

Classical Civilisation and Classics at Fortismere

Exam board OCR

Why choose to study Classical Civilisation / Classics at Advanced level?

The first—and most important—reason is because it’s a fascinating subject, with a huge breadth of subject matter whose influence is very much still felt today. You will study the first pieces of Western Literature filled with Gods, Goddesses, Heroes and Monsters. You will consider the very beginnings of our civilisation. You will read gruesome tales of suicide, infanticide and mass murder. This is a subject that combines many other subjects. By studying an entire civilisation rather than focusing just on literature or history, you will get a great insight into how literature, religion, history, politics, art, architecture and philosophy inform each other. This will give you a richer appreciation of each.

It is also a very useful subject. Like History, Classical Civilisation / Classics offers an important insight into where we come from and why modern society is the way it is. Like RS, Classical Civilisation / Classics raises vital questions about matters that we take for granted by comparison to very different societies. Like English, it develops one’s appreciation of literature and one’s use of the language. As an essay subject, Classical Civilisation / Classics trains students to collect a diverse range of information and to synthesise this information into clear, concise arguments. In learning about the ancients, you will develop more familiarity with many of the references to the Classical world which abound in English (and European) literature.

Course content at AS – completing the AS only will give you a qualification in Classical Civilisation

Unit CC2 Homer's Odyssey and Society Homer's Odyssey and the society and values it represents	One exam of one and half hours One question is a commentary question based on any text from “The Odyssey” One essay question about Homer's Odyssey and the society and values it represents	Example essay question “Women are deceptive and not to be trusted in the Odyssey” How far do you agree with this opinion? (45 marks)
Unit CC4 Greek Tragedy in its context The works of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, as works of literature and as social documents	One exam of one and half hours One question is a commentary question based on any text from the tragedies above One essay question about Greek Tragedy in its context	Example essay question “Would Clytemnestra be a better title for Aeschylus’ play than Agamemnon?” (45 marks)

Course content at A2 – completing AS and A will give you an A Level in Classics

Unit CC10 Virgil and the world of the hero Virgil's Epic, the Aeneid, in its literary and cultural context Parts of Homer's Iliad	One exam of two hours One question is a commentary question based on any text from “The Aeneid” One essay question	Example essay question 'The heroes in epic are concerned first and foremost with their own reputation.' Consider to what extent this is true both of the Iliad and the Aeneid. [50]
Unit AH4 (Entry code F394): Roman History: the use and abuse of power A study of the Roman World from the late Republic to the early empire The fall of the Roman Republic 81–31 BC The invention of Imperial Rome 31 BC – AD 96 Ruling the Roman Empire AD 14–117	One exam of two hours One option out of three Two questions answered from each option	Example essay question “Governors were incompetent, procurators corrupt and the army brutal and insensitive” How far do the sources support this view of the administration of the Empire? [50]

Personalised check list –Greek Tragedy in Context – year 12

	confident	developing	With difficulty
Know the plot of “Agamemnon”			
Know the plot of “Medea”			
Know the plot of “Antigone”			
Know the plot of “Electra”			
Know how to spell names and places correctly			
Know quotes from “Agamemnon”			
Know quotes from “Medea”			
Know quotes from “Antigone”			
Know quotes from “Electra”			
Know the relevant “back stories” of the myths eg House of Atreus / Oedipus.			
Assessment Objectives			
AO1 - Recall and deploy relevant knowledge and understanding of literary, cultural, material or historical sources or linguistic forms in their appropriate contexts.			
AO2 (a) - Analyse, evaluate and respond to Classical Sources (literary, cultural, material or historical sources or linguistic), as appropriate.			
AO2 (b) - Select, organise and present relevant information and argument in a clear, logical, accurate and appropriate form.			
Literary context			
Know about the differences in staging of the time eg skene, deus ex machina, ekkyklema.			
Understand and explain the role of the chorus			
Understand dramatic conventions such as messenger speeches, choruses etc.			
Pick out and explain the effect of linguistic devices in an extract			
Know how the playwrights have altered existing myths.			
Analyse characterisation			
Understand where dramatic irony is used and its effect			
Understand the conventions of tragedy (hamartia, peripeteia, katharsis etc) using Aristotles’ “Poetics” as a key text.			

