

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

J199

For first teaching in 2017

J199/21 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 responses 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 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 impressed at the overall standard of work that they saw. They felt that the standard had improved a little since last year, with more candidates scoring more than half marks than recently. There was an impressive knowledge shown of Mycenaean burials and some very good use of source material in the 8 mark question on hunting. Having said that, there were still a significant number of candidates who left large parts of the paper out through a lack of knowledge. It was particularly disheartening to see 15 mark questions regularly omitted.

As usual, some candidates ran out of time in the final question. Candidates do need to be very careful over time and make sure that they reach the midway point in no more than 45 minutes.

Assessment for learning



Although the paper is 90 minutes long and worth 90 marks, if candidates have the mindset of a 'minute per mark', their final responses in each section are likely to be a little short. They should aim to spend not much more than 15 minutes on the questions worth 1-6 marks in each section and allow themselves around 20 minutes for the 15 mark question. If they do find themselves running out of time, a plan with facts and analysis is likely to score more marks than an essay written in 5 minutes.

Some candidates ignored the rubric when asked to make a particular number of points. If the question requires them to make two points, they must make *no more* than two points. Sometimes two very different points were put in the one line. Where more than two points were made, further points were ignored, even if correct. This idea is in the rubric at the start of the mark scheme, as it always has been, but many candidates seem to think that they get their best points marked in such questions.

Candidates generally used the sources well when asked to pick out information from the source. Examiners felt that fewer candidates dropped marks this year by carelessly missing out describing AO1 material from the printed sources. For questions worth 4 or 6 marks, candidates must give two or three precise references to the source and the vast majority tried to do this.

Candidates showed mixed knowledge of Tiryns; most knew some details of the Killing Boxes, but struggled to discuss the galleries. There was some confusion about the design and location of the city, but most knew the key defensive elements. There was good discussion of the appearance of the Warrior Vase, even if a surprising number of candidates did not know its name. Responses to the 8 and 15 mark questions were quite pleasing, showing a good knowledge and understanding, especially of hunting and burial.

In Section B, examiners were impressed with responses about Aeolus and the Laestrygonians, with many analysing the passage in Question 16 very well. They were particularly good at quoting the key parts of the text. However, later shorter questions on Homer showed both a lack of knowledge and poor technique in dealing with the simile.

Higher tariff questions were answered well, although many candidates would have benefited from thinking more carefully about the wording of the questions, discussing only what happened in the cave for the 8 mark question and what could reasonably be classed as the build-up to the battle in the hall.

Spelling proved problematic for many candidates. Tiryons, repoussé and Aeolus were frequently misspelled. Candidates were not penalised for this, as long as examiners could spot a close enough resemblance to the correct response.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • used their time carefully to complete the paper to a high level • picked out relevant details in 4 and 6 mark questions and analysed them in detail • stuck to the rubric when asked to provide a specific number of points • tailored responses carefully to the requirements of a questions, reading the question carefully • provided balanced ideas on 15 mark questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spent too long earlier questions, resulting in shorter final Homer responses • did not back up ideas with references to the text • ignored instructions to provide a specific number of points • wrote all that they knew on a topic and provided unnecessary information • gave a one-sided argument in the 15 mark questions • over-narrated in the 15 mark questions.

Section A overview

Section A comprises 45 marks worth of questions on the Mycenaean Age. These include questions that require short responses 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 from a choice of two optional 15 mark questions.

Knowledge of Tiryns was generally quite impressive. A few candidates muddled it up with Mycenae, and distinctive elements like the curved wall and galleries were not well known. Knowledge of the walls and the topography of Tiryns was very good. It was pleasing to note that most candidates were aware of the design of the killing boxes. Most were able to make good analysis of the Warrior Vase, although what it was used for was often more problematic.

The 8 and 15 mark questions generally showed good knowledge, with the best responses making use of a wide variety of source material. Weaker responses tended to overuse sources from earlier in the paper, with ideas about sources showing hunting being overused in Question 13. Many candidates spent a bit too long stating facts rather than giving opinions. They would do well to remember that AO2 is worth more than AO1 in the 15 mark questions.

Question 1

- 1 Which city is shown in this plan?

..... [1]

Most candidates were aware that this was Tiryns, although spelling it correctly proved more problematic. Candidates were not penalised for misspellings as long as examiners could recognise it as Tiryns.

Question 2

- 2 Area 1 is known as the Killing Boxes.

