

**GCSE (9-1)**

**Examiners' report**

# **CLASSICAL CIVILISATION**

**J199**

For first teaching in 2017

**J199/21 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 21 series overview

J199/21 (The Homeric World) is one of three Literature and Culture components for GCSE Classical Civilisation. This component focuses on the study of the culture of the Mycenaean Age and selected books of Homer's *Odyssey*. To do well on this paper, candidates need to show knowledge and understanding of what life was like in the Mycenaean Age and the themes, characterisation and plot of the *Odyssey*.

Examiners were once again impressed by the level of knowledge and understanding that many candidates were able to show in both halves of the paper. They often wrote persuasive and well-evidenced ideas, with sound knowledge of the prescribed literary and visual material sources. Some answers even went beyond the scope of the sources and texts themselves and the OCR coursebook.

Candidates seemed to have used the time very effectively; very few seemed to run out of time, and many used the extra spaces. As ever, candidates should be reminded to use the space at the end of the booklet before asking for extra paper and to identify in the main body of the answer that there is supplementary material. Candidates also often wrote beneath the proper answer space making it harder for examiners to see their answer on a computer screen.

A major issue for candidates was not reading the precise wording of the question. For example, many candidates would seemingly pick out a key word such as "shields" in Question 4b), but not focus on the use of the types of shields shown in the picture which was what the question stated. Equally, when asked about the Linear B tablet in Question 6, weaker responses simply stated what Linear B tablets show us in general.

### Assessment for learning



Get candidates to highlight key words in questions. Candidates will often highlight a single word, but this runs the risk of them discussing everything they know about a topic, instead a particular slant. They should highlight a key phrase instead.

Simple exam technique was another issue for candidates. There seemed more candidates who missed out questions of all lengths compared to other years. Candidates should realise that having a go is preferable to missing a question out.

Candidates sometimes lost marks needlessly by not referring to the printed source in stimulus questions. The analysis of the source was sometimes excellent, and the idea could only have come from one or two parts of the source, but candidates still have to make the connection to get the mark(s).

Detailed and extended response questions showed good knowledge, but often took too long to get going, meaning there was not the range of ideas and evidence shown. In detailed responses questions there were sometimes introductions and conclusions that took up about half the space.

### Introductions

Candidates often spent far too long on an introduction to the 8 mark questions. There is simply no need for one at all with examiners realising time is tight in the examination.

Many based half their answer on the printed source in detailed response questions, but ideally the source should be used for a quick point or two before moving on. Generally, the conclusion should be no more than four lines. These questions continue to be the most challenging part of the paper for many candidates. There is a tendency to write everything that is known about a topic and over narrate

information; answers were often too discursive. Candidates would do well to remember that the majority of the marks are for the ideas given, rather than the evidence for this.

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"> <li>• Took note of the precise wording in the question to answer the question that was set.</li> <li>• Clearly picked out information from the Insert to back up idea.</li> <li>• Provided precise examples in higher tariff questions and considered alternative viewpoints.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did not read the questions carefully and often included irrelevant information.</li> <li>• Made unsupported claims without using the Insert.</li> <li>• Gave vague examples.</li> <li>• Failed to realise that evidence could be interpreted in more than one way.</li> <li>• Spent too long describing facts and plot, with less time analysing. This analysis was often repetitive.</li> </ul>

## Section A overview

Section A comprises 45 marks worth of questions on the Mycenaean Age. These include questions that require short answers demonstrating knowledge and understanding, short analytical statements and a detailed response (8-mark) question. All of these are introduced by a stimulus source. Candidates must also write an extended response answer from a choice of two optional 15-mark questions.

Candidates were unsure of Source A of the insert, although those who recognised it did know why it was built underground. Few could say much about its design. Candidates generally knew about corbelling (despite frequent misspellings). The questions on hunting discriminated candidates well. Weaker scripts did not show specific knowledge of Mycenaean times, but stronger ones regularly commented on the weaponry and armour. Many scripts did not really use the source at all in these questions. There were some fine answers to the questions on religion, although some candidates talked about what other Linear B tablets told us. Some quoted ideas, others made points, but only the best candidates did both.

