 1 Give **two** details about the death of Patroclus. [2]

The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.

#### Question 2

- 2 Why do you think both sides are fighting for Patroclus' dead body in **Passage A**? [1]

Candidates who gave a valid response were given the mark.

#### Question 3

- 3 Which side succeeds in taking Patroclus' body: the Greeks or the Trojans? [1]

The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.

### Question 4

4 Explain how **Passage A** is a vivid piece of writing.

Make **four** points and support each point with reference to **Passage A**.

[8]

The majority of candidates seem to have been taught the principle of Point, Example and Analysis (PEA) for GCSE and the principle still applies to these questions. Candidates are asked for four points only. Any work in addition to this was not given marks. They are advised to write four paragraphs each clearly identifying an example from the passage in question. They should then unpack the idea and show, therefore, how the writing is vivid. It is here that some candidates would benefit from further practice in expressing themselves. There is no need for candidates to write an essay.

### Assessment for learning



Spend ten minutes highlighting relevant points in any given passage using the PEA approach and getting candidates to explain why their chosen examples are relevant. This could be done in teams.

### Exemplar 1

4		Passage A is a vivid piece of writing as it uses simile, for example, Ajax is described as "fierce as a wild bear", which creates a sense to emphasise the violence and courage of Ajax. Passage A is also
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Exemplar 1 demonstrates how a candidate has used the PEA approach in practice.

### Question 5

5 Who was Paris fighting in the duel/fight, 'he had just come from a duel'/'he had come from a fight' (lines 6–7 Rieu/lines 5–6 Kline)?

[1]

There were candidates who did not remember Menelaus.

## Question 6

6 How has Helen helped Priam just before this duel/fight? [1]

Better responses illustrated that she had identified the Greek warriors.

## Question 7

7 Why do you think Helen thinks that it is wrong to sleep with Paris in **Passage B**? [1]

Candidates who gave a valid response were given the mark.

## Question 8

8 What does Helen say to Paris when they meet in the bedroom? Make **one** point. [1]

The majority of candidates made a relevant point.

## Question 9

9 Explain how Helen is presented in **Passage B**.

Make **four** points and support each point with reference to **Passage B**. [8]

Most responses noted that Helen was observant, self-aware and forthright. The best responses noted that her defiance was short-lived. Some candidates relied on material not in the passage. This type of question is primarily a character-based question. It does not require candidates to assess the literary merits of the passage.

## Question 10\*

**10\*** Explain how a good mortal woman was expected to behave in the *Iliad*.

You may use **Passage B** as a starting point, and your knowledge of the *Iliad* in your answer. **[16]**

This question was generally well answered. The majority of candidates included material relating to Andromache, Hecuba and Briseis with good, specific references to the text. It is advisable for candidates to use the passage as a starting point. Candidates who had spotted Helen's obedience, did not always capitalise on it and the implications of Aphrodite's disguise were not often used to introduce weaving as a skill expected of good women. However, there were plenty of other clearly expressed points which were well-substantiated by the text as a whole. There is no expectation for a counterargument in this type of question.



## Section B overview

Question 11 was the most popular essay question where candidates fully engaged with their chosen tasks and offered detailed and convincing responses. Question 12 was less popular, but there were more answering this type of question than in previous years.

### Misconception



There is no requirement to include references to modern scholarship at AS Level.

### Question 11\*

**11\*** Explain what anger (*menis*) is and why it is important in the *Iliad*. Justify your answer with close reference to the *Iliad*. **[25]**

Candidates had little difficulty in explaining what *menis* is and were strong when discussing the wrath of Achilles. Better responses included other relevant examples of anger and gave more than a cursory glance at the second part of the question.

### Question 12\*

**12\*** Homer uses different narrative and descriptive techniques in the *Iliad*. Analyse how Homer's use of language helps to bring the epic to life. Justify your answer with close reference to the *Iliad*. **[25]**

The literary qualities of the epics are clearly taught effectively because candidates coped well with the questions concerning how vivid writing is. Better responses paid heed to the 'close reference' to the epic part of the question and included a breadth of points as well as supporting examples.

## Option 2: The *Odyssey*

This was by far the more popular option and the majority of candidates were able to express their enthusiasm, understanding and knowledge of the epic in the prescribed time.

### Section A overview

Candidates possessed a useful knowledge of the epic and the majority of questions were answered in this section. Timing was also not an issue and candidates had been well versed on how to tackle the array of question types.

#### Question 13

**13** Who is Odysseus telling his adventures to in **Passage A**? **[1]**

There were candidates did not recall the Phaeacians/Alcinous.