Understand how the three tragedians contrast in their approaches			
Understand what is meant by the Sophoclean Hero as defined by Bernard Knox.			
Social and cultural context			
Understand the City Dionysia and the role the tragedies played in the festival.			
Know the historical context for when each play was performed, including a working knowledge of the events of 5 th Century Athens (establishing of democracy, Persian War, Pericles, Peloponnesian War, Sicilian expedition)			
Know when moral concepts, such as justice and revenge are used in the plays, how they relate to contemporary views and how attitudes towards them differ from today.			
Understand the position of women in society using contemporary sources eg Lysias, Thucydides, Xenophon.			
Understand attitudes to religion, Gods and fate.			
Understand the role of omens, oracles and prophecies.			
Understand the importance of burial and attitudes to death at the time.			
Have a sense of how playwrights are engaging with philosophical thought (eg sophists / Socrates).			
Understand the importance of honour and reputation and apply this to the behaviour of characters in the plays.			

Personalised check list –Homer’s Odyssey and Society – year 12

	confident	developing	With difficulty
Know the plot line and understand what it means to be in <i>Media Res</i>			
Know the main characters associated with Odysseus and his return home			
Know how to spell names and places correctly			
Assessment Objectives			
AO1 - Recall and deploy relevant knowledge and understanding of literary, cultural, material or historical sources or linguistic forms in their appropriate contexts.			
AO2 (a) - Analyse, evaluate and respond to Classical Sources (literary, cultural, material or historical sources or linguistic), as appropriate.			
AO2 (b) - Select, organise and present relevant information and argument in a clear, logical, accurate and appropriate form.			
Literary context			
Know the different types of narrative techniques that are used, including flashback, retardation and be able to use examples of when these techniques are used.			
Know the language of epic, including formulae and similes; and how characters are presented to the audience. Be able to recall specific examples of where these are used throughout the poem.			
Know the supernatural elements, such as monsters; and where Homer uses realism and fantasy in the poem. Recall and select examples of where these are used and to what effect they have on the poem.			
Understand when disguise and recognition is used and how successful it is for the plot line and for character development.			
Understand the importance of <i>nostos</i> for Odysseus and how this is threatened throughout the poem.			
Social and cultural context			
Consider the role of the gods and the power of fate; evaluate how far the actions that happen in the poem are down to divine intervention or human behaviour			

and choices.			
Know the stories of the heroes and understand the concept of heroism, including the ideas of honour (timé) reputation (kleos) and moments of glory (aristeiā).			
Know when moral concepts, such as justice and revenge are used in the epic poem.			
Know and recall examples of life and society as portrayed by Homer;			
Know and recall the part played by women in the Odyssey and their position in society. Consider the contrast and similarities with mortal women and goddesses			
Know the importance of hospitality and guest friendship (xenia); use examples of when it is used well and when it is not.			
Know what it means to be a slave, know who is a slave and consider how valued and important they are to the plot line.			
Understand the historical and archaeological background to the Odyssey.			

The Exam for each paper (Odyssey and Greek Tragedy)

Each paper is one and a half hours long and the whole paper is worth 100 marks. This works out at less than a mark a minute and this means that you are very time constrained in the exam,

Assessment objective 1 – A01 is where you demonstrate Knowledge and Understanding

This means that you must recall a wide range of details and events that are relevant to an exam question. You must also show that you understand the use of literary techniques, that you are sensitive to the cultural context of the poems and plays that you have studied and that you are aware of their appropriate contexts.

Assessment objective 2 – A02 is where you analyse, evaluate and present an argument to an essay question – there are 2 parts to the A02

a) analyse, evaluate and respond to classical sources (literary, cultural, material or linguistic) as appropriate

b) select, organise and present relevant information and argument in a clear, logical, accurate and appropriate form.

The exam consists of two sections

Section A: Commentary Questions (55 marks – A01 = 30 marks and A02 = 25 marks)

10 mark question (A01) which asks for a recollection of events leading up to, following on from or related to the chosen excerpt

20 mark question (A01 = 10 marks and A02 10 marks) which asks for a close analysis of a particular excerpt

25 mark question (A01 = 10 marks and A02 = 15 marks) which is a short essay question related to the excerpt and requires some form of evaluation and justification.

Candidates are presented with two commentary questions in section A and they are expected to choose one and answer all three sub questions set.

Section B: Essay (45 marks – A01 = 20 marks and A02 = 25 marks)

Candidates are required to answer one essay question from a choice of three. They will be expected to recall a wide range of evidence, draw on knowledge and understanding of literary techniques / cultural context and develop an argument in defence of their own judgement.

