

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

CLASSICAL GREEK

H444

For first teaching in 2016

H444/04 Summer 2022 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.

Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

To support student revision, advance information was published about the focus of exams for Summer 2022 assessments. Advance information was available for most GCSE, AS and A Level subjects, Core Maths, FSMQ, and Cambridge Nationals Information Technologies. You can find more information on our [website](#).

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Paper 4 series overview

The examiners were impressed with the overall quality of the responses this year and enjoyed marking some superb responses. Almost every candidate attempted every question, and the vast majority were adept at ensuring that they had sufficient time to do themselves justice. Knowledge of the texts was excellent on the whole: a large number of candidates scored full, or almost full, marks on the translation questions. Responses to factual recall questions showed detailed knowledge, although several candidates wrote much more than was needed, sometimes including detailed linguistic analysis in addition to the facts that were required. Although the quality of their discussion was high, expending too much energy on analysing the factual recall questions occasionally affected their timing for subsequent extended questions.

Essay and 15-mark questions were key areas for differentiation. In the 15-mark items, the most successful candidates offered a healthy combination of well-selected quotation and thoughtful analysis of content and language. The majority of students were well acquainted with a range of technical terms and put these to good use in their analysis. Some candidates were reticent about quoting the Greek or used truncated, paraphrased examples which in turn limited the quality of the associated analysis and achieved less highly.

In terms of the essay questions, *Medea* was by far the most popular and most candidates made explicit links between the themes of the play and modern-world issues to good effect. Some candidates made only passing references to contemporary experiences and did not achieve as highly. Homer's *Iliad* IX & XVIII came next in popularity, and responses reflected a good understanding of the texts, but a number of candidates struggled to show sufficient evaluation of the relationships they discussed. Although the *Peace* essay was the least attempted, the essays were done extremely well, demonstrating a strong grasp of the nature of comedy, fantasy and Aristophanes' ability to engage his audience.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learned their set text thoroughly analysed the Greek using a range of stylistic techniques quoted relevant words and phrases from the text, engaging in the complexities of the language planned their extended responses and maintained the 'golden thread' of their arguments through the essay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> did not demonstrate a sufficiently solid grasp of the Greek text restricted their analytical responses to a small number of basic techniques did not work methodically through the extracts for analysis, but commented on aspects of the Greek more erratically opted for a narrative response to essay questions rather than an evaluative approach.

Section A overview

The overall quality of responses was very high indeed. In Question 1(a), candidates translated the Greek accurately on the whole, although the examiners would prefer them to write their translations on alternate lines for added clarity if possible. Question 1(b) only required candidates to provide six factual details; they were not expected to analyse the text or quote the Greek. By contrast, Question 1(c) demanded extensive quotation of the Greek, together with an accurate translation to demonstrate a thorough understanding. Quotation should not be reduced to individual words but generally made up of significant phrases from which the candidate then identifies particular words or sounds.

Question 1 (a)

- 1 Read the following passages and answer the questions.

Item removed due to third party copyright restrictions

- (a) Translate ὥς οἱ μὲν ... μεγαλήτορα θυμόν (lines 1–5).

Write your translation on alternate lines.

[5]

ὀχθήσας was the only word that posed any significant difficulty; the examiners were expecting words associated with being distressed, troubled or indignant.

Question 1 (b)

- (b) ὦ μοι ἐγὼ ... ἀγγελίην ἀλεγεινήν (lines 6–17): what details in these lines anticipate the bad news that Achilles is about to receive? [6]

Candidates were only expected to identify six plot-related points from the extract, without analysis or quotation.

Misconception



Occasionally candidates were confused by the phrase Μυρμιδόνων τὸν ἄριστον, assuming that this referred to Achilles rather than Patroclus.

Question 1 (c)*

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(c)* How effectively does Homer convey the emotion of this scene?

You should refer **both** to the content **and** to the language of the passage.

