

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

CLASSICAL GREEK

J292

For first teaching in 2016

J292/05 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 are 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 5 series overview

The overall standard on this paper was sound and many candidates enjoyed responding to the questions. Candidates had plenty of time, as evidenced by the large number of scripts which used the extra pages. Knowledge of the text was sound in most cases, and this featured well in the short-answer comprehension and translation questions. Some candidates were less familiar with the text.

- All candidates should remember to pay close attention to the words or lines relevant to the specific question asked and not go outside these parameters. Candidates lost marks by referencing sections of text which were not included in individual questions.

In the 4-mark Questions 2 and 5b, and in the 8-mark Question 6, it was generally the case that answers which gave shorter quotations (plus English translation) were more successful than answers which gave long quotations from the passages.

- The best candidates often found short quotations easier to translate accurately and to analyse effectively, while longer quotations ran the risk of becoming unwieldy or lacking focus.

Many candidates displayed sound knowledge and opinion in the 8-mark question and found there was plenty for them to source and discuss, although some candidates were unable to support their opinions with satisfactory or sufficient evidence from the passage. The best responses included a range of language and literary style points, while remaining closely aligned to the question asked. The 10-mark question almost always began well, but some candidates moved swiftly from the question asked ('It is difficult to like or admire Electra or Orestes') to one of their own making, often discussing how Euripides evoked pity rather than admiration, even though Question 6 had already explored pity for Electra. Again, in the 10-mark question some candidates were unable to support their opinions with satisfactory or sufficient evidence from the set text.

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"> • Paid attention to the parameters of specific passages. • Responded to the wording of the 8-mark analysis and 10-mark extended response questions. • Revealed knowledge and understanding of the set text in both granular detail and contextual overview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignored the parameters of specific passages. • Paid loose attention to the wording of the 8-mark analysis and 10-mark extended response questions. • Placed excessive reliance on knowledge of the Electra story outside the restrictions of the set text.

Question 1 (a)

1 Read the passage and answer the questions.

Electra	λόγον δὲ δὴ τίν' ἦλθες ἐκ κείνου φέρων;	
Orestes	εἰ ζῆς, ὅπως τε ζῶσα συμφορᾶς ἔχεις.	
Electra	οὐκοῦν ὀρᾶς μου πρῶτον ὡς ξηρὸν δέμας.	
Orestes	λύπαις γε συντετηκός, ὥστε με στένειν.	
Electra	καὶ κρᾶτα πλόκαμόν τ' ἐσκυθισμένον ξυρῶ.	5
Orestes	δάκνει σ' ἀδελφός ὃ τε θανῶν ἴσως πατήρ.	
Electra	οἴμοι· τί γάρ μοι τῶνδ' ἐστὶ φίλτερον;	

Euripides, *Electra*, lines 237–243

(a) λόγον ... φέρων (line 1): what does Electra want to know?

.....

.....

..... [2]

Generally fine. Almost all candidates achieved the first mark for 'news / message', but some appeared confused as to who the news was from and so did not always give the answer required ('from Orestes / her brother').

Question 1 (b)

(b) οὐκοῦν ... ξυρῶ (lines 3–5): what do we learn about Electra's appearance?

.....

.....

..... [2]

Very good answers. Most candidates scored full marks.

Question 1 (c)

(c) δάκνει ... φίλτερον (lines 6–7): why is Electra so distressed?

.....

.....

..... [2]

Candidate responses were not always clear and those who referenced the death of Electra's brother did not show an understanding of why Electra was distressed.

Question 2

2 Read the passage and answer the question.

Electra	ἐγημάμεσθ', ὦ ξεῖνε, θανάσιμον γάμον.	
Orestes	ᾧμωξ' ἀδελφὸν σόν. Μυκηναίων τίνι;	
Electra	οὐχ ᾧ πατήρ μ' ἤλπιζεν ἐκδώσειν ποτέ.	
Orestes	εἶφ', ὡς ἀκούσας σῶ κασιγνήτῳ λέγω.	
Electra	ἐν τοῖσδ' ἐκείνου τηλορὸς ναίω δόμοις.	5
Orestes	σκαφεύς τις ἢ βουφορβὸς ἄξιος δόμων.	
Electra	πένης ἀνὴρ γενναῖος ἔς τ' ἐμ' εὐσεβής.	

