

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

CLASSICAL GREEK

H444

For first teaching in 2016

H444/01 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 1 series overview

This is the Unseen Translation paper. At this level, an amount of interpretation and even speculation is required. In both passages, candidates who read the English introduction carefully found there was a great deal of information, and indeed vocabulary, to help them.

Both passages were challenging, the verse passage particularly so, but candidates were resourceful.

Take time to maintain the linguistic basics

Several differentiating points, especially in the prose passage, hinged on core GCSE vocabulary and grammar. For example, a considerable number of candidates missed the aorist passive -χθησαν with agent introduced by ὑπό in Question 1 part (ii), even though these are routinely encountered at GCSE.

Following the approach documented in the 2018 Examiners' Report, on both this paper and Paper 2, examiners referred to the Defined Vocabulary Lists for both GCSE and AS Level when making choices about what to accept, and what alternative meanings to expect. This is not because either list is prescribed for A Level, but because examiners consider the lists to represent a scope of knowledge that an A Level candidate is expected to surpass, and substantially. In the comments below, "(GCSE)" and "(AS)" indicate that a word appears on those lists. The intention is constructive: to help centres and candidates by drawing attention to Greek words that significant numbers of candidates find difficult to pin down even after some years of study, most especially where more than one distinct meaning may be in use. To take one example, familiarity with the various forms of πείθω and πείθομαι as distinct from πάσχω (all met at GCSE) was a great help in this paper.

Brackets or slashes should be a tool of last resort only

The slashes in the translations offered in the mark scheme are to illustrate some possible alternatives that should all be accepted; brackets indicate words that are not necessarily required to express the meaning of the Greek in English. Neither of these have a place in candidate responses, except in the very limited example below.

Candidates should have the confidence to write communicative English: they will only ever lose marks on this paper if their English does not communicate the meaning of the Greek, which a quick re-read will make obvious. The rubric states that contradictory responses will not receive credit: this clearly applies to "for not paying in full to them the justice/fine" or "I feel pain at your evils/bad deeds". Brackets are recommended only to clarify a heavily metaphorical expression (e.g. "he told him to get his head out of the gutter (lit. to think better thoughts)"); but of course, if the metaphor is appropriate, the brackets will not be necessary. Examiners see perhaps one candidate response in a year where a bracketed explanation was helpful, and – to reiterate the essential point – brackets that offer any kind of alternative meaning are likely to be harmful.

Exemplar 1

		had done wrong. But the Eleans were firm
		already
		in their opinion opinion (l.it. = held the same
		argument), because ^{so} they could not be persuaded
		that they did not act wrongly.

The candidate, noticing that their idiom “were firm in their opinion” does not directly translate τοῦ αὐτοῦ and is quite far from the Greek, has clarified by adding a literal translation in brackets *after* their preferred translation; and the meaning of the two is in no way contradictory. Although this was not necessary (the initial translation would have been marked fully correct as all meaning is preserved), the literal translation was not penalised.

Handwriting was generally good. A small number of candidates of all ability levels did not write their translations on alternate lines, which made their responses harder to mark. It is completely acceptable and often preferable to put an asterisk or number and rewrite a tricky sentence in full underneath the main answer. Very often where words are squeezed in, an essential word ends up crossed out and not rewritten; such a word cannot be credited.

There was little evidence of candidates under-performing due to time pressure; there were also very few gaps to be seen. This is good news.

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"> • were familiar with words on the GCSE and AS Level DVL, including principal parts and all variant meanings, as well as a wider range of vocabulary • paid close attention to the use of particles, most importantly paired μεν / δε • checked that they had translated all of the Greek words • appeared familiar with the genres of both texts and knew what features to expect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • translated pairs of words that could not agree as if they did • defaulted frequently to translating verbs as third-person singular aorists regardless of morphology • were unclear on structures that use the infinitive, sometimes translating these as purpose clauses as if English • were vague in applying prepositions.

Section A

Question 1

- 1 Translate the following passage into English.

Please write your translation on alternate lines.

[50]

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Although much of the grammar of this passage was straightforward, the “they said... but the others said...” nature of the plot caused some confusion. A key differentiator turned out to be the tenses of infinitives and participles, with the difference between aorist and future participles holding the key to (for example) sections (v) and (viii).

Section i: Almost all candidates got off to a strong start asserting that the Games took place in that/this summer (English is sufficiently flexible with deixis that both were accepted.) The most common problem was the placing of $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\nu$. Many candidates had Androstenes winning the first pancration or winning first prize, but the adverbial interpretation was required.

