

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

CLASSICAL GREEK

J292

For first teaching in 2016

J292/05 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 5 series overview

Candidates very much enjoyed engaging with this Euripides text. As last year, there were many excellent responses, showing a familiarity with the play and demonstrating detailed understanding of it. *The Bacchae* throws up various challenges and examiners were impressed by the obvious dedication and enthusiasm of candidates and their teachers in preparing for this exam. It is pleasing to note that few candidates gave answers outside the lines specified in individual questions. As last year, most candidates seem to have had enough time, although a very few ran out of time on the essay question.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read the questions carefully and responded accordingly • made reference to the passages, adding style or content where required • referenced the set text as a whole (for the 10-mark essay question) • quoted Greek and translated into English accurately, where required • revealed a close familiarity and engagement with the text • paid attention to the parameters of specific passages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • misinterpreted the question(s) or did not link their responses explicitly to the question asked • did not develop or expand their ideas where required • mistranslated or misunderstood the Greek text • were less familiar with the text and did not always pay close attention to the questions themselves • relied on knowledge of the <i>Bacchae</i> story outside the restrictions of the set text.

Question 1 (a)

1 Read the passage and answer the questions.

ἀτὰρ τὸ μὲν σῶμ' οὐκ ἄμορφος εἶ, ξένε,
ὡς ἐς γυναῖκας, ἐφ' ὅπερ ἐς Θήβας πάρει·
πλόκαμός τε γάρ σου ταναός οὐ πάλης ὕπο,
γένυν παρ' αὐτὴν κεχυμένος, πόθου πλέως.

Euripides, *Bacchae*, lines 453–456

(a) In the lines immediately preceding this passage, what order has Pentheus given to the servant regarding the stranger?

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

Candidates impressed examiners with their knowledge of the text outside the question paper. Some candidates went too far back in the text and said that Pentheus had ordered the stranger to be arrested.

Question 1 (b)

(b) What does Pentheus say about the stranger's appearance in this passage? Make **two** points.

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

Candidates gave very full answers here; they were mostly good, but there was some ambiguity as to what/who was full of desire.

Question 1 (c)

(c) Do you think Pentheus is showing true admiration for the stranger? Give a reason for your answer, referring to the Greek.

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

This question was thoughtfully answered. Most candidates could give a convincing reason (yes or no), though a surprising number did not quote Greek.

Question 2 (a)

2 Read the passage and answer the questions.

Pentheus	τὰ δ' ὄργι' ἐστὶ τίν' ἰδέαν ἔχοντά σοι;	
Dionysus	ἄρρητ' ἀβακχεύτοισιν εἰδέναί βροτῶν.	
Pentheus	ἔχει δ' ὄνησιν τοῖσι θύουσιν τίνα;	
Dionysus	οὐ θέμις ἀκοῦσαί σ', ἔστι δ' ἄξι' εἰδέναί.	
Pentheus	εὔ τοῦτ' ἐκιβδήλευσας, ἴν' ἀκοῦσαι θέλω.	5
Dionysus	ἀσέβειαν ἀσκοῦντ' ὄργι' ἐχθαίρει θεοῦ.	

Euripides, *Bacchae*, lines 471–476

(a) ἄρρητ' ... βροτῶν (line 2): what does Dionysus say about the rites?

.....

..... [2]

ἄρρητ' caused problems, occasionally being omitted or mistranslated, but there was enough leeway in the mark scheme to allow candidates who knew the text to score both marks.

Question 2 (b)

(b) εὖ τοῦτ' ... θέλω (line 5): pick out and translate the **Greek** word which Pentheus uses to describe how Dionysus has behaved towards him.

Greek word:
English translation:

[2]

This was a challenging verb, but it was the only indicative and the only 2nd-person verb on the line and a good differentiator. Candidates, almost universally, correctly gave ἐκίβδηλευσας, but translations varied and some candidates did not translate 'you' in context.

Exemplar 1

Greek word: ἐκίβδηλευσας
English translation: played a trick

Translating in context requires candidates to give the whole of the meaning, including the person of the verb. As Exemplar 1 shows, it is not enough to say 'have played a trick', but the full answer requires 'you have played a trick'.

Question 2 (c)

(c) ἀσέβειαν ... θεοῦ (line 6): what does Dionysus say to warn Pentheus?

.....

.....

..... [2]

This was mostly well answered, though a few candidates found this difficult.

