

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

CLASSICAL GREEK

J292

For first teaching in 2016

J292/05 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.

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Paper 5 series overview

Candidates who chose the Euripides paper seem to have relished their choice. There were many excellent responses, showing enjoyment of the *Bacchae* and demonstrating an excellent understanding of the play.

Overall, the standard was high and candidates knew their text. Candidates who did well on this paper exhibited a close familiarity with the text. Candidates who did not do as well were less familiar with the text and did not always pay close attention to the questions themselves.

The characters of Pentheus and Dionysus appear to have absorbed candidates, who engaged well with the conflict between the ruler of Thebes and the manipulative god. Candidates especially showed an excellent understanding of the dramatic irony at work throughout the exchanges.

Candidates are asked not to squeeze responses onto blank sections of the paper. If a response requires more space, candidates should use the extra paper.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • paid attention to the parameters of specific passages • revealed knowledge and understanding of the set text in both granular detail and contextual overview • engaged with the characters of the play. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • did not pay close attention to the parameters of specific passages • placed excessive reliance on knowledge of the <i>Bacchae</i> story outside the restrictions of the set text.

Question 1 (a)

1 Read the passage and answer the questions.

Servant Πενθεῦ, πάρεσμεν τήνδ' ἄγραν ἡγρευκότες
 ἐφ' ἣν ἔπεμψας, οὐδ' ἄκρανθ' ὠρμήσαμεν.
 ὁ θῆρ δ' ὄδ' ἡμῖν προῶς οὐδ' ὑπέσπασεν
 φυγῆ πόδ', ἀλλ' ἔδωκεν οὐκ ἄκων χέρας
 οὐδ' ὠχρός, οὐδ' ἥλλαξεν οἰνωπὸν γένυν, 5
 γελῶν δὲ καὶ δεῖν κάπαγειν ἐφίετο
 ἔμενέ τε, τοῦμὸν εὐτρεπὲς ποιούμενος.

Euripides, *Bacchae*, lines 434–440

(a) Πενθεῦ ... ὠρμήσαμεν (lines 1–2): what have Pentheus' servants achieved?

.....

.....

..... [2]

A straightforward question, although some candidates offered 'hunted' instead of 'hunted down' or 'caught'. This omitted the sense of achievement in the question.

Question 1 (b)

(b) ὁ θῆρ ... φυγῆ πόδ' (lines 3–4): pick out and translate a **Greek** word which describes the stranger.

Greek word:

English translation:

[2]

Candidates responded well to this question.

Question 1 (c)

(c) ἀλλ' ἔδωκεν ... ποιούμενος (lines 4–7): state **two** ways in which the stranger cooperated when the servant arrested him.

1

.....

2

.....

[2]

Some candidates did not read the question closely and so quoted text from outside the parameters of the question. A common error was 'he did not withdraw his foot in flight'.

Question 2

2 Read the passage and answer the question.

Servant αὐτόματα δ' αὐταῖς δεσμὰ διελύθη ποδῶν
 κληῖδες τ' ἀνήκαν θύρετρο' ἄνευ θνητῆς χειρός.
 πολλῶν δ' ὄδ' ἀνὴρ θαυμάτων ἤκει πλέως
 ἐς τάσδε Θήβας.

Euripides, *Bacchae*, lines 447–450

How does the servant emphasise his amazement at what has happened?

You should make **two** points, each supported by close reference to the Greek.

1

.....

.....

.....

2

.....

.....

[4]

Examiners felt candidates' responses placed too much emphasis on misjudged assonance and alliteration. For example, in the opening line αὐτόματα δ' αὐταῖς δεσμὰ διελύθη ποδῶν, the repeated 'd-' does not make the sound of chains slipping to the floor, nor does the 'au-' sound represent a cry of amazement. Even a strong alliterative point needs correct reference to the Greek and English. Centres are reminded that this 4-mark question (with no translation given in the question paper) does **not** require a style point.

Question 3

3 Read the passage and answer the question.

Dionysus	τὸν ἀνθεμῶδη Τιμῶλον οἴσθᾶ που κλύων.	
Pentheus	οἶδ', ὃς τὸ Σάρδεων ἄστῳ περιβάλλει κύκλῳ.	
Dionysus	ἐντεῦθεν εἰμι, Λυδία δέ μοι πατρίς.	
Pentheus	πόθεν δὲ τελετὰς τάσδ' ἄγεις ἐς Ἑλλάδα;	
Dionysus	Διόνυσος αὐτός μ' εἰσέβησ', ὁ τοῦ Διός.	5

Euripides, *Bacchae*, lines 462–466

Translate this passage into English.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [5]

This was a fair translation which gave all candidates an opportunity to score well – and the majority did, showing excellent understanding and knowledge of the text. Common omissions included δέ ('and') from line 3 (although if candidates used a semi-colon no error was tagged), and αὐτός ('himself') from line 5.

There were many different offerings for εἰσέβησ'. Just a few of these included: initiated, sent, entered, instructed, made himself manifest, introduced me, delivered me, taught them to me, compelled me.