The Troy question was the best done of the high tariff questions on the paper. Candidates were often able to run through all the relevant ideas and scored full marks. The extended response answers (as ever) were very variable. Many were imaginative, analytical and a pleasure to read, but a similar number only made one or two points and gave vague examples to back up ideas.

### Question 1 (a)

Study **Source A**

1 (a) Where did this staircase lead to?

..... [1]

While many candidates knew this answer, there seemed a similar number who did not. It was commonly considered to be a tomb, while others considered it to be a sally port. Any periphrasis of cistern was accepted, but some candidates who had a rough recollection of what it was thought it led to an underground spring.

### Question 1 (b)

(b) **Apart from it being underground**, give one detail of the place that this staircase led to.

.....  
..... [1]

This question caused significant issues with most candidates getting it wrong. Many simply gave a description of what a cistern was, but unless they gave a description of the actual cistern, this was not given any marks.

Question 1 (c)

(c) Why was this place underground?

.....  
..... [1]

Most candidates answered this correctly, even if they had not got the first two parts correct. Having often stated that the place was a tomb, candidates were at least able to say that its underground location kept it safe in times of attack. Many wrote of sieges and, while not perhaps the major reason for keeping it underground, the coolness of the water was also given marks.

Question 2 (a)

2 (a) Name the building technique that was used to create the roof.

..... [1]

Most candidates knew this answer, even if the spelling was often incorrect.

Question 2 (b)

(b) What did this technique involve?

.....  
..... [1]

This question was often answered correctly, although answers were not always as clear as they could be. At times what was written was little more than 'bricks were piled on top of one another', with no reference to their size or how the blocks would meet. A few candidates thought the blocks got smaller as they went up.

Question 3 (a)

Study **Source B**

3 (a) In what part of Mycenae was this item found?

..... [1]

Most candidates knew this answer, but some thought it was Grave Circle B and others were too vague in simply stating it was found in a grave. More surprisingly, some thought that Tiryns and Troy were parts of Mycenae.

### Question 3 (b)

(b) How have archaeologists been able to date this item?

.....  
..... [1]

It seemed that most candidates put the same answer for this. Unfortunately, carbon dating wasn't how the age of the item could be dated as there is no carbon in it. However, a good number did comment on either the age of the Grave Circle or the types of shields being the key information. A few candidates did not read the question carefully enough and gave the date of the item.

### Question 4 (a)

4 (a) State **two** types of shield that are being used by the hunters in **Source B**.

1 .....  
.....  
2 .....  
..... [2]

The majority of candidates did not gain full marks on this question, but most did score something. Figure of eight shields was better known as a term than tower shields, but both types were repeatedly termed as round or rectangular. Examiners were particularly surprised to see the shields described as round when the picture clearly showed they were not.

### Question 4 (b)

(b) What does the use of these types of shields tell us about the Mycenaeans?

.....  
..... [1]

This question caused major issues as candidates seemed not to have read the question carefully enough. Examiners were looking for candidates to talk about the use of these types of shields, but a lot of comments were made about the use of shields in general. This often led to statements about the Mycenaeans being warlike, although the picture of a lion hunt would not have shown whether they were warlike or not.

There were some fine answers seen nonetheless, with a number of candidates recalling the use of these shield by Minoans, while others made reasonable assumptions about the Mycenaean warriors' strength or protection from them.



### Question 5

5 Using **Source B**, apart from the fact that lions were hunted, why do you think hunting would have been dangerous in the Mycenaean Age? Make **two** points.

1 .....

.....

.....

.....

2 .....

.....

.....

.....