[15]

The most successful responses were those in which the candidate worked methodically and forensically through the text, commenting on particular words, phrases or themes that emerged in each line and considering how Homer's use of language brought out the sense of his words. Candidates considered stylistic techniques such as the use of tautology in the phrase ζῶει καὶ ὄρᾳ φάος ἡελίοιο, Thetis' change of tone from helpless bystander to active mother, mimesis in περὶ δέ σφισι κῦμα θαλάσσης / ῥήγνυτο (where the verb is separated from the Nereids by enjambement suggesting a literal breaking apart) or the powerful imagery of Achilles in the centre of a scene where the Myrmidons are surrounding the grieving Achilles, framed by the angles of the ships drawn up to protect and shield him.

Candidates were rewarded for discussion of the sounds of words and for recognising context: this text would have been sung aloud to an audience rather than read passively on a page. Reference to onomatopoeia and alliteration in κωκύσασα κάρη that brings out Thetis' ululation were particularly appropriate, as were contextual points about the echoes of a traditional Greek funeral scene while Achilles is still alive with the Nereids in a procession, and Thetis holding Achilles' head as the principal mourner.

Less successful responses tended to ignore the final five lines where Thetis makes mention of Achilles' earlier request for the Greeks to struggle in battle; however, these lines serve to enrich our understanding of his grief: not only is he devastated by the loss of Patroclus, but he is overcome by guilt at having helped to cause it.

Assessment for learning



Candidates should avoid responding to 15-mark questions in a narrative way by simply retelling the story. To secure AO3 marks they should focus carefully and analytically on particular words and phrases and discuss the effect that their use has on the overall sense of the text.

Question 2 (a)

2 Read the following passages and answer the questions.

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- (a) σὲ τὴν σκυθρωπὸν ... ἀποστέλλεις, Κρέον (lines 1–11): how are the difficulties facing Medea described in these lines?

[6]

Question 2(a) was generally well answered, and candidates provided a wide range of relevant plot-based points.

Assessment for learning



Candidates can approach this type of factual recall question as they wish, but a basic summary of the plot of the lines specified that includes six key details will secure 6 marks and allow more time to focus on the analysis in Question 2(c). There is no need to quote the text or analyse its stylistic features.

Question 2 (b)

(b) Translate δέδοικά σ'... ἀνδρὸς ἐστερημένη (lines 12–16).

Write your translation on alternate lines.

[5]

Candidates often omitted the pronoun in δέδοικά σ', which missed Creon's primary message. They often included Creon himself as well as Glauke in his fears for the damage that Medea might do; this was not penalised but the text indicates that Creon's primary concern is for his daughter rather than himself.

Question 2 (c)*

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(c)* How successfully does Euripides convey Medea's treachery towards Jason in this extract?

You should refer **both** to the content **and** to the language of the passage.

[15]

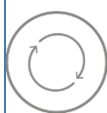
The vast majority of responses to this question were excellent, making detailed reference to Euripides' use of dramatic irony in the speech. The manner in which Medea is able to manipulate Jason's misogyny prompted detailed and high-quality analysis, and candidates were adept at commenting on Euripides' choice and placement of words that heightened this.

Many responses highlighted Medea's use of antithesis, contrasting her former attitudes with the present day, as well as the sinister way in which she involves the children in her deception. Her use of five imperatives suggests the control that she exerts over them, and the almost slow motion with which she entices them out of the house foreshadows their extreme vulnerability in ὦ τέκνα τέκνα, δεῦρο, λείπετε στέγας.

Particularly strong responses included comment on the use of juxtaposition and prepositions that heighten the sense of reconciliation and togetherness in lines 8-9.

Candidates referred to the way in which her mood changes through the speech and the effect that this might have on an audience when they see the way in which her resolve to kill the children slightly falters. Although many consider this to be an interesting insight into her psychology, it is clear from the responses that the extreme focus and divisiveness of the speech show Medea's true savagery.

Assessment for learning



Some candidates found it difficult to use quotations to demonstrate their understanding. Rather than quoting and translating a phrase and focusing on the sounds, placement or meaning of specific words within it, they would make a statement and then include a Greek word with its translation; however, this fails to support the point. An example of this is

'Medea says that women γυναικες (women) behave badly'

Exemplar 1

		of her ways. The repetition of "ἀλλ' ἔομεν οἷον ἔομεν... (γυναικες)" (but we women are as we are) adopts a mock-philosophical tone, cleverly parroting Jason's derogatory views towards women (emphasised by the emphatic placement of 'γυναικες') to deceive him into thinking Medea has come around. This methodical
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Exemplar 1 makes a clearer and more evaluative use of this part of the text.