How did the design of the Killing Boxes make it easier for the inhabitants to defend the city?

Make **two** points.

1

.....

2

.....

[2]

Candidates generally showed a very good knowledge of this area. They tended to know that it was a narrow area that was designed to trap attackers. Fewer were aware of the gates at either end for this. Many knew of the likely presence of defenders throwing items from the walls. Some candidates stated that it was surrounded by walls, which was not credited as this is true of any indoor space.

Question 3 (a)

3

(a) Give **two** details about the area marked by number 2.

1

.....

2

.....

[2]

Because the numbering on the insert was placed outside the galleries and walls, examiners allowed discussion of the walls for this question. While many wrote about the walls, they did not always provide any detail of them and often candidates mistook the rooms for holes in the wall to fire arrows through. Of those who chose to write about the galleries, there was widespread belief that they were some sort of burial area or sally port. Those who knew they were the galleries almost always went on to give an accurate detail of them, with impressive knowledge of the size and purpose of them.

Question 3 (b)

(b) Why do you think this area was located next to the walls?

.....

..... [1]

Despite the question asking about the area next to the walls, many candidates chose to discuss the walls and hence could not be credited. Others thought that soldiers could fight from it, escape through it, or else use it as a lookout post. Those who knew it was a gallery were often able to discuss why items would be sensibly located near the outskirts of the city.

Question 4

- 4 Why would it have been difficult for enemies to attack and capture this city?
Make **three** points.

You should **not** refer to the Killing Boxes.

1

.....

.....

.....

2

.....

.....

.....

3

.....

.....

.....

[6]

There were many fine responses to this question. Candidates focused typically on the walls, the ramp and the hill location with fine analysis on all of these. Some wrote equally perceptively on the sally ports, cistern and palace. A few candidates repeated whatever they had written on the galleries (which was not seen as relevant to the question) or the killing boxes.

Question 5

- 5 What is the name of the vessel shown in **Source B**?

..... [1]

Most candidates did know this was the Warrior Vase. Many chose to name the type of vessel, which was fine providing they did not choose the wrong type of vessel. Unfortunately, a lot of these candidates thought it was an amphora or kylix.

Question 6

6 What was the original purpose of this item?

.....
 [1]

Candidates were evenly split between it being used as a mixing bowl for wine and water or a storage vessel for liquids. The latter was credited as a consequential error if candidates had named such a storage question in the previous response. Many did know it was a krater, but did not know what a krater was used for.

Assessment for learning



Candidates find it difficult to remember the different shapes of vessels and what their purpose was. Ask them to find examples from the internet or draw the shapes. Get them to create a table with the name of the vessel, a small picture, and descriptions of the size, contents, and an advantage and a disadvantage for each vessel.

Question 7 (a)

7 Look at the shields shown in **Source B**.

(a) Give **one** reason why these shields are **more** effective than tower shields or figure of eight shields.

.....
 [1]

Few candidates had problems with this and showed good understanding of the different types of shields. Only a few candidates seemed to muddle up which shield was which.

Question 7 (b)

(b) Give **one** reason why these shields are **less** effective than tower shields or figure of eight shields.

.....
 [1]

A few candidates wrote that they were smaller, but needed to make it clear why this was an issue. Otherwise, few problems were seen.

Question 8

- 8 What does the appearance of the soldiers, **apart from their shields**, tell us about Mycenaean armies?
Make **two** points.

1

.....

.....

.....

2

.....

.....

.....

[4]

Most candidates were able to pick out two features from the source. Many discussed well the helmets and how they would be effective in protecting the heads, but were often less successful in analysing the spears, believing that they were thrown or were long-range weapons. There were lots of comments about the similarity of the appearance of the soldiers, but not all were able to discuss what this showed. A sizeable number chose to write about the shields, often commenting on the material. With more careful reading of the question, candidates should have realised this would not be credited.

Question 9

- 9 Why might the figure on the left have her arm raised?

.....

..... [1]

Most candidates gave the most common interpretation of waving the soldiers off, but a variety of other ideas were allowed from grieving for them to praying for them. Many felt she would have been commanding the soldiers, but examiners felt this would have been very unlikely.

Question 10

10 Name **one** technique that was used in the manufacture of this ring.

..... [1]

Most candidates knew the response, but there was some support for all the metalworking technical terms. Spelling proved problematic, but did not result in the loss of the mark.

Question 11

11 'This ring is our best piece of evidence about hunting in the Mycenaean Age.'