[4]

Often candidates made statements that did not show enough knowledge of Mycenaean hunting and could have been applied to most periods in history. Such answers were not deemed worthy of marks. A typical example of this was the frequent discussion of limited medical care. Despite the advice not to discuss lions, many candidates still did, while others simply discussed the ferocity of other animals like boar. Candidates needed to focus more on the hunters than the animal being hunted.

It was a pity that some candidates made good points such as the limited armour and weapons used at close quarter but did not make any clear reference to the image. However, many candidates did reference the source to make these two points and so scored full marks.

### Question 6

Study **Source C**

**6** How is this tablet useful in telling us about Mycenaean society? Make **three** points.

1 .....

.....

2 .....

.....

3 .....

.....

[6]

Once again, a number of candidates did not take note of the word “this” and described the usefulness of Linear B tablets about Mycenaean society for some or all of the points. Those that did confine their answers to the source often produced fine answers, but as with other answers, they frustratingly would make a good point such as offering valuable items, but then not go on to give a precise example. Even if obvious, candidates must make a clear reference to the source.

### Question 7

**7** Why might Linear B tablets help us to understand what happened at the end of the Mycenaean Age? Make **two** points.

1 .....

.....

2 .....

.....

[2]

Sometimes the analysis was a little basic in comments that simply said ‘the Mycenaean were religious’, but there were many fine answers. Some of these were very perceptive in noting how females were offered to female gods, that the Mycenaean did have a form of calendar or that they might have shown a disregard for human life by sacrificing people.

## Question 8

### Study **Source D**

- 8 'Level VIIa of Troy provides the best evidence that the Trojan War took place.' How far do you agree with this statement? Use **Source D** as a starting point and your own knowledge in your answer. **[8]**

Candidates had clearly prepared well for this question. Weaker scripts relied too heavily on the source, but these were infrequently seen. Many scripts knew at least a couple of arguments in support of Troy VIIa and went on to discuss Troy VI. Many discussed a wide variety of ideas and the best scripts would provide alternative theories for evidence such as the storage jars on poor housing. Many candidates, however, were a little too conclusive in their views saying that their chosen piece of evidence was definite proof of an idea. At times the facts could have been more precise with candidates talking about weapons found or bodies (bodies in themselves do not really prove anything). Very frequently, candidates mistakenly said that Homer described Troy as being destroyed by fire.

### Assessment for Learning



A debate on this or similar topics is an excellent way for students to be aware of counter arguments in analysing evidence.

## Exemplar 1

Some may argue Troy VIIa was not the location of the Trojan war. Troy VI was. In Source D, Troy VI clearly has the walls and towers discussed in the Iliad, see Helen and Priam as the walls of Troy. Additionally, Troy VI was a rich prosperous city with over 10000 people. Houses were large and rich. This all suggests Troy VI was the city of Homers Troy. However, Troy VI was destroyed by an earthquake not a fire, therefore not fitting in with what we know of the Trojan war. Virgil tells us it was destroyed by fire. Additionally, Troy VI dates back to 1200 BC - the Trojan war took place in 1250 BC. However, it allegedly took place then, Homer was not a super reliable source so maybe it is not likely this is right. Hence some may argue Troy VI is Homers Troy.

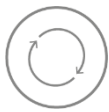
This response achieved full marks. It started quickly, with only a single sentence introduction. There was then excellent use of the source, even though no marks are given for evidence from the Section B prescribed text, it was perceptive of the candidate. There is then a good range of evidence, with each point only taking a sentence; there is very little wastage in this response. It is also pleasing to see the reference to Virgil rather than Homer for Troy being destroyed in a fire. The response then went on to consider the arguments for Troy VIIa being the site. Overall, this was a detailed, analytical and balanced response.

## Question 9

- 9 'It is clear that those who lived in Mycenaean cities had a high standard of living.' How far do you agree with this statement? [15]

Examiners were impressed at the range of ideas that candidates produced. Most were able to discuss several areas in which the Mycenaeans had a lavish lifestyle. The most frequent areas seemed to be the production of metalwork and frescoes. However, there was very little seen about pottery or ivory. Candidates are perhaps less confident about all the shapes and different uses of pottery, but this was definitely a missed opportunity. There was virtually no mentions of stirrup jars, amphorae or other vessels.

