

**A LEVEL**

**Examiners' report**

# **CLASSICAL GREEK**

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**H444**

For first teaching in 2016

**H444/03 Summer 2024 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 standard of the 2024 cohort was extremely high and examiners saw a number of excellent scripts where candidates had clearly been taught exceptionally well. Candidates who knew the prose texts in detail produced work of a very high standard. As last year, the 15 mark commentaries and the 20 mark essay were what differentiated the excellent from the very good. It was felt that all candidates had been able to access the paper and produce work that was reflective of their ability.

While examiners appreciate that there is significant pressure on time within the exam, there were some scripts where handwriting was extremely difficult to read. It is worth considering if candidates might benefit from typing their answers where arrangements allow.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dealt with the whole of the Greek passage on the 15 mark question</li> <li>• wrote in detail for each extended question, explaining their ideas in depth</li> <li>• had a good working knowledge of the Greek and were able to evaluate its meaning</li> <li>• used frequent quotations from the texts in order to support the points they made</li> <li>• considered the effects of particular literary techniques on the audience</li> <li>• included English translations of each Greek quotation</li> <li>• avoided leaving gaps in their responses but made sensible guesses at questions they did not already know.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• didn't focus on the whole of the passage – answers sometimes lacked the full range</li> <li>• wrote too briefly on the extended questions</li> <li>• weren't as secure in their knowledge of the Greek</li> <li>• didn't base their answers on quotation from the text – some 15 markers contained very little Greek quotation</li> <li>• focused too much on alliteration where sometimes the repeated letter might just be a coincidence</li> <li>• omitted a conclusion on the 20 mark question.</li> </ul>

## Section A overview

Candidates clearly knew both texts very well and produced a number of excellent answers. The Level 5 answers tended to have more precise evaluation especially on the language of the passages.

### Question 1 (a)

- 1 Read the following passage and answer the questions.

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- (a) ὁ μὲν Νικίας ... ἀσφαλῶς ἐκπλεῦσαι (lines 1–3): what does Thucydides claim Nicias thought might happen as a result of his speech? [3]

This question was answered extremely well with most candidates achieving 3 marks here. There is no need to quote the Greek in response to this type of question.

### Question 1 (b)\*

- (b)\* οἱ δὲ τὸ μὲν ἐπιθυμοῦν ... ἡσυχίαν ἤγεν (lines 3–13): how does Thucydides emphasise that Nicias' speech had the opposite effect to the one he wanted?

You should refer to **both** the content **and** to the language of the passage. [15]

There were lots of extremely good responses here. There was some sophisticated analysis especially on the effect of Nicias' speech. It is important that candidates answer the question being asked. At times on all the 15 markers, it felt like lower performing candidates were sometimes just listing ideas from the commentary rather than making a series of points which answered the question.

Exemplar 1 shows a candidate making perceptive points using well-chosen examples. Although this response isn't perfect, it was still awarded full marks.

## Exemplar 1

(b) In this passage, Thucydides explains how Nicias' attempt to dissuade the Athenians by proposing an excessively large-scale operation has backfired, and now ~~every~~ each different facet of their heterogeneous population has increased in their enthusiasm.

Thucydides uses a complex phrase using an abstract noun where one would typically expect a verb to highlight the Athenians' emotion. 'το μὲν ἄνθος οὐκ οὐκ ἐξήρπασαν' (but they were not disabused of their desire for the expedition). The lexis here is striking, with 'ἐξήρπασαν' being a physically enacting word and 'ἄνθος' (enthusiasm) to give a sense of their vastly amplified, quintessentially Athenian trait of ambition, which will work against them in the end. 'πολυ δὲ μᾶλλον ἠρπῆντο' (they became much more eager) describes the

		adverse, unintended effects of Nicias' rhetoric and is highly emphatic by the 'πολυ πλὺλλον' (much more). The fact that 'ἐν τῇ γὰρ παραίνεσιν ἔδοξε' (they decided that he had advised well) further demonstrates how Nicias' experience is working against him, and 'τὸναντίον παρῆρτο αὐτῷ' (the reverse of his intention happened) is, poetically compressed to concisely convey his failure to dissuade them. 'ἡσυχάζειν νῦν δὲ καὶ πολλὴν ἄσπετον' (They <sup>thought</sup> decided that] now indeed there would be a great chance of safety). The emphatic 'νῦν δὲ καὶ πολλὴν' highlights their strong feelings. 'ἐπεσπινέμενος τοὺς πάντας ὁρῶνς ἐκπλεῖν' (and a passion to set sail fell upon them all similarly), with the totalising and hyperbolic 'τοὺς πάντας' and <del>metaphor</del> <sup>* metaphor</sup> 'ἐπὶ πάντας' to emphasise the shared nature of this sentiment, the response to Nicias' second speech is clearly conveyed.
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## Question 1 (c)

- (c) καὶ τέλος ... βουλευσάμενοι (lines 14–17): how does Thucydides demonstrate that high-ranking generals such as Nicias could still be put under pressure by ordinary people? [4]

This question was again done extremely well. There were lots of good responses that covered the key details concisely and accurately. Some candidates wrote at great length with Greek quotation and this wasn't necessary here.