Answering a 20 mark commentary question

Read the whole excerpt and consider what context it is in – what events come before and after the excerpt to make this excerpt worthy of analysis

When you are asked how the scene is made vivid –consider the literary technique being used to make it vivid

- **Pace** – is the excerpt fast in pace where a lot is happening and it is exciting and dramatic or is it slow where it is focusing on the minute details in order to add tension? Is the excerpt varied in pace?
- **Tension / rising action** – is the excerpt leading up to an explosive / climatic scene?
- **Dramatic Irony** – are all of the characters aware of the actual events that are going to unfold, does the fact that the audience know more than the characters make it more vivid for the audience?
- **Hyperbole** – is anything exaggerated or emphasised, if so, why?
- **Pathos** – is the audience made to feel sympathy towards a particular character, if so, why? Is the audience made to feel anger towards the character? If so, why?
- **Climax** – is this the moment that we have been waiting for? Is it better than we expected?
- **Justice / revenge** – is it a point in the story where good is rewarded and evil is punished? Who is punishing? Who is being punished? Is the person being punished deserving of the punishment or not?
- **Nostos** – the whole poem is about nostos, is the excerpt about homecoming and all of the emotions associated with it? In what way is the theme of nostos presented?
- **Character** (part 1)– is a character being allowed to represent him/herself through dialogue, direct speech or soliloquy? If so, how is that character coming across?
- **Character** (part 2) – is someone else talking about the character, if so, how well is that character being represented by the speaker – is it a fair / unfair description?
- **Description of objects / landscape/ actions** – is there a detailed description of the scene? If so, why is it being described in so much detail?
- **Deus ex machine** – are the gods being used to tie up loose ends? How? why?

Look at specific words and phrases that will highlight how the scene is being made vivid – are there any really descriptive words that can be explored in detail? Is there any speech that can be quoted and explained and explored?

- **Description of motifs** (objects / themes) – if there is an object / feeling in your excerpt, how is it being described?
- **Graphic descriptions** – if there is something gory happening in your excerpt, what words are being used to describe it?
- **Emotion of the character** – fear? resigned to their fate? Angry? Helpless? in despair? Shocked? surprised?
- **Epithet**- descriptive word or phrase occurring before the name of a person or thing.
- **Simile**- descriptive comparison using 'like or as'
- **Metaphor**- comparison between two seemingly unrelated subjects
- **Epic simile**- detailed comparison, may be several lines
- **Personification**- nonhuman object/idea given human qualities, why? How?
- **Commands** – that any character is making, what is that showing about the character? Are any characters submissive to the commands?
- **Movement of people or objects** – are they quick, slow, thoughtful, cunning, deceptive, testing, powerful, helpless?
- **Juxtaposition** - two things being seen or placed close together with contrasting effect, why are the two things are being highlighted?

Style guide - academic discourse in Classics A Level essays – Odyssey, Tragedy, Virgil.

For these three papers in A Level Classics, you are fundamentally writing literature essays. You will need to draw on your existing knowledge of essay writing from English Literature GCSE but to develop and improve it. Your aim is to be simple but effective. You do not want to sound as though you have swallowed a Thesaurus. Instead your aim should be clarity and succinctness. As well as knowing your texts well, you will also need to be a confident writer. Your teacher will model good writing practice and support your efforts to improve. This short guide exemplifies the key language features of academic discourse that you must learn to embed in your essays.

Use this style guide when you are writing essays to help you develop your written discourse.

1. Discourse markers. They introduce a topic, move an argument forward, signal comparison and contrast and draw an argument to a close. They can be used at the start of paragraphs as well as in the body of your text. Examples of discourse markers are:

However
Moreover
Furthermore
Additionally
Likewise
Another point is
Significantly
Similarly
Comparatively
Contrastingly
Finally
In conclusion

2. Connective phrases ('lexical bundles'): these are phrases that link your quotes to your analysis and explorations of the text, enabling you to succinctly move between text and your comments

which suggests that
which implies that
this evokes an image of
the fact that
the impact of this is
from which we can infer that
the impact of this is
which conveys that
which demonstrates that
which evokes an image of
which contrasts with
which depicts that

3. Higher level verbs/verb phrases: at primary school you show and tell, but you need to draw on a more sophisticated range of verbs to signal explanation, analysis and evaluation of a quotation or example. Be careful about what word you use: do not say a word or technique "shows" something unless it definitely does. For example, an onomatopoeia rarely "shows" anything.

suggests; implies; depicts; illustrates; denotes; infer; evokes; emphasizes; conveys; explores
expresses

4. Comparative language: you will need to be able to draw comparisons and contrasts between different texts in Year 13 and if you choose the 5th question in the tragedy paper in Year 12. Effectively used comparative language enables you to do this clearly and fluently not only...but also; in contrast; whereas

5. Passive voice – the use of the passive voice creates a detached, academic tone in your writing, suggesting an exploration of different critical or analytical viewpoints rather than personal viewpoint.

