

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

CLASSICAL GREEK

J292

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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. 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 can be downloaded from OCR.

Paper 4 series overview

The overall standard on this paper was very good. Most candidates knew the text well and showed a sound knowledge on the short-answer questions. The 8-mark and 10-mark questions also produced some excellent work, and the best candidates were able to offer a range of language and/or literary points, especially in the 10-mark essay where candidates were required to select and interpret various episodes relating to the theme of romance. However, some candidates did not know the text thoroughly and this led to inaccurate and often bland answers, especially on the 8-mark and 10-mark questions. Some candidates found it difficult to make language points effectively, and it was a pity to see, occasionally, otherwise strong candidates denied a Level 4 mark on Question 8 simply because they included no language points. Similarly, marks can be lost by failing to include a translation (or accurate paraphrase) with each piece of Greek quoted.

Question 1 (a)

1 Read the passage and answer the questions.

αὐτίκα δ' Ἥως ἦλθεν εὐθρονος, ἣ μιν ἔγειρε
 Ναυσικάαν εὐπεπλον· ἄφαρ δ' ἀπεθαύμασ' ὄνειρον,
 βῆ δ' ἴμεναι διὰ δώμαθ', ἵν' ἀγγείλειε τοκεῦσι,
 πατρὶ φίλω καὶ μητρὶ· κινήσατο δ' ἔνδον ἑόντας·

Homer, *Odyssey* 6, lines 48–51

(a) αὐτίκα ... εὐπεπλον (lines 1–2): what did Dawn do upon her arrival?

.....
 [1]

Almost all candidates answered correctly, although 'Dawn awoke her' was not acceptable (see Mark Scheme).

Question 1 (b)

(b) βῆ δ' ἴμεναι ... ἑόντας (lines 3–4): why did Nausicaa make her way through the house?

.....

 [2]

Answers such as 'to announce it to her parents' achieved full marks, but candidates should be encouraged to contextualise (especially pronouns) to make the overall sense clear. Nevertheless, candidates should not be under the impression that full sentences are always required, particularly for questions worth only 1 or 2 marks.

Question 3 (b)

- (b) μήτηρ ... γυναιξίν (lines 2–6): how does Homer emphasise the number and quality of the supplies which Nausicaa's mother prepares?

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

[4]

A few candidates only tackled one element of 'number and quality'. There was a tendency to list the various picnic items without saying how the language generated emphasis. Answers should try to focus on a key word or phrase rather than writing out a whole line/sentence, and references giving only the first and last words (e.g. 'μήτηρ ... παντοίην') should be avoided as the key Greek word/phrase may not be quoted in the answer at all. A number of candidates referred to the repetition of ἐν (lines 3–4) but did not include any context, thus missing out on full marks for a potentially good point.

Exemplar 1

~~Homer~~ Homer describes three things (a tricolon) that her mother gives her: "ὄψα" (hot food), "οἴνου" (wine) and "ἕρπον ἔλαιον" (liquid olive oil). This emphasises just how many things she gave Nausicaa.

Homer also says that she gave her ^{liquid} olive oil in a golden flask ("ἔδωκεν δὲ χρυσοῦ ἐν λυκαυθῶ ἕρπον ἔλαιον"). The choice of the word "χρυσόου" (golden) shows the extent to which her mother ensured her supplies were of the best quality.

Exemplar 1 illustrates good answer technique. The 1st bullet point identifies three items specifically and accurately, in both Greek and English, and then links to the question. The 2nd bullet point gives a translation of the relevant sentence to provide context, highlights the key word in both Greek and English (thus it was unnecessary to write out the whole sentence in Greek), and then links the point to the question.

Exemplar 2

- Her Mother put foods of all different sorts in ~~the~~ a basket
 "μητρ δ'ερ δ'ωπα τίθει" ~~και~~
 and she poured wine into a goat skin wineskin - "εν δ'οινον ~~εκειν~~
 εκευαν οκω εν αγειω"

Exemplar 2 illustrates weak response technique. Although the opening English sentence quotes a potentially relevant section of the passage, the accompanying Greek is inaccurate (in copying out the text, the candidate has jumped from line 2 to line 3), too long, and omits the key Greek word (παντοίην). The second part of the answer contains accurate English and Greek, but the quotation is again too long, and no specific word/phrase is highlighted. Neither point is directly linked to the question.