Section B overview

The highest-achieving candidates showed the ability to summarise their extended answers in the form of short introductions and conclusions, which added clarity and structure to their responses. It is also advisable to work systematically through the text, identifying the particular themes, words and structures that make up the Greek in order to develop a response to the question. Omitting large sections of the Greek suggests that the candidate has not learned the text in sufficient depth, even though this may well not be the case, so it is worth demonstrating a good level of understanding by working methodically.

The most successful, rounded responses on each text were those that were able to demonstrate an understanding of its context – either as oral poetry or a live dramatic production to an audience. The more that modern candidates can see the dynamism and performativity of a text, the more interesting it will become for them. As well as this, showing the ability to understand features of a society like fifth-century Athens is of the utmost importance, particularly in the context of major themes such as the role of women, slavery, and the Peloponnesian War. Commonly held values such as those of masculinity, heroism and justice are also highly significant in these texts, and those candidates that refer to them tend to do better overall than those who focus solely on the plot.

Question 3 (a)*

3 Read the following passages and answer the questions.

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(a)* How does Odysseus attempt to persuade Achilles to accept Agamemnon's offer?

You should refer **both** to the content **and** to the language of the passage.

[15]

Candidates who answered this 15-mark question were often tempted to employ a narrative, AO2 approach rather than a more analytical one, and this resulted in lower marks. There are many literary techniques employed by Homer that showcase Odysseus' skills as an arch-manipulator, not least his use of listing and polysyndeton, epithets and hyperbole which create an overwhelming sense of plenty and scale.

As modern Western marriage does not involve the custom of dowries or bride prices, candidates often ignored this part of Agamemnon's offer, despite its significance in the Homeric world.

Less successful responses tended to quote each of the names of the cities that Agamemnon offers, together with their epithet; unless this is done with a specific aim to discuss the individual words in depth and categorise them to make a particular point, there is no need to copy out a large section of the text.

Exemplar 2

This is shown immediately through Achilles' treatment of Agamemnon's daughters, who are being offered in marriage. Odysseus says, 'τρεις δε οι εισι θυγατρες' (there are three daughters), in which the hyperbaton of 'τρεις ...θυγατρες' highlights the quality of those being offered. This is something further shown by Odysseus' naming them, 'Χρυσοθεμις και Λαοδικη και Ιφιανασσα' (Chrusothemis and Laodike and Iphianassa). The polyptoton for the tricolon separates them to show that each is an equally viable choice. Furthermore, the value is shown of these women as wives by an argument put forward by Willcock, who argues that each name signifies a part of regal power, respectively, divine right, justice over people and dominion. Clearly, marriage to one of these is not to be shunned and so Achilles ought to accept.

Exemplar 2 makes excellent reference to the text without spending time copying out and translating long sections of the Greek. The response includes discussion of several stylistic techniques (hyperbaton, tricolon and polyptoton), and cites Willcock, considering the specific meanings of the daughters' names.

Question 3 (b)

Item removed due to third party copyright restrictions

(b) Translate τῷ πάντ' ... ὥπα ἰδέσθαι (lines 1–5).

Write your translation on alternate lines.

[5]

A number of candidates found this translation difficult. The most common areas for confusion were οὐδ' ἂν ἔμοιγε and κύνεός περ ἐών, which were often omitted entirely.

Question 3 (c)

(c) οὐδέ τί οἱ βουλάς ... ἐν καρὸς αἴσῃ (lines 6–10): what is Achilles' opinion of Agamemnon in these lines? **[4]**

This was generally well answered with factual points from the extract. Since it is a 4-mark question, candidates do not need to analyse or quote the Greek as this will distract them from higher tariff questions.

Question 3 (d)

- (d) οὐδ' εἴ μοι ... θυμαλγέα λώβην (lines 11–19): what evidence is there for Achilles' strength of feeling here? [5]

There was a great deal of scope to identify points within the specified lines, and candidates typically scored very highly on this question, showing a good knowledge of the text and story.