It can be suggested that...

It has been implied that...

It was described as...

It can be inferred from this...

6. Modal verbs: these suggest possibility, that something *could* or *might* be true but that there are a range of interpretations. It's useful to use modal verbs when you are exploring different readings of a text, either language analysis, or critical reading.

could; can; should; might

7. Reference to 'the reader'/'the audience' – again this encourages a thoughtful, critical standpoint in your writing rather than really personal opinions. It helps to create a detached, evaluative voice. There will always be more than one reader or audience: modern or contemporary. And a sophisticated answer will consider that even the contemporary audience would not necessarily all have had the same response.

8. Complex sentences, with subordinate clauses to support the development of an analytical, non-narrative writing style. Complex sentences enable you to develop and explore ideas in detail. Simple sentences are well...too simple: 'Electra was angry' doesn't really give enough detail. Compound sentences encourage a narrative writing style that doesn't suit discursive essays: 'Electra was angry, and wanted to kill her mother, but she needed Orestes to come back.' So use the other techniques listed to help you build up your sentences and improve your analysis.

If you are studying English Literature or English Language and Literature, you will notice the style guide is almost exactly the same for both. The key difference between the two subjects in terms of exam technique is that Classics gives more weight to knowing the texts and demonstrating that knowledge. Therefore you need to include a lot textual evidence and examples (it does not have to be direct quotations) and more than you would be including if you were writing the equivalent English essay.

Further reading

AS Unit CC2 (Entry Code F382): Homer's Odyssey and Society

The principal focus of this unit is on literature, society and values. The unit is also concerned with history and archaeology. Candidates must study Homer's Odyssey. Passages for the commentary questions will be selected from books 4–12, 18–22.

Candidates must be prepared to answer commentary questions on passages taken from any of the material prescribed for the unit.

Suggested further reading

Boardman, J., Griffin, J. and Murray, O. *Oxford History of the Classical World* (chapter 2) 1986, Oxford University Press. ISBN 0198721129

Clarke, H. W. *The Art of Odyssey* 1989, Bristol Classical Press. ISBN 1853990523

Edwards, M. W. *Homer: Poet of the Iliad* 1987, John Hopkins. ISBN 0801840163

Emlyn-Jones, C., Hardwick, L. and Purkis, J. (eds.) *Homer: Readings and Images* 1992, Duckworth. ISBN 0715624385

Finley, M. I. *The World of Odysseus* 1979, Pimlico. ISBN 0712665730

Griffin, J. *Homer: the Odyssey* 1987, Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0521539781

Jenkyns, R. *Classical Epic Homer and Virgil*, 2007, Bristol Classical Press. ISBN 1853991333

Jones, P. V. *Homer's Odyssey: a Companion to the English Translation of Richard Lattimore* 1988, Bristol Classical Press. ISBN 1853990388

Lefkowitz, M. *Greek Gods, Human Lives*, 2003, Yale University Press. ISBN 0300101457

Rutherford, R. *Homer*, 1996, Oxford University Press

Sowerby, R. *Homer, The Odyssey*, 2000, York Press.

Thorpe, M. *Homer* 1991, Bristol Classical Press. ISBN 0862922410

Willcock, M. M. *A Companion to the Iliad* 1976, University of Chicago Press. ISBN 0226898555

CANDIDATES ARE EXPECTED TO BE FAMILIAR WITH	SUGGESTED FURTHER READING
Literary context	
oral tradition;	Rutherford, R. <i>Homer</i> pages 9 – 15 Griffin, J. <i>Homer: the Odyssey</i> pages 6 – 13 and 22-23 Thorpe, M. <i>Homer</i> pages 19 – 23 and 25 – 28 Homer , <i>Odyssey</i> translated by E V Rieu, introduction by Peter Jones pages xxvii - xxxi
transmission of the texts, including when the epics were written down;	Rutherford, R. <i>Homer</i> pages 16 – 20 Griffin, J. <i>Homer: the Odyssey</i> pages 4 – 5 and 30 – 33 Sowerby, R. <i>Homer, The Odyssey</i> pages 98 - 99
what their preliterate form was and whether they were composed by one or more poets;	Jenkyns, R. <i>Classical Epic Homer and Virgil</i> , pages 1 – 4 Sowerby, R. <i>Homer, The Odyssey</i> pages 101 – 105 Homer , <i>Odyssey</i> translated by E V Rieu, introduction by