### Assessment for Learning



Candidates could be asked to find an image of each type of pottery vessel and be asked to fill in phrases about decoration, contents, practicality and decoration during their pre-examination revision.

Weaker scripts tended to give very few precise examples of objects, preferring to discuss gold necklaces and rings. When there was an item that was discussed, it was often the Lion Hunt Dagger, but often this was no more than named. More successful answers discussed the techniques in metalwork that were shown in this and other objects and would describe other objects in detail.

Frescoes were another popular area for discussion. Those who chose to discuss the Mycenaean fresco often were able to bring in clothing and jewellery to their discussion. There was quite a bit of discussion of the colours, but there were some less important details that kept reoccurring, such as the colours of men, women and monkeys.

A lot of candidates talked about the construction of tombs and graves. This was relevant to a degree as it would have been expensive to do, but candidates then seemed to trot out all they knew. Similarly, there were lots of ideas about the defences of the cities, which often went through every named area on the specification. Examiners didn't feel this was a key area to the standard of living.

Most answers did mention that only the elite had access to such luxuries; it was pleasing to see good balance in the answers.

## Question 10

**10** 'Honouring the dead was a vital part of Mycenaean life.' How far do you agree with this statement?  
**[15]**

This question proved slightly less popular, but there was little difference in the standard of answer produced to question 9. Examiners were looking for candidates to focus on the three main areas of types of burial, funeral gifts and burial customs. Virtually all candidates did discuss burial types, although sometimes they only discussed tholos tombs and shaft graves. Surprisingly, many candidates suggested that shaft graves were graves for poor people, despite then going on to write about the treasures found within them.

Candidates generally wrote very effectively about the types of burials. There was some impressive level of detail in the best scripts, although sometimes discussion of cist graves included comments that the dead were simply thrown in and the fact that they were not dug deeply suggested a lack of respect.

Grave goods were frequently mentioned. Sometimes the examples given were a little vague, but more successful answers gave a precise description and considered the skill shown in the manufacture. Most discussion featured gold items. Candidates could have chosen a wider variety of objects to discuss.

Discussion of funeral customs was variable. The best answers used the material evidence very carefully, referring to smashed cups, stelai evidence or offerings. However, the majority did not discuss these, and many candidates never considered what actually might have happened during a funeral. There was also some confusion with later Greek practices, presumably from those who had done the Myth and Religion topic. Others also wrote about other things that the Mycenaeans felt important, but this was completely outside the remit of the question.

It was pleasing that candidates generally spotted that not all Mycenaeans got a high standard of burial and did generally try to provide a balanced argument.

## Section B overview

Section B comprises 45 marks worth of questions on the prescribed books of Homer's *Odyssey*. These include questions that require short answers demonstrating knowledge and understanding, short analytical statements and a detailed response (8-mark) question. All of these are introduced by a stimulus source. Candidates must also write an extended response answer from a choice of two optional 15-mark questions.

The main parts of the *Odyssey* were generally well known, although precise details and names of individuals proved problematic to individuals, especially in generally weaker scripts. Candidates need to have a firm grasp on who's who in the plot.

### Assessment for Learning



The first time a candidate encounters a key named individual, they could write it in a small notebook with a phrase to remind them of who the person is. They could have a page for each letter. This works well for technical terms on Mycenae too.

Questions involving discussion of literary features such as irony and similes were quite well handled. Pleasingly, candidates seemed to know what irony was. Answers in the simile question were occasionally a bit far-fetched however, but candidates were clearly very engaged with the text.

There was good knowledge of the role of Telemachus, even including some details outside the set books, and a good attempt to comment on his negative qualities. Weaker scripts, as ever, could not recall enough ideas beyond the passage.