## Question 1 (d)

(d) Translate ὅσα μέντοι ... πλέοσιν (lines 18–22).

Write your translation on alternate lines.

[5]

Most translations were very accurate – candidates that gained 4 marks tended to lose their last mark through a careless mistake such as an omission rather than a lack of knowledge. The gerundive μεταπεμπτέας was not always clearly rendered.

## Question 2 (a)

2 Read the following passage and answer the questions.

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(a) ταῦτα εἰπὼν ... θριξίν· (lines 1–2): explain what makes Aristophanes' comparisons effective. [4]

Candidates answered this question extremely well – the best responses did this concisely and accurately. Where there was an omission, it tended to be the idea that Zeus is cutting people in half and this was key to explaining the comparison.

## Question 2 (b)

(b) τὸν Ἀπόλλω ... ἐκέλευεν (lines 3–5): what did Zeus tell Apollo to do, and why?

[3]

This was answered extremely well.



## Question 2 (c)\*

(c)\* ὁ δὲ τό τε πρόσωπον ... ἀλλήλων ποιεῖν (lines 6–16): what makes this an engaging account of what happened to the human race?

You should refer **both** to the content **and** to the language of the passage

[15]

As with 1(b), it's important that candidates explain *why* something is engaging rather than just presenting statements as fact, e.g. 'it is engaging that Aristophanes compares Apollo to a shoemaker'. The best responses had clearly planned their answer and used the Greek quotations and analysis to answer the question.

Exemplar 2 achieved 10 out of 15. This makes a number of good points but lacks the range of points necessary to gain higher marks.

## Exemplar 2

2	C	<p>The account is made engaging through the choices of similes and comparisons used that create a very striking account. The comparison between the creation of <del>the</del> the navel and a "Βαλαντία" (purse) is a key example, since while <del>it is</del> the disfigurement of mortals is being explained a very mundane simile is used to both make the passage more memorable but also help to draw links between original and present day humans.</p> <p>The description of Apollo using the tools of a "σκυτοτομοί" (cobbler) also adds to how engaging the passage is. The</p>
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		<p>image of a god using such methods seems in many ways absurd, creating a memorable and slightly comedic account as a result. This comedic tone thus makes the story being told more interesting and engaging especially since the comparison is so unexpected.</p> <p>The explanatory nature of the account also helps to make it more engaging. As with the reference to the "ὀμφαλον" (navel) the "πυτίδας" (wrinkles) on the newly created half-human are explained as being there as a "πυγπισιον" (reminder) of what the humans have been through. This increases the relatability of the account as the reader is having parts of their own body explained. Thus these explanatory powers make the account more engaging.</p> <p>The contrasting pessimistic tone at the end of the passage compared to the comedic similes also makes the account engaging. The mention of the halves as "ἀπὲθνησκον" (they died) juxtaposes the humor of similes before. This sombre tone is reinforced by the mentioned causes being "λιποῦ καὶ τῆς ἀλλῆς ἀπρίας" (hunger and general laziness), highlighting the <del>high price</del> deep impact their punishment has caused. In this way the difference in atmosphere and that contrast adds to the striking and engaging nature of the account.</p> <p>Finally, the repeated idea of the newly found desire for completeness also makes the account engaging. The repeated prefix of "σὺν-" (with) in the verbs "σὺν" "σὺνπλεκόμενοι" (embracing) and "σὺνθύναι" (joined together) emphasises the loss felt by the humans having been separated from their other half. The <del>repeated nature of</del> repetition of this idea reinforces it, again creating an engaging account of <del>the</del> what happened to the human race.</p>
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## Question 2 (d)

(d) Translate καὶ ὁπότε ... εἰς τὸ πρόσθεν (lines 17–20).

**Write your translation on alternate lines.**

**[5]**

This translation was done extremely well.

## Section B overview

Candidates clearly knew the texts extremely well and generally answered the short questions accurately and concisely. It's worth noting that the 15 markers rely on analysis of the Greek text and therefore every paragraph in a commentary should be focused on the Greek text and be primarily devoted to analysing a quotation.

### Question 3 (a)

3 Read the following passages and answer the questions.

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(a) Ἀλκιβιάδης δὲ ... ἀπελθεῖν (lines 1–2): what does Alcibiades want to avoid?

[2]

Most candidates answered this very well. Some weaker responses mixed up the points e.g. setting out shamefully.