Question 4 (a)

- 4 Read the following passages and answer the questions.

Item removed due to third party copyright restrictions

- (a) δοκεῖς γὰρ ... πόσιν τ' ἐμόν (lines 1–8): what is Medea's attitude towards Creon? [5]

Candidates scored very highly on the shorter, recall-based questions in this section, and summarised Medea's attitude towards Creon particularly effectively. Many showed genuine horror at the way in which Medea speaks about the king. All that was required of candidates in this question was a summary of the situation that included five accurate points taken from the prescribed lines – they did not need to analyse or quote the Greek.

Question 4 (b)

- (b) *πολλὰς δ' ἔχουσα ... ἐχθοῖς γέλων* (lines 9–16): describe Medea's thought processes in these lines. [4]

This question was done similarly well and almost all candidates scored full marks on this.

Question 4 (c)

- (c) Translate *κράτιστα τὴν ... τοῦμόν δέμας* (lines 17–21).

Write your translation on alternate lines.

[5]

The translations were done well overall, and effort was put into making the English of the translation sound as fluent as possible.

Misconception



In some cases, candidates mistranslated *ξένος* as 'friend', when the context is specifically one of *xenia*, requiring 'guest friend', 'host' or 'stranger'.

Question 4 (d)*

Item removed due to third party copyright restrictions

(d)* How effectively does Euripides arouse pity and convey the horror of this scene?

You should refer **both** to the content **and** to the language of the passage.

[15]

Responses to this question were exceptionally strong, and those that scored 14 or 15 marks were those that showed an understanding of the play's theatrical context as well as its text: comments about the sounds of words such as sibilance, alliteration, assonance or spondaic phrasing reflected an understanding of the impact that this would have on a contemporary audience; brief mention of the role of the messenger in this scene helped to demonstrate a strong grasp of the text and the purpose of the speech. Although the audience could not physically see this scene, the lasting images of Creon's horrific struggles, his being stuck to Glauke's corpse, or of father and daughter lying side by side are evidence of Euripides' dramatic and linguistic skills – candidates that were able to acknowledge this tended to score highly.

Responses made particularly good use of stylistic techniques. Rather than simply identifying them, successful candidates were able to discuss their varying effects on the audience in terms of sound and impact. Word order was also explored in detail, and candidates looked for ways in which the placement of words could reflect the sense of the sentence. See Exemplar 3.

Exemplar 3

for a melancholic meditation on the scene now set before them. This – child and old man, her father, lying dead nearby – is a ‘ποθεινὴ δακρυόισι συμφορὰ’, ‘disaster calling for tears’: that we ought to mourn, to lament – to pity – Euripides emphasises through syntax, the ‘ποθεινὴ...συμφορὰ’ (‘disaster calling for...’), the calamity, syntactically enveloping and holding at its heart the tears it so potently evokes.

Euripides' use of imagery was addressed particularly well in Exemplar 3: most candidates included a reference to the association of παλαίσματα with wrestling which indicates the physical violence with which Creon is trying to extricate himself from Glauke's corpse.

Question 5 (a)*

5 Read the following passages and answer the questions.

Item removed due to third party copyright restrictions

(a)* How does Aristophanes make the audience laugh in this extract?

You should refer **both** to the content **and** to the language of the passage.

[15]

Although humour is subjective and affected by a huge range of factors, candidates were generally willing to guess what might make something funny to a contemporary Aristophanic audience. This is challenging given the thousands of years that have elapsed, but the responses indicated that candidates had a sound grasp of the theatrical and societal contexts in which the play was originally performed.

The most successful responses tended to be those that worked in a logical way through the extract, commenting on Aristophanes' imagination and staging through his use of language. Key forms of humour mentioned tended to be scatological, absurd and fantastical and candidates discussed word play in some detail.

High-achieving responses included reference to the fifth-century world of Athens and recognised the roles of slaves as well as commented on the significance of the bilge water (lines 5-6) and the comic comparison of the revolting beetle to a haughty, demanding woman. Similarly, an understanding of the play as a piece of live theatre was important in this question – responses that referred to the suspense created by the slaves slowly opening the door at the end of the extract to reveal the beetle or the effect of breaking the fourth wall by asking audience members a direct question.