Question 3

3 Read the passage and answer the question.

Pentheus τὰ δ' ἱερὰ νύκτωρ ἢ μεθ' ἡμέραν τελεῖς;
Dionysus νύκτωρ τὰ πολλά· σεμνότητ' ἔχει σκότος.
Pentheus τοῦτ' ἐς γυναικῆς δόλιόν ἐστι καὶ σαθρόν.
Dionysus κὰν ἡμέρα τό γ' αἰσχρὸν ἐξεύροι τις ἄν.

Euripides, *Bacchae*, lines 485–488

Translate this passage into English.

.....
.....
.....
.....
..... [5]

This was a straightforward translation which resulted in a pleasing number of full marks. That said, even for those who scored full marks, the majority produced an inconsequential error (no marks are lost for a single inconsequential error), the most common being 'ceremonies' for τὰ δ' ἱερὰ. There were also problems with τὰ πολλά (variously translated as 'usually', 'normally', 'the majority', 'many', 'most').

Question 4

4 Read the passage and answer the question.

Pentheus καὶ ποῦ 'στιν; οὐ γὰρ φανερός ὄμμασίν γ' ἐμοῖς.

Dionysus παρ' ἐμοί· σὺ δ' ἀσεβῆς αὐτὸς ὦν οὐκ εἰσορᾷς.

Euripides, *Bacchae*, lines 501–502

Explain the dramatic irony in these lines.

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

This was very well answered.

Question 5 tip for the 4-marker

Candidates who quoted large chunks of Greek, or who quoted using ellipsis, sometimes lost a mark because their English translation did not match the Greek quotation. Examiners look to make sure that candidates have a clear understanding of the Greek they have quoted.

Question 6

6 Read the passage and answer the question.

Pentheus Πενθεύς, Ἀγαύης παῖς, πατρός δ' Ἐχίονος.

Dionysus ἐνδυστυχῆσαι τοῦνομ' ἐπιτήδειος εἶ.

Euripides, *Bacchae*, lines 507–508

ἐνδυστυχῆσαι τοῦνομ' ἐπιτήδειος εἶ (line 2): explain what Dionysus means when he says this.

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

Some candidates struggled with this question or became tied up in knots. Often they understood the meaning of the line quoted, or else knew the meaning of Pentheus' name, but not always both.

Question 7

7 Read the passage and answer the question.

Pentheus ἀπόρω γε τῷδε συμπεπλέγμεθα ξένω,
ὅς οὔτε πάσχων οὔτε δρῶν σιγήσεται.
Dionysus ὦ τᾶν, ἔτ' ἔστιν εὖ καταστήσαι τάδε.
Pentheus τί δρῶντα; δουλεύοντα δουλείαις ἑμαῖς;

Euripides, *Bacchae*, lines 800–803

How does Euripides convey Pentheus' feelings in these lines? You should make **two** points, each supported by close reference to the Greek.

1

.....

.....

.....

.....

2

.....

.....

.....

[4]

Candidates seemed to find this a difficult question and some looked for escape by offering alliteration of 'd' in τί δρῶντα; δουλεύοντα δουλείαις ἑμαῖς; but without providing any convincing development. The most successful responses discussed the word order in line 1, or the content in line 2. Style points were not required for this question.

Exemplar 2

2 Euripides also conveys Pentheus' feeling of surprise and incredulosity in the line, 'τί δρῶντα; ... ἐμυλλεῖ;' (By doing what? By being a slave to my slaves?). The question that Pentheus asks about becoming a slave to his slaves is a silly suggestion but it highlights how Pentheus cannot think of any reasonable way to resolve this and so is very surprised. [4]

Exemplar 2 shows a creditable attempt to answer the question, using (an ellipsis of) the questions in line 4: τί δρῶντα; δουλεύοντα δουλείαις ἐμαῖς; the candidate refers to Pentheus' surprise and disbelief, which the king draws attention to by his deliberately 'silly suggestion'.

Question 8*

8* Read the passage and answer the question.

