

**GCSE (9-1)**

**Examiners' report**

# **CLASSICAL GREEK**

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**J292**

For first teaching in 2016

**J292/03 Summer 2023 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.

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## Paper 3 series overview

The Plato set text was offered by a small number of centres but this select cohort was impressive. Teachers deserve to be congratulated for choosing to tackle this challenging, but seminal text and the candidates evidently found the account of Socrates' final hours both engaging and moving. Indeed, the many mature and sophisticated responses indicated that Plato is not at all inaccessible to candidates at this level. In this first 'normal' examination cycle since 2019, with candidates expected to revise the full prescribed text, it was heartening to see what can be achieved by motivated candidates under the guidance of inspirational teachers, who are often delivering the subject on a limited timetable.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrated detailed knowledge and understanding of the whole prescribed text</li> <li>supported their responses with accurate Greek quotation, along with translations that matched the Greek quoted</li> <li>analysed literary style effectively, showing an understanding of context</li> <li>used their knowledge of the whole text in their response to the final 10-mark question, drawing in evidence from sections of the prescription not printed on the question paper.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>did not know the whole text in detail</li> <li>offered imprecise or impressionistic translations</li> <li>did not support comments with appropriate Greek quotation or did not match their translations to the exact Greek quoted</li> <li>did not analyse linguistic or literary features</li> <li>omitted questions</li> <li>showed limited knowledge and understanding of the whole text in responding to the final 10-mark question.</li> </ul>

### Legibility of Scripts

Examiners are increasingly faced with hard to read, handwritten scripts, which they make every effort to decipher.

Centres are encouraged to make appropriate access arrangements for candidates likely to be disadvantaged by illegible handwriting: type-written scripts are welcome and, indeed, often easier to mark. If the issue of Greek quotation discourages candidates from typing, there are various options to consider as detailed in [this blog](#). The list below is ordered in terms of examiner preference, but candidates should do whatever is easiest and most convenient for them:

- a polytonic Greek keyboard, which can be toggled on and off and allows the typing of diacritical marks (breathings, iota subscripts and accents). Candidates would need to familiarise themselves with the keyboard layout and practice using it in exam conditions
- the Symbol font in Word for typing Greek quotations without diacritical marks (breathings, iota subscript, accents); some practice is advised with this too (e.g. terminal sigma  $\varsigma$  = SHIFT + v); at this level candidates will not be penalised for omitting diacritical marks
- hand-written Greek quotations in the answer booklet, clearly linked to the question answered on a type-written response. This is a more time-consuming format for on-screen markers to navigate but examiners will read and mark as 'seen' everything written on a script.



### Question 1 (b)

(b) After this passage, Phaedo mentions the arrival of the ship from Delos. What did this mean for Socrates?

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

The majority of candidates were aware that the arrival of the ship from Delos signalled that Socrates' execution was imminent. Examiners accepted both 'the next day' and 'that day' and did not penalise the responses which assumed that the ship was carrying the poison to be administered to Socrates.

### Question 2 (a)

2 Read the passage and answer the questions.

εἰσιόντες οὖν κατελαμβάνομεν τὸν μὲν Σωκράτη ἄρτι λελυμένον, τὴν δὲ Ξανθίππην – γινώσκεις γάρ – ἔχουσάν τε τὸ παιδίον αὐτοῦ καὶ παρακαθημένην. ὡς οὖν εἶδεν ἡμᾶς ἢ Ξανθίππη, ἀνηυφήμησέ τε καὶ τοιαῦτ' ἄττα εἶπεν, οἷα δὴ εἰώθασιν αἱ γυναῖκες, ὅτι 'ὦ Σώκρατες, ὕστατον δὴ σε προσεροῦσι νῦν οἱ ἐπιτήδειοι καὶ σὺ τούτους'.

5

The Martyrdom of Socrates: Plato *Phaedo* 59e–60a

(a) εἰσιόντες οὖν ... παρακαθημένην (lines 1–3): pick out and translate a **two-word Greek phrase** which indicates that Socrates' chains have been removed.

Greek phrase: .....  
English translation: .....

[2]

The majority of candidates correctly selected ἄρτι λελυμένον ('recently released' *vel sim*), to earn 2 marks. Since the question stem stipulated a **two-word** phrase, a single word could not be given full marks, even if correctly translated. Candidates who did not translate ἄρτι earned at most 1 mark.


Exemplar 1

Greek phrase:	..... λελυμενον .....
English translation:	..... untied .....

[2]

Exemplar 1 demonstrates the quotation of the single word λελυμένον here. Although accurately translated, it was not given full marks as the question specifies a two-word phrase. The response therefore did not gain any marks.

Assessment for learning

 The exam paper will always feature a question of this sort, asking for a word or a phrase (of a specified length) and a matching translation. Candidates who provide a longer or shorter selection, even if accurately translated, risk losing both available marks.