Translation:

Electra	I have married, stranger, in a deathly marriage.	
Orestes	I lament for your brother. To which of the Mycenaeans?	
Electra	Not one to whom my father ever hoped to give me.	
Orestes	Tell me, so I can tell your brother what I've heard.	
Electra	I live in this house of his, far away.	5
Orestes	Is he a labourer or a herdsman, as befitting such a house?	
Electra	He is a poor man, but noble and respectful towards me.	

Euripides, *Electra*, lines 247–253

How does Electra emphasise her disappointment with her marriage?

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

1

.....

.....

.....

.....

2

.....

.....

.....

[4]

There was plenty to say on this passage and the best candidates tackled the question well. Candidates are reminded that translations of quoted Greek should be included in their answers: however, less successful responses did not use the translation provided, omitted to include a translation, or offered an incorrect translation. Without sound knowledge of the text candidates are likely to struggle with both translation and with making stylistic literary points, as was the case here.

Exemplar 1

- 1 ~~It is the~~ she uses the word ~~πένης~~.
 "Θανάσιμον" to describe the marriage, which is
~~not~~ a contradiction because marriage is supposed
 to bring happiness.
- 2 πένης ^{which means 'poor'} promoted at the beginning of line 7,
 which shows she thinks that is more important than
 the fact he is noble and respectful.

In Exemplar 1, the first bullet point is achieved less highly because the candidate quotes θανάσιμον but does not translate it. The second point is much stronger: the candidate quotes and translates πένης, and also adds a stylistic comment.

Question 3

3 Read the passage and answer the question.

Orestes	καὶ πῶς γάμον τοιοῦτον οὐχ ἦσθη λαβῶν;
Electra	οὐ κύριον τὸν δόντα μ' ἠγεῖται, ξένε.
Orestes	ξυνηκ' Ὀρέστη μὴ ποτ' ἐκτείση δίκην.
Electra	τοῦτ' αὐτὸ ταρβῶν· πρὸς δὲ καὶ σώφρων ἔφυ.

Euripides, *Electra*, lines 258–261

Translate this passage into English.

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [5]

The translation was reasonably well known, although frequent omissions on otherwise sound translations suggested a lack of care rather than a lack of knowledge. Common omissions included ποτε (1.3), αὐτὸ (1.4) and καὶ (1.4). Omission of words was a major mark loser for those who clearly knew their texts.

Question 3: Tip for the passage for translation

The best translations often showed evidence on the exam paper of the candidate using a pencil to lightly tick off each Greek word to make sure it had been translated and not omitted.

Question 4 (a)

4 Read the passage and answer the questions.

Orestes	μήτηρ δέ σ' ἡ τεκοῦσα ταῦτ' ἠνέσχετο;	
Electra	γυναῖκες ἀνδρῶν, ᾧ ξέν', οὐ παίδων φίλαι.	
Orestes	τίνος δέ σ' οὐνεχ' ὕβρισ' Αἴγισθος τάδε;	
Electra	τεκεῖν μ' ἐβούλετ' ἀσθενῆ, τοιῶδε δούς.	
Orestes	ὡς δῆθε παῖδας μὴ τέκοις ποινάτορας;	5
Electra	τοιαῦτ' ἐβούλευσ'.	

Euripides, *Electra*, lines 264–269

(a) γυναῖκες ... φίλαι (line 2): why do you think Electra says this?

.....

.....

..... [2]

This was a straightforward question and was generally well answered.

Question 4 (b)

(b) τίνος ... τάδε (line 3): pick out and translate the **Greek** word which shows how Aegisthus treated Electra.

Greek word:

English translation:

[2]

Most candidates correctly chose the Greek word ὕβρισ'. More challenging was to translate the word in context: infinitives or participles were not acceptable.

Question 4 (b): Tip for translation in context

Translate the Greek word in context.

Greek word: ὕβρισ'

English translation: '(he) insulted', NOT 'to insult' or 'insulting'.

Question 4 (c)

(c) τεκεῖν ... ἐβούλευσ' (lines 4–6): what do we learn about Aegisthus' plan?

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

Most candidates achieved both marks for this question.