Pentheus	ἐκφέρετέ μοι δεῦρ' ὄπλα, σὺ δὲ παῦσαι λέγων.	
Dionysus	ἄ·	
	βούλη σφ' ἐν ὄρεσι συγκαθημένας ἰδεῖν;	
Pentheus	μάλιστα, μυρίον γε δούς χρυσοῦ σταθμόν.	
Dionysus	τί δ' εἰς ἔρωτα τοῦδε πέπτωκας μέγαν;	5
Pentheus	λυπρῶς νιν εἰσίδομι ἄν ἐξωνωμένας.	
Dionysus	ὅμως δ' ἴδοις ἄν ἠδέως ἅ σοι πικρά;	
Pentheus	σάφ' ἴσθι, σιγῇ γ' ὑπ' ἐλάταις καθήμενος.	
Dionysus	ἄλλ' ἐξιχνεύσουσίν σε, κἄν ἔλθῃς λάθρα.	
Pentheus	ἄλλ' ἐμφανῶς· καλῶς γὰρ ἐξεῖπας τάδε.	10
Dionysus	ἄγωμεν οὖν σε κἀπιχειρήσεις ὁδῶ;	
Pentheus	ἄγ' ὡς τάχιστα· τοῦ χρόνου δέ σοι φθονῶ.	

Euripides, *Bacchae*, lines 809–820

How does Euripides demonstrate Dionysus' manipulation of Pentheus?

In your answer you may wish to consider:

- Dionysus' persuasiveness.
- Pentheus' growing desire to see the Bacchantes.

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

[8]

There were some excellent answers on the 8-marker. There was plenty to say on this passage and most candidates delivered well. Pentheus' willingness to give 'an enormous amount' of gold was often discussed, with good answers including 'the use of hyperbaton here bookends the clause and emphasises how much Pentheus wants to see the women'.

In the past, some candidates have discussed 'stichomythia' with little reference to the text, or development of analysis, or relevance to the question asked. Examiners were pleased this year to see candidates offer examples of stichomythia with some intelligent development and relevance, e.g. quoting the beginning of lines 9 and 10, ἄλλ' ἐξιχνεύσουσίν, followed by ἄλλ' ἐμφανῶς, or lines 11 and 12, ἄγωμεν οὖν, followed by ἄγ' ὡς τάχιστα with an explanation of how the stichomythia makes Pentheus' mimicry (ἄλλ' ... ἄλλ' and ἄγωμεν ... ἄγ') of Dionysus' language successful.

Question 9 (a)

9 Read the passage and answer the questions.

Dionysus ἐγὼ στελῶ σε δωμάτων ἔσω μολών.

Pentheus τίνα στολήν; ἦ θῆλυν; ἀλλ' αἰδῶς μ' ἔχει.

Euripides, *Bacchae*, lines 827–828

(a) ἐγὼ ... μολών (line 1): what does Dionysus intend to do?

.....

.....

..... [2]

This question proved to be challenging for some candidates. There was ambiguity as to who intended to go into the palace (Dionysus) – the ambiguity was reflected in the written responses, as if in hope of being right either way. Some candidates took their answers from both lines of the passage, rather than the line asked for, and so did not gain the maximum marks available.

Question 9 (b)

(b) τίνα ... μ' ἔχει (line 2): why is Pentheus unhappy with Dionysus' plan?

.....

.....

..... [2]

Some candidates chose to answer with a direct translation in a way which did not always convey clear comprehension.

Question 10*

10* 'Pentheus is a foolish and arrogant king.'

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]**

The 10-mark essay offers candidates the opportunity to deliver their own opinions of the set text. This was the most challenging question on the paper and the wide range of marks reflected this. As always, the best answers focused on the specific question and were able to discuss Pentheus as foolish and arrogant, and as a king, with a broad range of examples from the text. Many could offer discussion of foolish and arrogant behaviour, though relatively few engaged with the idea of 'king' in the question, but those who did often presented nuanced arguments in favour of Pentheus' actions.

Some candidates discussed at length why Pentheus was (or was not) foolish and arrogant. At times, this opinion was unsupported by textual evidence, and candidates are reminded always to support their comments with reference to the text itself. Some were harsh on Pentheus for acting wilfully against a god, lacking the balance of the fact that Pentheus did not know who the stranger was. Others exculpated him outright, lacking the balance provided by evidence from the text of questionably arrogant behaviour. The most successful responses realised that Pentheus acted either in culpable ignorance (neglecting many clues and hints given throughout the play) or out of foolishness (being incapable of picking up the clues). Many candidates also recognised Dionysus' deliberate tormenting of Pentheus.

Some less successful responses relied excessively on parts of the play not prescribed for study and tried to give a summary of the end of the play, without this being relevant.

A very few candidates appeared to run out of time, but the majority were able to write at length, with some essays stretching to several pages in length.

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