Question 2 (b)

(b) Ξανθίππην (line 2): who was Xanthippe?

..... [1]

This question was answered correctly by every candidate.

Question 2 (c) (i)

(c) ἄττα εἶπεν ... τούτους (lines 4–5):

(i) what does Xanthippe say to Socrates?

.....  
 .....  
 ..... [3]

This comprehension question was very well answered by the majority of candidates. Examiners did not accept 'see' as a translation of προσεροῦσι, since Xanthippe's comment refers to the final conversation Socrates will now have with his friends.

### Question 2 (c) (ii)

- (ii) οἷα δὴ εἰώθασιν αἱ γυναῖκες (line 4): what comment does Phaedo make here **and** what does it suggest about his attitude towards Xanthippe?

.....

.....

..... [2]

This question was very well handled. Candidates showed a secure understanding of Phaedo’s comment (‘the sort of thing that women usually say’) and what can be deduced from this about his attitude towards Xanthippe, and indeed all women.

### Question 3 (a)

3 Read the passage and answer the questions.

‘ὅπως ἄν,’ ἔφη, ‘βούλησθε, εἴπερ γε λάβητέ με καὶ μὴ ἐκφύγω ὑμᾶς.’ γελάσας δὲ ἅμα ἡσυχῇ καὶ πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀποβλέψας εἶπεν· ‘οὐ πείθω, ὦ ἄνδρες, Κρίτωνα, ὡς ἐγὼ εἶμι οὗτος Σωκράτης, ὁ νυνὶ διαλεγόμενος καὶ διατάττων ἕκαστον τῶν λεγομένων, ἀλλ’ οἶεταί με ἐκεῖνον εἶναι ὃν ὄψεται ὀλίγον ὕστερον νεκρόν, καὶ ἐρωτᾷ δὴ πῶς με θάπτῃ.’

5

The Martyrdom of Socrates: Plato *Phaedo* 115c–d

- (a) What question has Crito just asked?

..... [1]

This question was answered correctly by almost every candidate.



### Question 3 (b)

(b) ὅπως ἄν ... εἶπεν (lines 1–2): how does Plato suggest that Socrates does not take this question seriously? Make **two** points.

1 .....

.....

2 .....

.....

**[2]**

The majority of candidates successfully gave two points here to illustrate how Socrates makes fun of Crito’s question (about how to bury Socrates). Many candidates supported their points with Greek quotations, although these were not a requirement of the question. Incorrect Greek quotation was therefore not penalised.

### Question 3 (c)

(c) οὐ πείθω ... θάπτῃ (lines 2–5): according to Socrates, what has Crito failed to understand?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**[2]**

This challenging passage of Greek was well interpreted by the majority of candidates. Almost all appreciated the distinction Socrates is drawing between the body and the soul, and explained this well in their response. Some offered a verbatim translation of the lemma, in lieu of a developed interpretation. These responses were accepted in the mark scheme. The best responses focused on how Socrates is more interested in philosophical discussion than in the manner of his burial, and is gently chiding Crito for failing to understand this.

## Question 4\*

4\* Read the passage and answer the question.

‘ὦ Σώκρατες,’ ἔφη, ‘οὐ καταγνώσομαί γε σοῦ ὅπερ ἄλλων καταγιγνώσκω, ὅτι μοι χαλεπαίνουσι καὶ καταρῶνται ἐπειδὴν αὐτοῖς παραγγείλω πίνειν τὸ φάρμακον ἀναγκαζόντων τῶν ἀρχόντων. σὲ δὲ ἐγὼ καὶ ἄλλως ἔγνωκα ἐν τούτῳ τῷ χρόνῳ γενναιότατον καὶ πραότατον καὶ ἄριστον ἄνδρα ὄντα τῶν πώποτε δεῦρο ἀφικομένων, καὶ δὴ καὶ νῦν εὖ οἶδ’ ὅτι οὐκ ἐμοὶ χαλεπαίνεις, γινώσκεις γὰρ τοὺς αἰτίους, ἀλλὰ ἐκεῖνοις.’

5

The Martyrdom of Socrates: Plato *Phaedo* 116c

How does Plato show that the attendant has formed a positive opinion of Socrates?

In your answer you may wish to consider:

- the attendant’s experience of previous executions
- the words he uses to describe Socrates

You must refer to the **Greek** and discuss Plato’s use of language.