Question 4 (a) (i)

4 Read the passage and answer the questions.

αί δ' ὅτε δὴ ποταμοῖο ῥόον περικαλλέ' ἴκοντο,
 ἔνθ' ἦ τοι πλυννοὶ ἦσαν ἐπιηετανοί, πολὺ δ' ὕδωρ
 καλὸν ὑπεκπρορῆει μάλα περ ῥυπόωντα καθῆραι,
 ἔνθ' αἶ γ' ἡμίονους μὲν ὑπεκπροέλυσαν ἀπήνης.
 καὶ τὰς μὲν σεῦαν ποταμὸν πάρα δινήεντα
 τρώγειν ἄγρωστιν μελιιδέα· τὰ δ' ἀπ' ἀπήνης
 εἶματα χερσὶν ἔλοντο καὶ ἐσφόρεον μέλαν ὕδωρ,
 στεῖβον δ' ἐν βόθροισι θοῶς ἔριδα προφέρουσαι.

5

Homer, *Odyssey* 6, lines 85–92

(a) αἰ δ' ὅτε ... μελιιδέα (lines 1–6):

(i) what did the maids do when they arrived at the washing place?

.....

 [3]

For this question (and the following question – see below) some candidates used the wrong line references and described the maids washing the clothes (lines 6–8) instead of the sending of the mules off to pasture (lines 1–6). Where multiple questions are set on a single passage, candidates would be well advised to mark off the different sections on the question paper.

Question 4 (a) (ii)

(ii) what does Homer tell us about the water available for washing?

.....

.....

..... [2]

This proved to be a very straightforward question as lines 1–6 of the passage included a lot of information about ‘the water available for washing’. However, some candidates again took part of their answer from the wrong lines e.g. μέλαν – dark.

Question 4 (b)

(b) τὰ δ' ἀπ' ἀπήνης ... προφέρουσαι (lines 6–8):

what impression does Homer give of the maids here? Make **two** points.

-
-

[2]

Most candidates referred to the maids being hardworking or competitive, but some went for a less obvious view which could only be credited if backed up by some evidence.

Question 5

5* Read the passage and answer the question.

ὡς εἰπὼν θάμνων ὑπεδύσετο δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς,
 ἐκ πυκινῆς δ' ὕλης πτόρθον κλάσε χειρὶ παχείῃ
 φύλλων, ὡς ῥύσασαιτο περὶ χροῖ μήδεα φωτός.
 βῆ δ' ἴμεν ὡς τε λέων ὄρεσίτροφος ἀλκί πεποιθώς,
 ὅς τ' εἶσ' ὑόμενος καὶ ἀήμενος, ἐν δέ οἱ ὄσσε
 δαίεται· αὐτὰρ ὁ βουσί μετέρχεται ἢ ὄϊεσσιν
 ἠὲ μετ' ἀγροτέρας ἐλάφους· κέλεται δέ ἐ γαστήρ
 μῆλων πειρήσοντα καὶ ἐς πυκινὸν δόμον ἐλθεῖν·

Homer, *Odyssey* 6, lines 127–134

How does Homer convey the frightening appearance and behaviour of Odysseus in this passage?

In your answer you may wish to consider:

- his emergence from the bushes
- the simile

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

[8]

Most candidates showed a detailed and accurate knowledge of this passage, although even the best answers occasionally lost marks by failing to include language points. The case for δῖος (god-like) as an epithet indicating Odysseus' frightening appearance was often argued weakly, and the enjambement of φύλλων (line 3) yielded little worthwhile analysis. δαίεται (line 6) was a more fruitful example of enjambement, but its effectiveness was undermined by those candidates who described the 'blazing eyes' as belonging to Odysseus rather than to the lion. Such errors with simile analysis are not uncommon, and the potential even for extreme misunderstanding ("Odysseus is thinking about eating a sheep") should not be underestimated. It should be noted that precise technical terms are not required. The 'over-running of a line' would be perfectly acceptable for 'enjambement', and in any case technical terms are often misunderstood and misapplied; 'tricolon' was the main culprit on this paper. Much was made of Odysseus' frightening strength in lines 2–3 (ἐκ πυκινῆς ... φύλλων), although the phrase ἀλκί πεποιθώς (trusting in its strength) was often underused. Weaker answers tended to lose sight of the question, especially when discussing Odysseus' nakedness in line 3, and drifted into a narrative summary of the passage.

Exemplar 3

He is also presented as ~~so~~ frightening
 as we see his strength as Homer
 writes - he broke off a sapling off
 of the ^{thick} ~~forest~~ ^{branch} with his hand - ἐκ
 πυκινῆς ὕλης πτόρθου κλάσε χειρὶ
 παχείῃ φύλλων.