Section ii: As noted above, the aorist passive + $\acute{\upsilon}\pi\acute{o}$ was problematic; even not knowing the vocabulary, a candidate solid on GCSE grammar could expect to get at least as far as “The Lacedaemonians, of the temple, (GCSE) by the Eleans were [something]-ed” which achieved more marks than versions which had them destroying the Eleans’ temple. It is always better to write English that makes sense than translation-ese or isolated words, but the combination of assuming a genitive direct object and ignoring a preposition ought to have rung alarm bells. Familiarity with $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\omega\nu$ (GCSE) led a majority to find a meaning for the second infinitive and almost all handled the participle phrase well.

Section iii: $\phi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\kappa\omicron\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ was generally handled well, although the tense of $\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\pi\acute{\epsilon}\mu\psi\alpha\iota$ eluded many, who made it future and had the Eleans threatening hoplites on the Spartans. $\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\omega\nu$ was frequently omitted, but interestingly many candidates appeared to have added “their” at a later stage, perhaps while checking through; their time was well spent. There were many instances of “truces” and “treaties” for the always-plural $\sigma\pi\omicron\nu\delta\acute{\alpha}\iota$ (AS).

Section iv: This mostly went well. The chief issue was the translation of $\kappa\alpha\tau\acute{\alpha}$ as “according to” (GCSE) rather than “from” which was not accepted (the fine was issued to the Lacedaemonians as a whole, not to each hoplite to pay). A few found $\delta\iota\sigma\chi\acute{\iota}\lambda\iota\alpha\iota$ (AS) difficult. The range of phrases for the last four words (including “as the law set out” and “following the law”) showed candidates confident of the meaning of the Greek making strong choices in their translation.

Section v: “Ambassadors” was required rather than “elders” (both meanings AS). A significant number took this as nominative and ended up in difficulties completing the phrase. There were many sensible translations of $\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\epsilon\gamma\omicron\nu$, from “counter-argued” to “appealed” deixis – almost every attempt to go further than simply “said” was successful. “Said in reply” was common too.

Section vi: $\pi\omega$ was helpful to following the logic of what they said – that they shouldn’t be fined for sending soldiers prior to communication of the truce – and some rendering of this was required. Those who had trouble with elided $\acute{\omicron}\tau\epsilon$ (AS) had usually missed $\pi\omega$. A significant number did not distinguish $\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\text{-}$ from $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\text{-}$ as a prefix, even when they had translated $\acute{\epsilon}\varsigma$ successfully in the same sentence.

Section vii: $\pi\alpha\rho\prime \acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$ was a challenge here, but interestingly most candidates who made a slight error did something that made less sense than the literal “beside them” (which was not accepted). A majority understood that the meaning was something like “on their side”. $\sigma\phi\acute{\iota}\sigma\iota\nu \acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$ (AS) was required to be reflexive; missing this was the most common error.

Section viii: A range of creative words to render ἡσυχάζοντων (AS) showed candidates thinking carefully about the story (“living peacefully”, “lying low”); ὡς ἐν σπονδαῖς was rendered well as “since they were in a truce”. Object-less προσδεχομένων felt similar to πέμπων in 2019 and examiners were similarly flexible. The final phrase was tricky (as shown by the variant approaches in published translations of this passage) and examiners remained flexible, while mindful that the vocabulary ought to be familiar.

Section ix: A particularly taxing section, but generally well done. ἔτι was critical to success, and although omission was treated as a slight error, if it was omitted comprehension was bound to suffer.

Section x: τοῦ αὐτοῦ “same” (GCSE) was a common omission, even though the middle verb + genitive was handled well by most and a good range of idiomatic expressions appeared. The principal challenges here were to make use of ἄν, and to identify the final infinitive to mean “be persuaded” rather than “obey”. The clue was the ὡς clause, which was an unremarkable indirect statement. Candidates might have found it helpful to divide up the phrases: a vertical line before ὡς and another before μὴ might make everything clearer.

Section B

Question 2 (a)

2 (a) Translate the following passage into English.

Please write your translation on alternate lines.

[45]

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This was a very stretching passage, but candidates worked hard to make sense of it and almost all recovered considerably towards the end of the passage and were rewarded for persevering. Knowledge of tragic vocabulary was notably good – only very few were not in the right ballpark for ἔφουν, πενθεῖν, πήματα and ἀλγῶ.