Question 4 (a)

4 Read the passage and answer the questions.

Pentheus	ὁ θεός, ὄραν γὰρ φῆς σαφῶς, ποιός τις ἦν;	
Dionysus	ὁποῖος ἤθελ'· οὐκ ἐγὼ ἄτασσον τόδε.	
Pentheus	τοῦτ' αὖ παρωχέτευσας εὔ γ' οὐδὲν λέγων.	
Dionysus	δόξει τις ἀμαθεῖ σοφὰ λέγων οὐκ εὔφρονεῖν.	
Pentheus	ἦλθες δὲ πρῶτα δεῦρ' ἄγων τὸν δαίμονα;	5
Dionysus	πᾶς ἀναχορεύει βαρβάρων τὰδ' ὄργια.	
Pentheus	φρονοῦσι γὰρ κάκιον Ἑλλήνων πολὺ.	

Euripides, *Bacchae*, lines 477–483

(a) ὁ θεός ... τόδε (lines 1–2): Pentheus asks about the god. What does Dionysus tell him?

.....

.....

..... [2]

Candidates responded well to this question. An error was to use the present tense 'I do not arrange this', rather than the past tense.

Question 4 (b)

(b) τοῦτ' αὖ ... λέγων (line 3): why is Pentheus dissatisfied with Dionysus' response?

.....

.....

..... [2]

Candidates responded well to this question.

Question 4 (c)

(c) δόξει ... φρονεῖν (line 4): what makes this statement by Dionysus insulting?

.....

.....

..... [2]

There was good knowledge and understanding shown here of the insult, such as 'Dionysus uses a gnomic statement to pointedly suggest that he is speaking wisely, but to Pentheus this seems like Dionysus makes no sense'. The minority of candidates found this a difficult question, with different approaches to their responses.

Question 4 (d)

(d) φρονοῦσι ... πολὺ (line 7): how does this add to our understanding of Pentheus' character?

.....

.....

..... [2]

This was an AO3 question with some impassioned responses. In discussions around Pentheus' character, examiners welcomed broader thoughts discussing the xenophobia or cultural insensitivity of Pentheus. On the whole, however, candidates found it difficult to respond to a question about 'character'. Better responses offered 'arrogant', 'ignorant' or even 'patriotic', but weaker responses gave lengthier responses which skirted around the idea of 'character' without actually answering the question.

Question 5*

5* Read the passage and answer the question.

Dionysus	εἶφ' ὅτι παθεῖν δεῖ· τί με τὸ δεινὸν ἐργάσῃ;	
Pentheus	πρῶτον μὲν ἄβρὸν βόστρυχον τεμῶ σέθεν.	
Dionysus	ἰερός ὁ πλόκαμος· τῷ θεῷ δ' αὐτὸν τρέφω.	
Pentheus	ἔπειτα θύρσον τόνδε παράδος ἐκ χεροῖν.	
Dionysus	αὐτός μ' ἀφαιροῦ· τόνδε Διονύσω φορῶ.	5
Pentheus	εἰρκταῖσί τ' ἔνδον σῶμα σὸν φυλάξομεν.	
Dionysus	λύσει μ' ὁ δαίμων αὐτός, ὅταν ἐγὼ θέλω.	
Pentheus	ὅταν γε καλέσης αὐτὸν ἐν βάκχαις σταθείς.	
Dionysus	καὶ νῦν ἅ πάσχω πλησίον παρῶν ὄρα.	

Euripides, *Bacchae*, lines 492–500

How does Euripides create tension and drama in this passage?

In your answer you may wish to consider:

- the threats of Pentheus and responses of Dionysus
- the use of dramatic irony

You must refer to the **Greek** and discuss Euripides' use of language.

[8]

There was much to say here, and many responses were well written with candidates having a good understanding of tension and drama. Candidates often explained dramatic irony in detail with a clear understanding of this concept.

There was extensive reference to stichomythia, although only the better candidates actually quoted from the text to show how the line-by-line dialogue effectively increases drama and tension. The best responses included a range of language and literary style points while remaining closely aligned to the question asked. Examiners' advice is to be specific when quoting. Rarely will it be the case that a candidate quoting a full line or sentence of Greek can do better than just quoting a single word or a couple of words of Greek.

Question 5. TIP for the question worth 8 marks



Less Greek is (usually) more. Candidates who quoted extensive chunks of Greek often lost a mark because their English translation was unwieldy and inaccurate. Candidates should practise quoting only what is relevant. One or two words of Greek (plus translation and comment) are often sufficient for each point made.

Exemplar 1

.....Finally, the way in which Dionysus asserts his absolute control builds tension as the audience speculate what terrible things are coming. When Pentheus tells him to hand over the thyrsus, Dionysus tells him to 'take it away from ~~me~~ yourself' (': αὐτός ~~μ~~ ἀφαιρου'), using the imperative 'ἀφαιρου' to command him and promoting 'αὐτός' to the start of the line to directly challenge and attack the king.

In Exemplar 1, the candidate has produced a good paragraph which offers Greek quotation, English translation, sensible comment and a valid style point. The quotation is specific and targeted (no ellipsis) and the translation is accurate. The comment provides a relevant and sensible response to the question asked and the style point discusses the effect brought about by the force of the imperative alongside the promotion of αὐτός.