The extended answers produced the usual mixed bag of answers. A key issue with Question 20 was that candidates often did not really consider which actions of Odysseus were typical behaviour or that they didn't try to compare the different aspects in the episodes. This often led to two-character sketches. With Question 21, there could often have been a few more AO1 examples of disguise, with many only focusing on the disguise as a beggar and how this helped.

### Question 11 (a)

#### Study Source E

11 (a) Who had asked Odysseus to tell of his adventures?

.....  
..... [1]

Most candidates were able to recall Alcinous, but a good number simply wrote the Phaeacians. As only one individual had invited Odysseus to tell his story, this wasn't seen as creditable.

### Question 11 (b)

(b) By what name is **Ilium** (line 1) better known?

..... [1]

This question caused more problems than was anticipated, although most candidates seemed to know it. Many thought he had come from Ithaca while others thought it referred to other lands he visited. Such answers revealed a lack of understanding of the chronology of Odysseus' journey.

### Question 12

12 Odysseus took women and riches from Ismarus. Why else would Odysseus have sacked Ismarus? Make **two** points.

1 .....

.....

2 .....

.....

[2]

This question was answered well. Nearly all candidates scored some marks and many got both marks. Quite a number mistakenly felt that xenia had something to do with the attack.



### Question 13

**13** 'At dawn ... doomed companions and me.' (Rieu lines 9–10); 'At dawn ... endless trouble' (Kline lines 6–8).

Why does Odysseus describe the arrival of the Cicones in the manner that he does? Make **two** points.

1 .....

.....

2 .....

.....

[2]

Most candidates realised they had to write about the arrival of the Cicones and were able to provide at least one idea for this question. It was pleasing to see so many candidates realise the simile stressed the number of the Cicones, while others felt Odysseus was trying to explain the struggle by blaming Zeus and Fate. Candidates who did not read the question carefully enough discussed other parts of the story, especially the loss of the 72 men, but this was clearly not about the arrival of the Cicones. Others simply gave two facts from the story.

### Question 14

Study **Source F**

**14** 'This was very much to their liking' (Rieu line 1); 'They all agreed with Antinous' (Kline line 1).

What reason did Antinous give for postponing the contest?

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

Many candidates again did not read the question carefully enough and discussed what Antinous perhaps felt internally (his worry that he wouldn't string the bow) rather than what he actually said. There was also some confusion about the festival of Apollo; candidates often said that he planned to postpone the contest until the following day's festival of Apollo. Many did score full marks, mostly by knowing that the day of the contest was a holy day of Apollo.

### Question 15

15 'The crafty Odysseus came out with a wily suggestion' (Rieu line 4); 'resourceful Odysseus spoke with subtle intent' (Kline lines 3–4).

How is Odysseus' speech in **Source F** wily/subtle? Make **two** points.

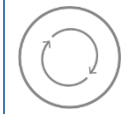
1 .....

2 .....

[4]

There were many fine answers to this question and many candidates scored full marks. This tended to be by mentioning the flattery and self-deprecation of Odysseus with appropriate references. As with other questions, candidates threw marks away by stating that Odysseus flattered Antinous but failing to give the reference to the text to back this up.

#### Quote the text



It should be second nature for candidates to quote the text in questions worth 4 or 6 marks, but for many it isn't. This was a major factor in this question and Question 6. It is so frustrating not to be able to award candidates the marks when it seems obvious the evidence that they must have used to make the point.

### Question 16

16 'The privations of a roving life' (Rieu line 10); 'poor nourishment and endless wandering' (Kline lines 8–9).

Why does Odysseus refer to himself in this way?

..... [1]

This question was answered very well. Some felt Odysseus would naturally look as he did after being away for 20 years, but this wasn't felt to explain why he made this comment.

### Question 17 (a)

17 (a) State **two** details that Antinous gives of the myth of Eurytion, the Centaur.

1 .....

.....

2 .....

.....