### Question 3 (b)

(b) ἀλλ' ἔς ... ἔσεσθαι (lines 2–7): how does Alcibiades try to show that his proposal has been carefully planned?

[4]

This question was answered very well – candidates often gave 5 or 6 creditable points.

### Question 3 (c)

(c) προσαγαγομένους ... ἐπιχειρεῖν (lines 7–8): when should the Athenians attack Syracuse and Selinus?

[2]

This was less well done with lower performing candidates sometimes struggling to explain the second point.

### Question 3 (d)

(d) Translate Λάμαχος δὲ ... μᾶλλον (lines 10–14).

Write your translation on alternate lines.

[5]

This translation was generally done well although a couple of areas caused some problems. πρὸς τῇ πόλει was not always rendered correctly and some candidates made τὸ γὰρ πρῶτον onwards refer to a specific army rather than a general statement.

### Question 3 (e)\*

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(e)\* How does Thucydides convey the fear and uncertainty which was driving the Athenian investigations?

You should refer **both** to the content **and** to the language of the passage.

[15]

This was generally well done. Something worth noting is that alliteration may not be the best thing to focus on in this paper. Examiners saw several examples of so-called alliteration which didn't really add anything stylistically to the argument. Just because two words start with the same letter doesn't always mean it's a deliberate alliteration. Candidates might be better advised to think about the choice and positioning of the words that the writer is using in the text.

## Question 4 (a)

4 Read the following passages and answer the questions.

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(a) μὴ τοίνυν ... τούτοις (lines 1–4): explain Diotima's argument here.

[4]

This was done very well.

## Question 4 (b)

(b) καὶ μὴν ... οὐδὲ θεὸν εἶναι (lines 5–9): how does Diotima persuade Socrates to challenge his own thinking?

[4]

This was again done very well with some students analysing her techniques extremely well.

## Question 4 (c)

(c) Translate τίνες οὗτοι ... οὐκ ἔγωγ', ἔφη (lines 10–15).

Write your translation on alternate lines.

[5]

This translation was done extremely well.

## Question 4 (d)\*

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**(d)\*** How convincingly does Diotima present her explanation of Love as being between wisdom and ignorance?

You should refer **both** to the content **and** to the language of the passage.

**[15]**

Plato, *Symposium* 204a–b

Question 4(d) was done very well. Candidates generally assessed the arguments extremely perceptively.

The most successful responses explained how each stage of the passage built an argument noting how the rhetorical features helped to compel agreement/clarify the stages.

## Question 5 (a)

5 Read the following passage and answer the questions.

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- (a) πρώτην ... παρελθεῖν καὶ ἐπιδοῦναι (lines 1–4): how does Plutarch suggest that Alcibiades took advantage of a lucky opportunity to gain popularity? [4]

This was answered very well.

## Question 5 (b)

- (b) τοῦ δὲ δήμου ... τῷ Ἀλκιβιάδῃ γενέσθαι (lines 4–8): what caused Alcibiades to be grateful to Antiochus? [4]

This was again answered very well. Candidates who lost marks here or on 5(a) generally did so only through not giving enough detail. For 4 marks, there need to be 4 points.

## Question 5 (c)\*

- (c)\* μέγας ... διασκοπούμενος (lines 9–20): how positively does Plutarch present the skills and character of Alcibiades?

You should refer **both** to the content **and** to the language of the passage [15]

This question was well handled by the vast majority of candidates. There was some really good perceptive analysis especially on perceived reservations within the text.

## Question 5 (d)

- (d) Translate αἱ δ' ἵπποτροφίαι ... φιλοτιμίαν (lines 21–25).

Write your translation on alternate lines. [5]

The translation was well done. Some candidates struggled with how to translate καὶ τῷ πλήθει



## Section C overview

There was a range of marks across the essays and while most candidates had an excellent knowledge of the texts, weaker essays tended to be dominated by factual content at the expense of analysis and answering the question. The best essays answered the question throughout the essay and had clearly planned their answer making sure that their AO2 content was well-chosen and appropriate. There were a number of essays that had clearly run out of time and were unfinished.

### Assessment for learning



An essay with a conclusion and a clear ending is likely to score better than the same essay with an extra paragraph and no conclusion. It's worth candidates spending the last 5 minutes of the exam bringing their essay to a close with a conclusion rather than trying to cram in an extra paragraph.

### Question 6\*

**6\*** 'A clear demonstration of the strengths of Athenian democracy, debate and decision-making.'

How well does this summarise the sections of Thucydides' *Histories* which you have read? **[20]**

It was clear to examiners that candidates had a good knowledge of the *Histories* and wrote well on the different politicians presented within the text as well as making comparisons with the tyranny. The best responses used paragraphs to present a range of ideas supported by the text. Weaker responses sometimes felt like a summary of the *Histories* that attempted to answer the question at the end of the essay.