#### Question 14

**14** Why is Odysseus clinging onto the fig-tree (line 1 Rieu/line 1 Kline)? **[1]**

The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.

#### Question 15

**15** Why do you think Odysseus says, 'nothing could have saved me from certain death.'/'I would never have escaped utter disaster.' (line 11 Rieu/lines 8–9 Kline)? **[1]**

Candidates who gave a valid response were given the mark.

#### Question 16

**16** Which god destroyed Odysseus' boat just before this passage? **[1]**

Poseidon was a popular choice alongside Zeus.

### Question 17

17 Explain how **Passage A** is a vivid piece of writing.

Make **four** points and support each point with reference to **Passage A**.

[8]

The majority of candidates seem to have been taught the principle of Point, Example and Analysis (PEA) for GCSE and the principle still applies to these questions. Candidates are asked for four points only. Any work in addition to this is not given marks. Candidates are advised to write four paragraphs, each clearly identifying an example from the passage in question. Candidates should then unpack the idea and show, therefore, how the writing is vivid. It is here that some candidates would benefit from further practice in expressing themselves. There is no need for candidates to write an essay.

#### Assessment for learning



Spend ten minutes highlighting relevant points in any given passage using the PEA approach and getting candidates to explain why their chosen examples are relevant. This could be done in teams.

#### Exemplar 2

		Finally, Homer uses active imagery to make this passage vivid. Odysseus "swung", "sprawled" and "paddled" away from his demise, making this passage active and <del>more</del> intense and vivid, as we imagine him using all his might to escape from Scylla and Charybdis.
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Exemplar 2 demonstrates how a candidate has used the PEA approach in practice.

### Question 18

18 Who is being referred to in line 4 Rieu / lines 3–4 Kline, 'her foreign lover's arms' / 'a stranger from abroad'? [1]

A number of different lovers were cited here, both mortal and immortal.

## Question 19

- 19 Which war is being referred to in line 5 Rieu/line 4 Kline, 'would go to war'/'the warrior sons of Achaea would come'? [1]

The majority of candidates mentioned the Trojan war.

## Question 20

- 20 Why do you think Athene kept the day from dawning in lines 18–21 Rieu/lines 18–20 Kline? [1]

Candidates who gave a valid response were given the mark.

## Question 21

- 21 Give **one** of the predictions/prophesies which Teiresias has made about Odysseus' future, 'Teiresias' soul predicted'/'the spirit of Teiresias prophesied' (line 24 Rieu/lines 22–23 Kline). [1]

The majority of candidates gave the correct response.

## Question 22

- 22 Explain how Penelope is presented in **Passage B**.

Make **four** points and support each point with reference to **Passage B**. [8]

The majority of candidates noted that Penelope is faithful, devoted and emotional. The best responses noted that she is placatory and suspicious. Some candidates relied on material not in the passage. This type of question is primarily a character-based question. It does not require candidates to assess the literary merits of the passage.

## Question 23\*

**23\*** Explain how a good mortal woman was expected to behave in the *Odyssey*.

You may use **Passage B** as a starting point, and your knowledge of the *Odyssey* in your answer. **[16]**

There was good work on *xenia* with respect to Penelope, whose *xenia* is abused, and Nausicaa. Circe was irrelevant and not given marks. Weaving was often not foregrounded. Candidates used Penelope's shroud trick to show her devotion and loyalty, which was fine, but not all candidates specified the importance of weaving as an expectation of women's behaviour. Obedience, child-rearing, women's quarters were sensibly considered.

## Section B overview

Question 24 was the most popular essay question where candidates fully engaged with their chosen tasks and offered detailed and convincing responses. Question 25 was less popular, but there were more candidates answering this type of question than in previous years.

### Misconception



There is no requirement to include references to modern scholarship at AS Level.

### Question 24\*

**24\*** 'Odysseus' character is complex.'

Explain how far you agree with this statement. Justify your answer with close reference to the *Odyssey*. [25]

The majority of candidates were able to cite examples of a range of character traits which Odysseus displays. Better responses were those which considered whether they should the hero to be complex or not and included examples from the whole of the epic, not just Books 5–12.

### Question 25\*

**25\*** Homer uses different narrative and descriptive techniques in the *Odyssey*. Analyse how Homer's use of language helps to bring the epic to life. Justify your answer with close reference to the *Odyssey*. [25]

The literary qualities of the epics are clearly taught effectively because candidates did well with the questions concerning how vivid writing is. Better responses included the 'close reference' to the epic part of the question and managed to include a breadth of points as well as examples.

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