[2]

Many candidates simply picked out two phrases from the source, typically about the speed that Eurytion was maddened by wine and that he drank without restraint. If candidates are required in this paper simply to pick out phrases, this will be indicated in the question. Other candidates could not recall the story and missed the answer out entirely.

Despite this, many candidates did know the answer and knew exactly what Eurytion did and how he was punished, although some candidates did think he was killed for his actions.

### Question 17 (b)

(b) Give **one** example of irony, in terms of what happens during the battle, in what Antinous says about this myth.

.....

.....

[1]

Some candidates could recall that this punishment was meted out to Melanthius, although this was not often seen. Others correctly felt it ironic in that Antinous threatened violence to a seemingly drunk Odysseus and that he himself would be killed while drinking. It was not enough to write that Antinous himself would be punished and killed, especially as Eurytion was not actually killed. Most candidate did at least seem to understand what irony was.

## Question 18

### Study Source G

**18** How appropriate is the comparison of the maids to birds in **Source G**? Make **three** points.

1 .....

.....

.....

3 .....

.....

**[6]**

This question provided the most inventive responses on the paper. Examiners were impressed at the ingenuity of the answers, with candidates suggesting a vast array of parallels. Some of these were clearly well considered, with references to the similar modes of death, entrapment and the idea of roosting. Others commented how both groups were caught off guard and many felt that Homer suggested that neither the birds nor maids deserved to die.

It was very encouraging to see candidates not automatically assuming that they had to pick out only parallel with many feeling that the maids deserved to die, unlike the birds.

Quite often the parallels were a little forced. The struggle of the maids or their dresses were felt to reflect the flapping wings and many felt the maids hanging in the air resembled the trapped birds, failing to realise the birds were trapped on the ground. On more than one to be like bird droppings falling on people.

## Exemplar 2

- 1 ... appropriate as they are unable to escape their death just like a bird is unable to escape a 'snare'
- 2 ... appropriate as they are helpless ~~to~~ like birds and cannot free themselves from ~~Odysseus~~ Telemachus' punishment.
- 3 ... not appropriate as they are likened to 'doves' which ~~are usually pure~~ usually symbolise pureness, ~~to~~ but <sup>maids</sup> they are not pure as they slept with suitors and are disloyal

The first and third sections of this response gained 2 marks each. Although the references to the passage are brief, the comments about doves and a snare are enough for references to the passage. The analysis of both of these ideas is well expressed and logical. The middle part of the response did not gain any marks. It was felt that the idea of helplessness was too similar to the idea of being caught in the first paragraph and there is no real reference to the text. The points of candidates often overlapped like this.

## Question 19

- 19 'Telemachus behaves in a wholly admirable way in the *Odyssey*.' How far do you agree with this statement? Use **Source G** as a starting point and your own knowledge in your answer. [8]

Candidates used the passage effectively in their answers. Some criticised Telemachus' brutality and disobedience of his father, while others praised his defence of his mother and seizure of the initiative. These felt the Greeks would probably have approved of the decision by commenting on the epithet in the passage, but some felt he was being too sexist in his treatment of the maids. The best answers were able to look at this episode in various ways.

There was widespread discussion his fighting skills, with the best answers naming his victims and recalling how he nearly strung the bow. The strongest answer linked this idea to his obedience of his father.

His treatment of others was also largely also seen as admirable. He was praised giving *xenia* at various points in the *Odyssey* as a whole, including to the beggar when he met him and Athene in book 1, for sending Penelope to her room (although some candidates criticised him for his rudeness) and for sparing some of his slaves.

### Going beyond the prescribed books



Candidates are always given marks for going beyond the set books, although it is not necessary to do so to gain full marks.

Weaker scripts found it harder to criticise him. Many could recall him leaving the storeroom door open and leaving a spear in Amphinomous, although few could recall his savagery to Melanthius.