As remarked in previous years, candidates who did well showed signs of knowing what to expect from a speech of this kind; it was, in fact, a textbook speech. In general, characters tend to use speeches to

address people or the gods, explain their own position, and get things done by giving directions (using imperatives). (They also (as here) often conclude by making remarks about themselves.) Here, there was quite a clear division between those who recognised in the first line that Creon is addressing the ἄνδρες, and those who in the absence of a verb preferred to supply one in the third person plural (or even singular). Further examples are noted below.

Assessment for learning

Make time to read examples of tragic speeches and stichomythia (including interactions with the Chorus), in Greek but also out loud in English, to learn to recognise the common features of passages from tragedy.

Later in the course, once candidates are familiar with these features, they may appreciate A E Housman's spoof tragic episode (which can be found, together with introduction and with D S Raven's translation into tragic Greek, at <https://antigonejournal.com/2021/10/fragment-of-a-greek-tragedy/>)

Section i: A large number of candidates, many of them otherwise high achieving, did not indicate that Creon was speaking. A sizeable number thought they detected οἰκτεῖρω (AS) and introduced "pitiable" or similar; the suffix -τορ is worth learning to recognise.

Section ii: The multiple accusatives here caused difficulty, but a methodical approach would have yielded success. τιν' (GCSE) could only agree with φόβον, leaving ὑμᾶς εἰληφότας – and those who identified the latter as a participle were able to fit a reasonable meaning together. ἐπεισόδου was mostly translated well; interestingly of those who did not see ἐπ-εις-όδος, very few offered "episode".

Section iii: ὄν could not relate to ἐπεισόδου, but understandably was often taken that way. Here those candidates who seemed primed for the ingredients of a tragic speech were able to handle the imperatives; that the negative was μή ought to have warned others off writing "you neither fear nor do you..." The principal difficulty, though, was the temptation to take ὡς δρᾶν as a purpose clause, which in practice almost always led to a maximum mark of 3 ("I have come not to do what you are planning", or similar).

Section iv: Examiners noted that ἐπεὶ is given as both "when" and "since" at in the GCSE DVL and so "when" was taken as a slight error. σθένουσαν was handled well by a majority, but the adverbial force of μέγα was only rarely identified. εἴ τιν' Ἑλλάδος was perhaps the hardest phrase to construe in the entire paper, with the most frequent responses offering a variation on "if I am/it is a certain Greek", which was rewarded to the extent that it reflects the meaning.

Section v: As reflected in the wording of the mark scheme, it was common to treat τηλικόσδ' as agreeing with τόνδε. This was another moment when familiarity with the language of tragic dialogue would help, alerting candidates to a reference to another character onstage. πείσων (GCSE) was an unremarkable example of a future participle expressing purpose, but difficulties with ἀπεστάλην (στέλλω, AS) interfered with this: most especially, the position of ἄνδρα τόνδε in the previous line, which seemed to invite taking as the object of ἀπεστάλην with a conjectured meaning. The final phrase was usually dealt with well.

Section vi: Interestingly, candidates who had not treated ὑπό correctly in the first passage often had no issues here.

Section vii: A very challenging section. The trickiest point was γένει; examiners were briefed to be flexible with this but very few responses came close to a workable meaning. Encouragingly though τὰ τοῦδε πενθεῖν πῆματα was generally dealt with well, often with “feel pain at” rather than “lament” for the infinitive but rarely any further from the mark than that. εἰς πλεῖστον however was not often taken correctly as adverbial, and even less frequently connected with πόλεως.

Section viii: Even if ἴκοῦ was morphologically tricky (noting that ἀφικοῦ might appear at GCSE), the vocative made it clear that a command was being given. “Oedipus, hearing my plea to come home” appeared quite often, suggesting that the genitive ἐμοῦ was misleading. The second half was usually done well.

Section ix: Although this was another hard section, most candidates bounced back here and were rewarded for writing something feasible to finish the passage. A majority made sense of the connecting ἐκ δὲ τῶν. Knowing ἔφυν as “I am by nature” proved helpful, but here it was common to make this third person singular. πλεῖστον again caused trouble; but any translation that used this to reinforce κάκιστος was accepted (including “very worst”). γέρον proved a sting in the tail: many candidates were unclear that this was a direct address and added in a verb.

Question 2 (b)

(b) Write out and scan lines 16 and 17.

[5]

ὄσωπερ, εἰ μὴ πλεῖστον ἀνθρώπων ἔφυν
κάκιστος, ἀλγῶ τοῖσι σοῖς κακοῖς, γέρον.

As is normal, this was mostly well done. The most common slip was to mark the first syllable of the third metron in line 16 (-θρῶ-) as light.

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