### Question 7\*

**7\*** 'Plato's *Symposium* contains sensible and well-argued philosophy.'

To what extent do you agree with this view? **[20]**

There were a number of perceptive and evaluative essays here. The best ones had clearly spent time planning and focused their discussion on the key words of 'sensible' and 'well-argued'. The best essays looked at both sides of the argument and produced interesting ideas on the sensible side of Aristophanes. As with the other questions, having an essay completed with a conclusion undoubtedly increased the mark.

Exemplar 3 is an example of a decent essay that scored 15 out of 20 marks. To have accessed the marks in the highest band, the AO2 needed to be more precise and the AO3 evaluation needed a little more perception and close focus on the key ideas.

## Exemplar 3

7	<p>Plato's 'Symposium' contains much philosophy that is sensible and well-argued, exploring the ideas of the Ladder of Love <del>Forms of Beauty</del> defining what and ideas that are universally applicable and <del>the</del> compelling in their arguments. However, there are also instances where logic seems to be lacking and the use of a <del>potentially</del> comedic tone in Aristophanes' speech in particular has the potential to draw from the serious philosophic topic. Ultimately, despite this, the 'Symposium' does contain sensible philosophy which is justified due to how compelling and universal the ideas explored are, as well as the ability of Socrates to define love in his speech.</p> <p>The sensible nature of the 'Symposium' is clearly seen in the compelling notion explored by both Socrates and also Aristophanes that lack drives love. The idea of one's "other half" is still common in the modern world, showing how it is a prevailing and universally applicable idea and thus making it a well-argued for philosophy. Socrates develops this point further through discussing the <del>forms of</del> Ladder of Love and Form of Beauty to reinforce this point,</p>
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again supporting the fact the philosophy discussed is well argued and sensible. This is done so further through the use of elenchus and the Socratic method which allows the ideas to be supported and examined, adding to the integrity of the argument. The fact Socrates and Diotima are able to reach an axiomatic point highlights the effective nature of this method. The definition achieved from this therefore ~~adds to the fact~~ supports the well-argued nature of the 'symposium' further. In addition to this, Aristophanes explores all sexual preference ~~and~~ through his explanatory myth of the original three sexes and Socrates explores all types of love through his comparison of love to 'creation' where it has many groups and parts. This allows the ideas to be well developed and fully considered. In this way, the 'symposium' does contain sensible and well-argued philosophy.

The 'symposium', however, does have a few flaws that include the occasional lack of logical sense and the fact the comedic aspects of Aristophanes' speech arguably take away from the serious purpose of his speech. The comedic comparisons in Aristophanes' speech such as that of Apollo to a cobbler and the description of Zeus having difficulty devising a plan creates a sense of absurdity in the speech. This ~~negate~~ in many ways reduces the ~~serious~~ seriousness of the speech and means the argument loses credibility, thus devaluing the ~~well-argued~~ philosophy discussed and explored throughout. Yet, the comedic



tone helps to engage readers and add variety. It also helps to make other accounts, such as Socrates' speech, more powerful and thus helps the philosophy explored. ~~But~~ Although, the gaps in logic also threaten the philosophy as it destroys credibility ~~of~~ of the philosophy, suggesting it is not well-argued. In Aristophanes' speech there is the illogical way ~~anyone would rewrite humans were deformed as this would mean~~ each half would not be able to recognise the other and the fact this sense of lack would only apply to one generation. The ~~idea of any~~ <sup>desire about any</sup> unity could be achieved when rewritten on account of the deformed new body is also an issue raised by the speech. Similarly in Socrates' speech, Diotima raises the idea love is the desire for the good forever, and this is achieved through negating something, such as a child or even glory ('kleos') ~~never~~ that could create an aspect of immortality. Yet, due to humans' mortal status, the question of why this matters if you never experience such a 'product' is raised. The definition is also questioned through love of one's family and country as this can be irrational rather than driven by the good. However, despite these problems, ~~the~~ the 'symposium' is able to create a sensible argument, thus it is <sup>mostly</sup> well-argued even if there are flaws.

Therefore, the 'symposium' of Plato does contain ~~a~~ the sensible and well-argued philosophy for the most part. While there are some flaws caused by occasional gaps in the logic of the argument, the majority of the arguments

presented are well thought out, argued skillfully and sensible ~~overall. Thus~~ In this way, the 'symposium' ~~is~~ does contain sensible and well-argued philosophy overall.

## Question 8\*

8\* 'Plutarch's main aim in his *Life of Alcibiades* was to entertain, rather than to write accurate and balanced biography.'

How far do you agree?

[20]

It was clear that the majority of candidates here had an excellent knowledge of the text and the majority of essays contained excellent AO2 content on the life of Alcibiades. However the best essays were where the candidates had again planned their answer and used the factual information to support ideas on 'entertain' and 'accurate/balanced'. This meant that their essays answered the question throughout.

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