## Question 20

**20** 'Odysseus' true character is revealed much more clearly during his time on Circe's island than during his time on Polyphemus' island.' How far do you agree with this statement? **[15]**

Candidates knew the most famous parts of the story very well and made points which focused on these. Virtually all candidates focused on Odysseus' intelligent plans in escaping Polyphemus, but there were also frequent comments on his greed and desire for kleos (it was pleasing to note how often candidates were able to use the term). Similarly, in dealing with Circe, he was nearly always praised for his bravery, but criticised for his infidelity.

Many candidates could not recall any AO1 beyond these parts of the story. In particular, the build up to encountering the characters where lands were being scouted and the reunification scene on Aeaea were rarely discussed. Hardly any candidate thought to use the scene where Odysseus despaired as he was told the next stage of his journey by Circe. As a result, candidates often were only felt to show reasonable levels of AO1.

However, this wasn't the major issue with many answers as AO2 is more important in the awarding of the final mark. Many answers read as two separate character sketches. These would have a section on his intelligence and arrogance with Polyphemus and a section on his leadership and infidelity with Circe. There might then be a summary as to which they felt was more indicative of his character, but there was no real attempt to compare the same aspects in the two stories or to contrast different parts. Much more successful were those answers that made statement such as he had to think for himself and come up with his own plan with Polyphemus, whereas he only really did what he was told to with Circe.

### How to best answer comparative extended responses



Most candidates when faced with questions like this will answer the question by writing the first part all on one episode and the second part all on the other. This often leads to disjointed responses which are heavy on AO1 and light on AO2.

Candidates are encouraged to make one point using one episode, and then compare this with evidence from the other episode. This way, they will cover both halves equally (another common issue) and be comparing and contrasting throughout, instead of in a short final conclusion.

## Question 21

21 'Odysseus is able to defeat the Suitors only thanks to deceit and trickery.' How far do you agree with this statement? **[15]**

Overall, the standard of responses in this question was quite pleasing. Candidates engaged with the question and found plenty to say.

Virtually all candidates began their answer by considering Odysseus' disguise as a beggar and how this helped him. This was as far as weaker scripts got on deceit. Many scripts also wrote that Odysseus disguised himself as a beggar, rather than crediting it correctly to Athene.

More successful answers considered how he also tricked Penelope and the trickery involved in him getting the bow and removing weapons. Others commented on the trickery and deceit of others, especially Athene.

There was some fine analysis of the other reasons why Odysseus won. Most candidates acknowledged the help of his slaves, Athene and Telemachus. There was some precise knowledge of what each of these did and how it helped him. Many also referred to his own skill and strength, realising that once he had shed his disguise in book 22, there was no trickery and disguise on his part. A few candidates made some excellent points on the complacency and weakness of the suitors being a key factor.

There were occasional scripts which discussed disguise and trickery elsewhere in the story. As ever, not reading the question carefully enough led to irrelevant detail.



## Exemplar 3

As well as Odysseus' deceit, his good warrior skills are another thing to thank for the defeat of the suitors as he was able to shoot Antinous, the leader of the suitors, right in the neck. Therefore his good <sup>fighting</sup> ~~war~~ skills contribute a lot to the defeat as this is one of the most important skills that were used in order to kill ~~the~~ all of the suitors.

This excerpt comprised two-thirds of the total response. As with most responses on this question, it started with discussion of the beggar disguise with a simple point about how this aided him. The candidate missed an opportunity to discuss other examples of deceit and trickery. There then followed a very good range of other reasons that Odysseus won, including the roles on Penelope, the slaves and his own fighting skills.

However, the response is only reasonable in the level of AO1. There are two slightly vague examples of how the slaves help, although it is not said which of them does each task and the gathering of weapons (unless the candidate is including the bow here) was perhaps more down to Telemachus. There is an accurate example of his warrior skills, although it would have been more successful to have another example rather than the repetitive final four lines.

The response then went on to consider the actions of Athene and his own planning. Overall, it just got into Level 4 because of the range of ideas but could not get higher than it did as there is not enough AO1.

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