Question 5 (a) (i)

5 Read the passage and answer the questions.

Orestes	ὁ κατθανῶν δὲ σὸς πατὴρ τύμβου κυρεῖ;	
Electra	ἔκυρσεν ὡς ἔκυρσεν, ἐκβληθεὶς δόμων.	
Orestes	οἴμοι, τόδ' οἶον εἶπας· αἴσθησις γὰρ οὖν καὶ τῶν θυραίων πημάτων δάκνει βροτούς. λέξον δ', ἴν' εἰδῶς σῶ κασιγνήτῳ φέρω λόγους ἀτερπεῖς, ἀλλ' ἀναγκαίους κλύειν.	5

Euripides, *Electra*, lines 288–293

(a) ὁ κατθανῶν ... δόμων (lines 1–2):

(i) what does Orestes ask about Agamemnon?

..... [1]

Most candidates achieved this mark.

Question 5 (a) (ii)

(ii) what reply does Electra give?

..... [1]

Most candidates achieved this mark.

Question 5 (b)

(b) οἴμοι ... κλύειν (lines 3–6): how does Orestes show his shock at what he is being told?

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

1

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

[4]

Many candidates made a strong first point with reference to οἴμοι, although weaker responses should try and expand on undeveloped comments such as ‘οἴμοι means alas and so shows his shock’. Good answers included stylistic comments such as word position or use of an exclamation, as well as developed analysis like ‘the word spills out of his mouth before he can control his thoughts’. There was plenty to be said here, as shown in the MS. Candidates who gave lengthy quotations and translations often did themselves a disservice if they did not translate correctly or highlight the specific word in question.

Question 5: Tip for inclusion of quotations from the Greek

The best responses were those which quoted concisely and with focus on single Greek words or short phrases. Those candidates who prefer to give lengthy quotations or who employ ellipsis (e.g. quoting a whole line λόγους ἀτερπεῖς, ἀλλ’ ἀναγκαῖους κλύειν or offering the ellipsis of λόγους ... κλύειν) should be aware that this is not paying close attention to the Greek. A lengthy or elliptical quotation can lead to mistakes in translation, and force candidates to work harder to give focus to their chosen word(s).

Question 6*

6* Read the passage and answer the question.

ἐπεὶ δὲ κινεῖς μῦθον, ἱκετεύω, ξένη,
 ἄγγελ' Ὀρέστη τὰ μὰ κακείνου κακά,
 πρῶτον μὲν οἷοις ἐν πέπλοις ἀυλίζομαι,
 πίνω θ' ὅσῳ βέβριθ', ὑπὸ στέγαισί τε
 οἴαισι ναίω βασιλικῶν ἐκ δωμάτων,
 αὐτὴ μὲν ἐκμοχθοῦσα κερκίσιν πέπλους
 ἢ γυμνὸν ἔξω σῶμα καὶ στερήσομαι
 αὐτὴ δὲ πηγὰς ποταμίους φορομένη,
 ἀνέορτος ἱερῶν καὶ χορῶν τητωμένη.

5

Euripides, *Electra*, lines 302–310

How does Euripides create pity for Electra in this passage?

In your answer you may wish to consider:

- how she talks about her living conditions
- what she can and cannot do

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

[8]

There were some good answers here. Many candidates made well-explained points about ἀυλίζομαι and its association with animals being kept in a stall. There were a great number of points that could have been made for this question and most candidates did manage to focus on the points that were relevant to the question of how we feel pity for Electra. There was some evidence of texts not known / vocabulary misunderstood. For example, βασιλικῶν (l.5) on its own was often taken to mean 'royal palace', and δωμάτων (l.5) to mean 'roofs'. Reference to the chiasmus (l.9) was generally not done well and it is clear many candidates did not understand what a chiasmus was, what it was doing or how it helped to create pity for Electra. It is not enough to say 'the chiasmus emphasises Electra's misery'; while this may be true, candidates need to explain how the chiasmus works and how it creates pity.

Exemplar 2

One way Euripides creates pity for Electra in this passage is through the use of the word 'ἐκτενω' meaning 'I beg'. This shows how desperate and despairing she is over the matter, leading the reader to pity her.