How far do you agree with this assessment?

Use **Source C** as a starting point and your own knowledge in your answer.

[8]

Candidates were able to analyse the ring very impressively. Most described what they could see accurately, but some were able to analyse the finer details, noting that it was a box chariot rather than just saying it was a chariot or commenting on the need for a driver and a hunter rather than simply saying there were two men. There was some good discussion on the size of the ring and how it could not show much detail in that size. Others wrote of the bow being seen as a cowardly weapon, but this was not felt to be true of hunting.

Most chose to write about the Lion Hunt Dagger, again showing impressive knowledge. However many candidates lost out on potential marks by simply comparing different artefacts without discussing their overall merits as sources. This was a key factor in deciding if a response was in the top level.

Some made errors in stating the dagger showed swords. Others were vague in saying the dagger shows the use of shields, wasting the chance to give more specific AO1. Other pieces under consideration included the Vapheio cups and the boar fresco, although a number of candidates talked about the usefulness of frescoes, but gave no details of what they showed.

Assessment for learning



Teachers are encouraged to get candidates into the habit of writing responses where one point is made about one source, followed immediately by a comparison to another source. Such an approach tends to lead to better analysis, rather than writing two separate halves. Candidates need to say why one piece of evidence is better than another.

Exemplar 1

The signet ring informs us that large animals such as deer were hunted by men in chariots which shows that it was a high ~~is~~ velocity sport that needed more than one person to assist in. The chariot is very useful in telling us about the structure of chariots since none remain today from the Mycenaean period.

However the ~~is~~ Lion Hunt Dagger might be more useful, since it tells us about the weaponry used and the differing types of shield one could use, such as the ^{figure} ~~four~~ of eight shield and the tower shields. Source C doesn't convey this, and instead shows a bow being used, but these were seen as cowardly, which shows that they were unlikely to have been used often which is what the ~~the~~ Source suggests.

Furthermore, one might argue that the source only shows one type of animal being hunted, but we have ^{direct} evidence from ^{the} ~~the lion~~ ~~the~~ boar tusk helmet in the Dendra armour that ~~boar~~ boars were not only hunted, but often hunted too since they needed the tusks of 10 boars to create one helmet - this is direct evidence as opposed to artistic licence in the source. There also isn't much space on the

Exemplar 1 makes some perceptive observations about the ring. There could be a little more detail and analysis, but the candidate chooses to move on. There is clear comparison between this source and the Lion Hunt Dagger in the use of weapons. The mention of a bow being a cowardly weapon is true of the *Iliad*, but was not felt to be relevant to this question.

Relatively few candidates chose to discuss further objects, but there is some excellent discussion of the range of animals hunted with the discussion of the boar's tusk helmet. The candidate then went on to describe the size and detail of the ring compared to other sources.

Overall, it showed a very good range of objects with perceptive analysis and clear comparisons.

Question 12

- 12 'The people who designed and painted the frescoes of Mycenae were the most skilful and imaginative of all the Mycenaean craftspeople.'
To what extent do you agree with this assessment?

[15]

Many candidates showed excellent knowledge of various aspects of fresco design, including the plastering of the wall, the creation of paints (although some gave the wrong sources for the colours) and the subject matter. Some responses spent a long time describing individual frescoes while others gave no specific examples. Two or three examples was the ideal. A few responses only discussed frescoes, resulting in modest evaluation as they were unable to respond to the word 'most' in the question.

Many then moved on to discuss other pieces of craftsmanship, but the best responses also discussed some of the limitations of frescoes such as unnatural body shapes or lack of perspective. Most responses made good points about the level of detail and colour in frescoes, although candidates got confused about the sources of colours, commenting on saffron, squid ink and shellfish. There was generally too much discussion of the usefulness of sources to modern historians, which was not part of this question. Candidates need to make sure that their response is focused on the question.

The best responses had a fairly even balance of the response devoted to frescoes and other crafts, but many had just a paragraph on either the former or the latter; this resulted in rather limited comparisons. Conclusions often revolved around whatever point the candidate had made last rather than a reflection of the whole response.

Most candidates chose to discuss metalwork and discussed the techniques shown. There were some fine examples chosen, but candidates are encouraged not to use objects they have referred to earlier, such as the hunting ring. There was some excellent, if rare, discussion of builders.