Question 6 (a)

6 Read the passage and answer the questions.

Dionysus ἐγὼ γυναῖκας δεῦρ' ὄπλων ἄξω δίχα.
 Pentheus οἴμοι· τόδ' ἤδη δόλιον ἐς ἐμε μηχανᾶ.
 Dionysus ποῖόν τι, σῶσαι σ' εἰ θέλω τέχναις ἐμαῖς;

Euripides, *Bacchae*, lines 804–806

(a) ἐγὼ ... δίχα (line 1): what does Dionysus offer to do?

.....

 [2]

This was a straightforward question, with the only real error being the omission of 'to here/to Pentheus'.

Question 6 (b)

(b) τὸδ' ἤδη ... μηχανᾶ (line 2): what does Pentheus suspect?

.....
..... [1]

Candidates responded well to this question.

Question 6 (c)

(c) σῶσαί ... ἐμαῖς (line 3): what does Dionysus claim he wants to do?

.....
.....
..... [2]

Candidates responded well to this question.

Question 7

7 Read the passage and answer the question.

Pentheus	τὸ δεύτερον δὲ σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου τί μοι;
Dionysus	πέπλοι ποδήρεις· ἐπὶ κάρα δ' ἔσται μίτρα.
Pentheus	ἢ καὶ τι πρὸς τοῖσδ' ἄλλο προσθήσεις ἐμοί;
Dionysus	θύρσον γε χειρὶ καὶ νεβροῦ στικτὸν δέρος.

Translation

Pentheus	What feature of the disguise is second for me?
Dionysus	A full length robe; and there will be a headband on your head.
Pentheus	Surely you will give me something else, in addition to these?
Dionysus	Yes, a thyrsus in your hand and the dappled skin of a fawn.

Euripides, *Bacchae*, lines 832–835

How does Euripides show that Dionysus is now controlling Pentheus?

You should make **two** points, each supported by close reference to the Greek.

1

.....

.....


2

.....

[4]

This is the 4-mark question which requires a style point. Candidates often omitted a style point here, limiting their ability to gain full marks. An English translation is given, so absolute accuracy of understanding of the Greek/English is expected.

Question 7 - Tip regarding alliteration



Candidates should make sure that any response discussing alliteration is valid and supports the point they make. Weak, general responses of 'alliteration being emphatic' are unlikely to score highly. For the phrase *πέπλοι ποδήρεις*, weak responses included: 'Euripides shows that Dionysus is controlling Pentheus through the plosive alliteration in *πέπλοι ποδήρεις*.' 'The alliteration of *πέπλοι ποδήρεις* communicates the idea that Dionysus finds the situation amusing, implying that he is controlling Pentheus.'

Assessment for learning – Question 7: 4 mark question with translation



This question has the translation attached to it so a style point **is** required.

Question 8*

8* 'In the exchanges between Pentheus and Dionysus, we naturally take the side of Pentheus.'

How far do you agree with this statement?

You should support your answer with a range of references to the texts you have read, and you may include passages printed on the question paper. **[10]**

Candidates seemed to enjoy this question. Many were able to support their opinions with satisfactory or sufficient evidence from the set text. This was a great improvement from last year and showed real engagement with what candidates had read. Many of the essays were a pleasure to mark.

Many essays were well-argued and showed an understanding of how difficult it can be to side with Pentheus due to his arrogance or ideas, but also how he is manipulated and mistreated by Dionysus. Some good responses showed an understanding of contemporary Athenian political and cultural views and compared these to modern views. For example, Pentheus' fear of allowing women to have freedom, or his attempts to be a good leader while maintaining a despotic approach. However, candidates should not allow their historical understanding to override the question. The best responses had four or five strong arguments, each one supported by one or two references to the text as evidence.

A handful of essays were well written but one-sided, without any element of balance. Many good responses had plenty of balance (thus responding to the 'to what extent' format of the question), siding with neither one nor the other, but recognising shifts within the play. Some candidates did not include specific references to the text, or made statements that showed misunderstanding of the whole play.

A minority of candidates wrote the names of the main characters as Dion and Pen, or even just D and P. Evidence from the responses suggested that this was not due to the pressure of time. Centres are reminded that the quality of extended response is assessed in the 10-mark essay questions.

Exemplar 2

In conclusion, I fully agree with the statement that we naturally take the side of Pentheus as on the whole, he is depicted as the victim in the play. He never even himself did anything wrong, it was Cadmus who didn't believe Semele, Pentheus wasn't even born then get at the end Cadmus is ~~also~~ turned into a snake yet the audience can't help but wonder the reason for Pentheus's extremely harsh death. It probably stems from jealousy from Dionysus that Pentheus is king of Greece and he ~~isn't~~ isn't and the anger from the injustice his mother ~~suffered~~ suffered probably clouded his ~~judge~~ judgement. Even

Exemplar 2 shows a stylish conclusion but one which veers too far from the essay question. While brief reference to the wider play is not discouraged and can shine a light on the thread of an argument, candidates should remember to respond to the question asked. It is important to provide evidence from selected references to the studied text.

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