Another way Euripides forces the reader to feel pity for Electra is through the description of Electra's and her husband's ~~relationship~~ challenges as 'woes' through the greek word 'κάκειου'. This dramatic depiction highlights the sorrow she feels for what is then a pitiful life.

Exemplar 2 shows less successful technique and poor knowledge of the set text in its response. The first paragraph correctly identifies and translates a key word from the text, but then does not develop the response with suitable commentary. The second paragraph confuses relationships by referring to Electra's husband and does not appear to know the meaning of the quoted Greek, suggesting that κάκειου means 'woes'.

Question 7 (a)

7 Read the passage and answer the questions.

αἷμα δ' ἔτι πατρὸς κατὰ στέγας
 μέλαν σέσηπεν, ὃς δ' ἐκεῖνον ἔκτανεν
 ἐς ταῦτ' αἰνῶν ἄρματ' ἐκφοιτᾷ πατρί,
 καὶ σκῆπτρ' ἐν οἷς Ἑλλησιν ἐστρατηλάτει
 μαιφόνοισι χερσὶ γαυροῦται λαβῶν. 5

Euripides, *Electra*, lines 318–322

(a) αἷμα ... σέσηπεν (lines 1–2): what detail does Electra give about her father's death?

.....

.....

..... [1]

Most candidates achieved this mark.

Question 7 (b)

(b) ὃς δ' ... πατρί (lines 2–3): what has Aegisthus been doing?

.....

.....

..... [2]

The question required acknowledging the two verbs αἰνῶν and ἐκφοιτᾷ and rewarded responses saying that (Aegisthus) had mounted the chariot(s) and was driving around. Translation of πατρί was not required. Many candidates scored one mark but not 2.

Question 7 (c)

(c) καὶ σκῆπτρ' ... λαβῶν (lines 4–5): why do you think this makes Electra angry?

.....

.....

..... [2]

Most candidates achieved 2 marks for this question.

Question 8*

8* 'It is difficult to like or admire Electra or Orestes in Euripides' *Electra*.' How far do you agree?

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

Candidates enjoyed this question which was both accessible and allowed the most successful candidates to shine and develop critical responses. There were some very good answers here, and many examples of the extra pages used showed that candidates had plenty of time in the exam. The best essays were clearly planned with paragraphs on the characters as well as analysis of their 'admirable' natures, with specific examples drawn from the text to support them. The benefits of an essay plan are clear: it calms the nerves, produces material and provides structure for the essay. A few candidates did not use paragraphs at all; this made it difficult for the examiners to distinguish between different points and perhaps indicated a lack of clarity in candidates' own minds as to where one point ended and another point began.

Candidates are encouraged to develop their responses for this question and to offer expanded paragraphs rather than a series of 'bullet point' answers. Candidates are reminded that examiners will endeavour to read untidy scripts, but an illegible word will remain as an illegible word.

A number of essays began by exploring the admirable natures of Electra and Orestes, but rapidly moved into an examination of pity or sympathy for them. Those who managed to relate pity to the question asked were able to produce fine responses. The best candidates had a good grasp of the set text as a whole and the strongest responses provided both AO2 evidence and AO3 analysis in their essays. Some candidates seemed to have less understanding of the set text, retelling instead the essentials of the Iphigeneia story, or else they developed analysis with only vague or insubstantial reference to the text. Usually these points gained little credit since they lacked specific reference to the prescribed text to support them.

Exemplar 3

Electra and Orestes are presented as very violent. For example, Electra mentions that she would like to kill her mother with the same axe that her father was killed with. This sounds difficult to like or admire as it is quite an unrelatable feeling. Furthermore, Orestes comes to see his sister in order to find out if she will be his accomplice in his plot to kill his step father and mother. These homicidal tendencies in either of the siblings are difficult to admire or like.

Exemplar 3 shows mostly good technique and knowledge of the set text in its response. The paragraph begins with an aspect of character – violence – and provides a specific example from the text which is not mentioned on the question paper. (Candidates are, of course, permitted to use examples from the question paper, but, in addition, should show knowledge of the prescribed text as a whole.) The candidate then relates the aspect of violence directly to the question. The paragraph continues with weaker analysis on Orestes, which would have gained more credit had the candidate included some further relatable evidence from the text.

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