[8]

There were some very good responses here and the majority of candidates reached Level 3 or 4. The best responses made full use of the passage, selecting appropriate Greek quotations, translating those quotations accurately, and commenting on Plato’s use of language. One ‘style’ point of this sort is required to access Level 3 and two are needed for Level 4. Good responses without any linguistic commentary were therefore limited to a Level 2 mark. Marks were sometimes lost for making too few points, or for mistranslation/lack of translation of the quoted Greek. There were some similar looking words in the lemma, which occasionally caused confusion (καταγιγνώσκω, χαλεπαίνουσι, καταρῶνται). χαλεπαίνουσι was sometimes mistranslated as ‘blame’. Some combined the tricolon of superlatives with the one used later by *Phaedo*, so that γενναιότατον καὶ πραότατον καὶ ἄριστον became ‘the best, wisest and most just’ rather than ‘the noblest and gentlest and best’.

Most candidates knew the text in detail and peppered their responses with appropriate literary critical terminology. The passage offered the opportunity for stylistic points and examiners were pleased to give marks for the many excellent comments about, for example, the chiasmus in οὐ καταγνώσομαί γε σοῦ ὅπερ ἄλλων καταγιγνώσκω, the hyperbolic effect of πώποτε and the emphatic final position of ἐκεῖνοις. It was evident that candidates had been very well prepared by their teachers.

## Exemplar 2

The attendant decorates Socrates with very lavish praises such as in: "γεγυαλιωτατου και πρωτατου και ἀριστη ἀνδρα ὄντα τῶν τελευτῶν", with the attendant using a tricolon of superlatives to amplify the grand image he has of Socrates, and how he stands in contrast to others who have been ~~in~~ in this prison.

Exemplar 2 illustrates part of a Level 3 response which had several strengths but also some shortcomings. The whole response addressed the question well, showed a secure understanding of the passage and included two good style points. However it was not quite full enough, with only three paragraphs (the illustrative extract is the middle paragraph), it did not include enough points to qualify for Level 4. The other shortcoming here is that the Greek quotation has not been translated, and the paragraph therefore constitutes a weak point.

## Assessment for learning



In preparing candidates for the 8-mark passage analysis question, teachers are encouraged to emphasise the characteristics of a Level 4 response. Candidates should:

- use the full passage, aiming to make at least four points, each supported by Greek quotation and showing an understanding of the context
- translate any Greek quoted, or make it clear that the meaning is understood
- include at least two comments about the author's use of language.

The bullet points in the question are intended as a steer and do not necessarily dictate the structure of the response.

Question 5 (a) (i) and (ii)

5 Read the passage and answer the questions.

ὁ δὲ Κρίτων ἔτι πρότερος ἔμοῦ, ἐπειδὴ οὐχ οἷός τ' ἦν κατέχειν τὰ δάκρυα, ἔξανέστη. Ἀπολλόδωρος δὲ καὶ ἐν τῷ ἔμπροσθεν χρόνῳ οὐδὲν ἐπαύετο δακρύων, καὶ δὴ καὶ τότε ἀναβρυχησάμενος κλάων καὶ ἀγανακτῶν οὐδένα ὄντινα οὐ κατέκλασε τῶν παρόντων πλήν γε αὐτοῦ Σωκράτους.

The Martyrdom of Socrates: Plato *Phaedo* 117d

(a) How do Crito and Apollodorus react when Socrates drinks the poison? Give **two** details about each man.

(i) Crito:


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

(ii) Apollodorus:

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

Question 5(a)(i) presented few difficulties, since two marks could be earned simply by saying that Crito cried and left the room. The majority of candidates also fared well with Question (5)(a)(ii), correctly answering that Apollodorus wailed/roared/bellowed and cried his eyes out in distress. A significant minority, however, relied on οὐδὲν ἐπαύετο δακρύων ('did not stop crying'), which refers to the time **before** Socrates drank the poison and therefore could not be given full marks.

**Misconception**



Candidates who offered 'did not stop crying' in response to Question 2(a)(ii) did not distinguish between the contrasting time phrases καὶ ἐν τῷ ἔμπροσθεν (even in the time up to now) and καὶ δὴ καὶ τότε (then especially – i.e. when Socrates drank the poison). Close attention to the Greek was needed here in order to extract the relevant details from the lemma.

### Question 5 (b)

(b) Judging by what he says after this passage, what did Socrates think of this reaction?

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

The majority of candidates gave the correct response to the question. Examiners exercised flexibility with this context question, accepting a range of responses, including perceptive comments about his wish to die 'in silence'.

### Question 6

6 Read the passage and answer the question.

ὁ δὲ περιελθὼν, ἐπειδὴ οἱ βαρύνεσθαι ἔφη τὰ σκέλη, κατεκλίνη ὕπτιος – οὕτω γὰρ ἐκέλευεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος – καὶ ἅμα ἐφαπτόμενος αὐτοῦ οὗτος ὁ δοῦς τὸ φάρμακον, διαλιπὼν χρόνον ἐπεσκόπει τοὺς πόδας καὶ τὰ σκέλη, κᾶπειτα σφόδρα πιέσας αὐτοῦ τὸν πόδα ἤρετο εἰ αἰσθάνοιτο, ὁ δ' οὐκ ἔφη.