Exemplar 2

attracting attention. Furthermore, the boat procession fresco also in Akrotiri has dolphins in the top of the ~~page~~^{fresco}, adding a fantastical element to the fresco, showing their imagination. However, they may not be the most skilful. For example, the corbelled method seen in the 18m underground cistern ~~area~~ in Mycenae and the 13m high Tholos tomb would have required greater skill to make than extracting colours to make paint. They are made by placing progressively larger boulders on top of each other and it is a self supporting structure, meaning it requires no cement. This is a great demonstration of skill, and imagination, as with less advanced technology, they ~~can make~~ have found clever ways to make the structure.

On top of this, the Craftsmen of the Crystal Swan basket, found in Grave Circle B, ~~is very~~ would require great skill. The Crystal is very fragile, so for a Craftsman to be able to neatly and skilfully chip away small parts of the swan, forming a smooth head and a precise eye, would have required much more skill.

Exemplar 2 starts off with good knowledge of a fresco from Akrotiri. AO2 credit is given for the idea of fantasy, which may or may not have been the case with dolphins around the city.

There is then a very fine counter argument with discussion of building structures in cities, showing both good knowledge and a very well made idea that the creation of monumental structures was more difficult than the creation of paints. This direct comparison between two elements is a feature of top level responses, rather than simply stating that creating structures would take skill. This is amplified by the point about the lack of cement and technology.

The exemplar does well to move on to a different area in the carving of the duck crystal. This was an unusual and well-chosen object allowing the candidate to discuss the fragility as well as the artistic content.

Question 13

13 'The dead in Mycenae were treated with great respect and honour.'

To what extent do you agree with this assessment?

In your response, you should write about **both** the rituals associated with burial **and** the places in which people were buried. **[15]**

There was some excellent discussion of the different types of burials in Mycenae. Most candidates talked about at least two different types, discussing the size and construction methods of graves. There were some who confused grave types, especially cist and shaft graves. Crucially, many did not include cist graves in their discussion which often meant an imbalance in the analysis. Others wrongly felt that shaft graves were burials for the poor, despite then going on to discuss the objects found in Grave Circle B. Discussion of tholos tombs was usually quite impressive, with the best responses providing good factual details and analysis of how they would have been built to show honour.

Weaker responses only focused on grave types and grave goods, but many candidates did discuss some elements of the funeral. Many candidates referred to evidence of rituals in tombs, with some even using evidence from Homeric funerals or scenes on larnakes. Unfortunately, many candidates who had studied the Myth and Religion topic brought in details that were not part of Mycenaean funerals, such as hiring mourners, placing a coin in the mouth, or carrying busts of ancestors.

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 responses 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 from a choice of two optional 15 mark questions.

There was some confusion about where Odysseus had been, but candidates were able to analyse well the sending of the men and the society of the Laestrygonians. As in previous years, the beggar's tale showed mixed knowledge. Some candidates gave very precise detail, some knew little, and others did know details, but did not take account of the wording of the question. The question about similes was not handled well. Candidates seem to forget they need to quote the simile and give a link or difference. Few were able to do both.

There was some fine discussion of the character of Odysseus in the cave, although many referred to what happened after the cave and criticised Odysseus for blinding Polyphemus.

Question 23 proved more popular than Question 24 and many candidates gave a good range of the actions of the gods with mixed discussion of how they affected the plot. Most chose to talk about at least one other driver of the plot. Question 24 proved a little more problematic to some in that there was less discussion than anticipated of the actual battle or the build-up, with Books 9 and 10 featuring more than anticipated. As a result, the comparative element was sometimes lacking depth.

Question 14

14 Where had Odysseus spent the month immediately before this passage begins?

..... [1]

Most candidates correctly identified the place, although there was some support for every place that Odysseus visited in Books 9 and 10.

Question 15

15 Odysseus chose three men to investigate. Why was this a sensible decision?
Make **two** points.

1

.....

2

.....

[2]

Most candidates scored full marks. Those who did not tended to just explain why it was sensible to send men, rather than considering the number who were sent.

Question 16

- 16** What impressions of the Laestrygonians and their society does Homer create in this passage?
Make **three** points.

1

.....

.....

.....

2

.....

.....

.....

3

.....

.....

.....

[6]

There were lots of excellent responses to this question and many candidates scored full marks. Most candidates suggested the lack of cultivated land suggested barbarism and there was good analysis of the presence of waggon and the palace. The behaviour of Antiphates' daughter was variously interpreted; her pointing towards the palace was seen as both rude and hospitable by different candidates. Similarly, smoke elicited a variety of responses. Those who felt it potentially suggested a hostile environment rather than a civilised one showed a greater understanding of it as a *topos* in Homer.