Although responses focused primarily on the comic nature of the extract, many would have been improved by a meaningful analysis of Aristophanes' language as poetry. The Homer and Euripides texts may seem more formally poetic in nature, but it is testament to Aristophanes' skill that he is able to incorporate a comic scene featuring a dung beetle into a poetic structure. Reference to stylistic and structural techniques such as enjambement, antithesis and imagery takes a response from a narrative AO2-based response that focuses on what is happening and why it is humorous, to a deeper level of evaluation resulting in higher AO3 marks.

Assessment for learning



Candidates will score more highly in the Aristophanes 15-mark question if they treat the text as a piece of poetic literature and consider the impact of the stylistic features that might make it humorous to an audience such as repetition, word placement, choice of words, imagery and use of poetry, particularly in an incongruous context.

Question 5 (b)

Item removed due to third party copyright restrictions

(b) ὧν οὖνεκ'... μηδέποτε' αὐτήν (lines 1–8): what has happened to Peace?

[4]

This response was done well and almost all candidates were able to identify four key aspects of the plot in these lines.

Question 5 (c)

(c) Translate εἶπέ μοι ... πόλεις βουλεύεται (lines 9–14).

Write your translation on alternate lines.

[5]

The quality of translation in this question was the highest of all the texts, and candidates made very few major errors. They are to be commended because the colloquial nature of Aristophanic language can be challenging.

Question 5 (d)

(d) ἀλλ' εἶμι ... τοῖν σκελοῖν (lines 15–25): why should Trygaeus be afraid of War?

[5]

Answers to this question tended to be accurate, and candidates summarised the salient points within this section of the text to good effect.

Section C overview

The quality of the extended Section C responses was high, although the *Medea* responses tended to be stronger than the Homer. Candidates typically focused carefully on answering the questions, using careful reference to the text by paraphrasing or quoting in English; they were under no obligation to quote in Greek. The most significant differentiator of responses in this Section was the ability to include AO3 discussion, evaluation and analysis as well as simply retelling the story or establish the facts of the plot in a way that suited the question.

The examiners expect that candidates will include a brief introduction and conclusion in their essay to outline their aims for the response and identify the key themes that are discussed.

Question 6*

In your response you are expected to draw, where relevant, on material from those parts of the text that you have studied in English, as well as those parts you have read in Greek.

6* Discuss the importance of personal relationships in the books of *The Iliad* that you have read. **[20]**

The candidates that responded well to this question were those that did not simply describe a range of different relationships in the text but discussed their significance and what they show the audience about the poem's key themes.

Question 7*

7* To what extent is *Medea* still relevant to a modern audience? **[20]**

Strong responses to this question focused very carefully on the potential areas of the play that might connect with a modern audience as well as those that have little correlation to the world in 2022. Areas of similarity such as attitudes towards women, marriage and children, justice and the role of men were discussed in depth, while factors such as the significance of exile or witchcraft tended to be seen as irrelevant in the modern day. Interestingly several responses suggested that the modern world does not consider the breaking of oaths to be important, perhaps forgetting that modern legal contracts, or the terms and conditions agreed to that underpin many aspects of the modern world are all forms of oaths, expressed in a more technical and literate way.

Exemplar 4

		now. It is rather significant that Euripides chooses to make his chorus a group of female citizens, giving them a voice and the ability to celebrate the power of women, and idea of female power is strikingly an almost proto-feminist concept, which is very relevant to this day, with speeches from the play even recited at suffragist meetings.
		However, this is undermined by the outdated presentation of Medea as sex-obsessed, making it less relevant

Exemplar 4 shows an effective way of comparing ancient and modern responses to the role of women.

Question 8*

8* Does it matter that the plot of *Peace* deals with things that are impossible in the real world? [20]

The general consensus among responses was that audiences, whether modern or ancient, are perfectly able to enjoy fantasy and creative ideas that remain completely implausible. Responses to this question tended to focus on providing examples of incongruity or symbolism, and more evaluation was needed to provide an over-arching response to the question. Wherever possible, respondents should aim to focus less on the specifics of the plot than the wider and deeper view of the ancient world that the play provides.

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