The Martyrdom of Socrates: Plato *Phaedo* 117e–118a

In this passage, how does Plato show that the poison is gradually taking effect?

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

1 .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2 .....

.....

.....

.....

[4]

Candidates who made two good content points here, supported by Greek quotation and translation, achieved full marks.

Generalisations or inaccurate translations were liable to reduce marks. For example, responses which maintained that Socrates' legs became 'stiff' (rather than 'heavy', for βαρύνεσθαι) or which described the poison as moving 'all up his body' (when only his feet and legs are mentioned in the passage) did not earn full marks.

Although linguistic points are not expected when the question is not accompanied by an English translation, a number of responses included valid stylistic points, such as the use of σφόδρα to emphasise the strength of the attendant's squeeze, or the abrupt reply from Socrates' (ὁ δ' οὐκ ἔφη) to indicate that he is losing feeling in his extremities.

### Question 7

7 Read the passage and answer the question.

ταῦτα ἐρομένου αὐτοῦ οὐδέν ἔτι ἀπεκρίνατο, ἀλλ' ὀλίγον χρόνον διαλιπὼν ἐκινήθη τε καὶ ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐξεκάλυψεν αὐτόν, καὶ ὡς τὰ ὄμματα ἔστησεν· ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ Κρίτων συνέλαβε τὸ στόμα καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς.

The Martyrdom of Socrates: Plato *Phaedo* 118a

Translate this passage into English.

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [5]

This short passage of translation presented several potential pitfalls, with the result that candidates did not earn full marks here. While the final ten words were invariably correctly translated, common mistakes elsewhere were:

- mistranslation of the genitive absolute ταῦτα ἐρομένου αὐτοῦ: omission of αὐτοῦ, or implying Socrates as the subject of the participle, or translating ἐρομένου as 'said' (see misconception flagged below)
- omission of ἔτι (judged to be an inconsequential error)
- omission of διαλιπὼν in the time phrase (very common: the whole phrase was limited to a single inconsequential error)
- interpreting ἐκινήθη as transitive (i.e. making the attendant the subject)

Note that a single more serious error plus a single inconsequential error in an otherwise correct translation cannot earn more than 3 marks.

## Exemplar 3

After he had said these things he made no further reply, but after some time he moved himself, and the man uncovered him, and [Socrates] fixed his eyes, and when he saw this, Critobolus closed his mouth and eyes.

Exemplar 3 demonstrates an example of translation, from a script which was very strong overall. It illustrates two of the common errors detailed in the previous commentary. The translation of ἐρομένου as 'said' and the translation of ὀλίγον χρόνον διαλιπῶν as 'after some time'. Both mistakes were treated as inconsequential errors, two of which lose a mark.

## Misconception



Those who translated ἐρομένου as 'said' presumably – and understandably – confused this word with ἐρῶ, the future tense of λέγω (I say). This form of λέγω features earlier in the question paper, in Xanthippe's words to Socrates (σε προσεροῦσι ... οἱ ἐπιτήδειοι). ἐρομένου, on the other hand, is the aorist participle (middle in form) of ἐρωτάω / ἠρόμην (I ask).

## OCR support



The Bloomsbury produced and OCR endorsed *Anthology for Classical Greek GCSE* has a running vocabulary for each of the GCSE prescribed set texts. On page 215 the word ἐρομένου is glossed as the aorist participle of ἐρωτάω, a verb on the GCSE Defined Vocabulary List.



## Question 8\*

8\* 'In taking such a calm approach to his death, Socrates failed to comfort those close to him.'

How far do you agree?

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

There were many impressive responses to this final essay question, with many candidates achieving a Level 5 mark. Essays displayed a detailed knowledge of the whole text and included a wealth of additional evidence drawn from sections not printed on the question paper. Indeed, some even referred to sections of the *Phaedo* outside the prescribed text. For example, 'Phaedo told Echecrates at the beginning of the dialogue that he did not feel pity for Socrates because he faced death so calmly and bravely. We can conclude, therefore, that Phaedo was comforted'.

Others offered sophisticated and insightful interpretations. For example, 'It is hypocritical of Socrates to commend the attendant's tears while condemning those of his close friends'. There was also an intriguing comment about Socrates' final words to Crito ('We owe a cock to Asclepius'), interpreted as a cryptic passing of the philosophical baton to Plato.

Many candidates wrote well with clear topic sentences and well-developed argument, managing their time effectively to include an introduction and conclusion. All these features are rewarded under AO3. Since the question asks about 'those close to him', Level 5 responses had to mention Socrates' wife and/or the prison attendant. The minority of candidates neglected to do this, but such responses were limited to Level 4. Some candidates insisted on quoting Greek (including from sections not printed on the paper), thus losing time needlessly. Teachers should reassure candidates that they do not need to do this for the 10-mark essay.

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