	Peter Jones pages xli - xliii
structure of the epic;	Griffin, J. <i>Homer: the Odyssey</i> pages 43 – 47 Homer , <i>Odyssey</i> translated by E V Rieu, introduction by Peter Jones pages xii - xx
narrative techniques, including flashback, retardation, episodes;	Griffin, J. <i>Homer: the Odyssey</i> pages 13 – 21 and 44 – 63 and 74 - 77 Homer , <i>Odyssey</i> translated by E V Rieu, introduction by Peter Jones pages xxxviii - xl
the language of epic, including formulae and similes;	Sowerby, R. <i>Homer, The Odyssey</i> pages 95 – 97 Thorpe, M. <i>Homer</i> pages 23 - 25
presentation of character;	Rutherford, R. <i>Homer</i> pages 61 – 65 Sowerby, R. <i>Homer, The Odyssey</i> pages 64 – 73 Thorpe, M. <i>Homer</i> pages 56 – 65 Homer , <i>Odyssey</i> translated by E V Rieu, introduction by Peter Jones pages xxi - xxvii
supernatural elements, such as monsters;	Griffin, J. <i>Homer: the Odyssey</i> pages 66 – 71
realism and fantasy;	Jenkyns, R. <i>Classical Epic Homer and Virgil</i> pages 36 – 42 Rutherford, R. <i>Homer</i> pages 65 -66 Clarke, H. W. <i>The Art of Odyssey</i> pages 45 – 48 Homer , <i>Odyssey</i> translated by E V Rieu, introduction by Peter Jones pages xxxv - xxxviii
disguise and recognition;	Rutherford, R. <i>Homer</i> pages 66 - 69 Emlyn-Jones, C., Hardwick, L. and Purkis, J. (eds.) <i>Homer: Readings and Images</i> pages 49 - 62
nostos.	Homer , <i>Odyssey</i> translated by E V Rieu, introduction by Peter Jones pages xliii - xlv

CANDIDATES ARE EXPECTED TO BE FAMILIAR WITH	SUGGESTED FURTHER READING
Social and cultural context	
the role of the gods and the power of fate;	Lefkowitz, M. <i>Greek Gods, Human Lives</i> pages 85 – 112 Sowerby, R. <i>Homer, The Odyssey</i> pages 62 – 64 Thorpe, M. <i>Homer</i> pages 52 - 55
the stories of the heroes;	Thorpe, M. <i>Homer</i> pages 29 - 37
the concept of heroism, including the ideas of honour (timé) and reputation (kleos);	Clarke, H. W. <i>The Art of Odyssey</i> pages 91 – 97 Emlyn-Jones, C., Hardwick, L. and Purkis, J. (eds.) <i>Homer: Readings and Images</i> pages 21 – 31 and pages 156 - 160
moral concepts, such as justice and revenge;	Jenkyns, R. <i>Classical Epic Homer and Virgil</i> pages 43 – 47 Griffin, J. <i>Homer: the Odyssey</i> pages 90 - 94
life and society as portrayed by Homer;	Jenkyns, R. <i>Classical Epic Homer and Virgil</i> pages 48 – 52 Griffin, J. <i>Homer: the Odyssey</i> pages 83 – 87 Emlyn-Jones, C., Hardwick, L. and Purkis, J. (eds.) <i>Homer: Readings and Images</i> pages 175 - 190
the part played by women in the epics and their position in society;	Rutherford, R. <i>Homer</i> pages 69 – 74 Griffin, J. <i>Homer: the Odyssey</i> pages 78 - 83
hospitality and guest friendship (xenia);	Thorpe, M. <i>Homer</i> pages 38 - 40
the role of slaves;	Thorpe, M. <i>Homer</i> pages 40 - 42
historical and archaeological background.	Thorpe, M. <i>Homer</i> pages 66 – 78 Homer , <i>Odyssey</i> translated by E V Rieu, introduction by Peter Jones pages xxxi - xxxv

Modern popular works in paperback

These books are recommended for leisurely reading of the ancient classical world

Attwood, Margaret - *The Penelopiad*

Duffy, Carol Ann - *The World's Wife*

Harris, Robert - *Imperium*

Harris, Robert - Lustrum

Holland, Richard - *Augustus*

Holland, Richard - *Nero*

Holland, Tom - *Persian Fire*

Holland, Tom - *Rubicon. The Triumph & Tragedy of the Roman Republic*

Miller, Madeline – *The song of Achilles*

Hughes, Bettany - *Helen of Troy*

Winterson, Jeanette - *Weight*

Wishart, David - *Ovid*

Wishart, David - *Virgil*