Exemplar 3 illustrates weak response technique. The Greek extract (inaccurately translated/paraphrased) does not pick out any key word(s), and the link between Odysseus' actions and the 'frightening appearance and behaviour' of the question is hardly explained/developed at all. Candidates should also be encouraged to look for an appropriate language/style point alongside each 'content' point. Here, a reference to the vocabulary in line 2 of the passage (e.g. πυκινῆς, κλάσε, παχείη) could have been used to show how Odysseus' savage/animal strength (= 'frightening behaviour') is emphasised.

Question 6

6 Read the passage and answer the question.

σμερδαλέος δ' αὐτῆσι φάνη κεκακωμένος ἄλμη,
 τρέσσαν δ' ἄλλυδις ἄλλη ἐπ' ἠϊόνας προύχούσας·
 οἷη δ' Ἀλκινόου θυγάτηρ μένε· τῆ γὰρ Ἀθήνη
 θάρσος ἐνὶ φρεσὶ θῆκε καὶ ἐκ δέος εἴλετο γυίων.

Translation:

*Terrifying, he appeared to them caked in sea-salt,
 and they fled in panic, all in different directions, along the jutting shore;
 only the daughter of Alcinous remained; for Athene
 placed courage in her heart and removed the fear from her limbs.*

Homer, *Odyssey* 6, lines 137–140

How does Homer make this passage dramatic?

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

-
-

[4]

As with Question 3(b) above, some candidates tended to side-track the question, quoting an example of dramatic content rather than explaining how or why it was dramatic i.e. not enough attention paid to the language of the passage. And yet there were several examples of emphatic language, e.g. σμερδαλέος ('terrifying') first word; κεκακωμένος ('caked') polysyllable (and onomatopoeia?); ἄλλυδις ἄλλη ('in different directions') alliteration; θάρσος ... γυίων (line 4) repetition of idea for emphasis.

Question 7 (b)

(b) εἰ δέ ... εἰσοιχνεῦσαν (lines 4–8): what does Odysseus say about Nausicaa’s mortal family?

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [4]

Most answers about Nausicaa’s mortal family were full and accurate. A few stopped short of line 8 (λευσσόντων ... εἰσοιχνεῦσαν), thus losing a mark. ‘such a sprout’ was a curious choice of expression for τοιόνδε θάλος, occurring more than once.

Question 7 (c)

(c) κεῖνος ... ἀγάγηται (lines 9–10).

Pick out and translate the **Greek word** which gives Odysseus’ opinion of Nausicaa’s future husband.

Greek word:

English translation:

[2]

Answered very well; almost all candidates managed to translate μακάριστος in the superlative.

Question 8

8* To what extent does Homer suggest that there could be a romantic relationship between Odysseus and Nausicaa?

You should support your answer with a range of references to the section of *Odyssey 6* you have read, and you may include passages printed on the question paper. [10]

Although perhaps less straightforward than usual, this essay question seemed to provide an opportunity for candidates to produce some excellent answers. As well as noting the mention of marriage both at the beginning and at the end of the text, many argued the motives of Athene (in arranging the meeting between Nausicaa and Odysseus) both for and against a romantic relationship. The many references to Nausicaa’s attractive qualities were nicely analysed, and a number of candidates saw parallels in the way the two lead characters were presented (e.g. both were likened to gods, both were shown as manipulative) and thus concluded that Homer could be setting them up as an obvious match. Some candidates however shot themselves in the foot by stating that Nausicaa went to the wash-pools specifically looking to meet a future husband. There was a tendency for some candidates to drift away from the text and talk about Odysseus being married to Penelope and his past affairs with Circe and Calypso, perhaps thinking, mistakenly, that this wider knowledge would gain extra marks.

Exemplar 5

Homer suggests strongly that there could be a romantic relationship between the two: both are compared to gods and both are from noble families. Nausicaa is clearly looking for marriage and Odysseus seems to think highly of her. The gods also seem to favour the match.

Homer shows Nausicaa to be looking for marriage. She says she was ashamed to mention blooming marriage to her dear father. However, this suggests she is very much intending to marry and the next man we meet is Odysseus, implying that they could be a potential couple.

Odysseus definitely seems to like Nausicaa. He says that the man who prevails with bride gifts and ^{leads} ~~takes~~ her to his house is the most blessed beyond all other men in his heart. This shows how highly he thinks of Nausicaa and suggests he would be delighted to be the man to marry her. Moreover, he suggests that she is so ~~very~~ special that the man would bring her bride gifts not the other way round which was customary.

This exemplar illustrates some features that contribute to a strong response. The opening paragraph is a clear, concise introduction indicating the various elements to be discussed; this suggests a planned, organised approach to answering the question. The next two paragraphs deal directly with the topic of marriage, firstly from Nausicaa's perspective and then from Odysseus'. In each case there is, importantly, a detailed and accurate reference to the text that is developed to show how the evidence might be used to answer the question.

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