Question 17

- 17** What happened to the fleet in the harbour of the Laestrygonians?
Make **two** points.

- 1
- 2

[2]

This was another question that required careful reading. Many wrote about Odysseus' escape, but as he had moored his boat outside the harbour, this could not be credited. Most knew that the men were eaten, with many also going on to say how they were killed. Some confused the episode with that in Ismarus and gave incorrect casualty details

Question 18 (a)

18

- (a)** State **two** of the lies that the beggar had just told Penelope.

- 1
- 2

[2]

This question proved challenging for many candidates; they often gave factually incorrect responses (such as the speaker saying he was a beggar or had a crew) or vague responses in stating that he had seen Odysseus. Many did not read the question carefully and went on to describe some of the lies after this passage, stating that the beggar said Odysseus would be back soon. However, there was good detail from many about the beggar's claimed homeland, name and family connections.

Question 18 (b)

(b) Give **one** way that Odysseus had made **one** of his lies more believable.

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

Candidates often repeated information from either 18(a) or went on to simply reword Question 19 and state that he described the clothes that Odysseus was wearing. Better responses stated that he gave elements of truth in his lies or provided a detailed tale.

Question 19

19 'Tell me ... with him.' (Rieu) / 'So describe ... with him.' (Kline)
Give **two** details that Odysseus gave in reply to Penelope.

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

There was some impressive knowledge shown in responses to this question. Many recalled his purple cloak and his brooch, with occasional impressive knowledge of the latter.

Weaker responses gave a general description of ancient Mycenaean men's clothing or wrongly stated that he was with members of his crew or was brave and handsome; it was clear that many were guessing the responses. There was little accurate mention of who he was travelling with, although a few were able to give details.

Question 20

20 'Seizing the ... burning wood' (Rieu) / 'They held ... the heat' (Kline).

How appropriate do you find the simile of the drill? Make **two** points.

1

.....

.....

.....

2

.....

.....

.....

[4]

This question proved to be the most challenging question on the paper. As ever, a sizeable number of candidates wrote the usual statement of similes helping us to understand the situation by comparisons with everyday objects, not engaging with the details of the simile. Others simply stated the Greeks would know all about ships, but did not make any attempt to discuss what was happening to Polyphemus. Many did not quote any part of the simile, throwing away AO1 marks. Others focused on the line of the extract of Polyphemus' eye boiling, although this was not in the simile, or got distracted into discussing why they felt sympathy.

Better responses stated that the drill used a twisting motion and went on to quote the line showing the crew doing this or described the teamwork involved. Some were able to give counter arguments, such as how the substance being drilled into was different.

Assessment for learning



Teachers could reprint every simile in a document and then create mini tables, or get candidates individually or in groups to talk about each simile and how it corresponds to the situation. They simply need to write statements such as 'In the simile it states and this corresponds to'. Candidates need to be drilled (excuse the pun) carefully in how to analyse similes precisely.

Exemplar 3

1 The Polyphemus was a Cyclops^{giant}, therefore it is appropriate to suggest that he "bore... a ship's timber" to emphasise the effort required to place the large eye of Polyphemus, and then bring to a great ship

2 ~~The men twining "a strap they hold at either end" is also appropriate since it enacts the continuous motion of the drill as he had to dig and spin a great deal to reach the root of his eyeball.~~ EXTRA PAPER →

20

2. Reference to "mates" who "twirl with a strap" when ~~reference~~ talking about the effort required to bore a ship's timber being similar to piercing the Cyclops is appropriate because it is true that Odysseus required the help of many of his men to achieve his goal. He mentions that "we" handled the pole which therefore cements this.

Exemplar 3 exemplifies how to analyse similes properly. There are two clear points here, in the idea of effort and needing help to drill, clearly backed up with references to boring a timber and the assistance of the crew. Many responses quoted these same references, but did not analyse them, or would give an idea but not back it up with a specific reference to a line.

Question 21

- 21 Apart from the fact that he ate humans, why would the Greeks have considered Polyphemus to be barbaric?
Make **two** points.

1

.....

2

.....

[2]

Most candidates gained full marks through a wide range of good idea. Some felt that having one eye, being strong and being a giant automatically would make him barbaric, but examiners felt that these did not necessarily make show barbarism.

Question 22

- 22 'During his time in Polyphemus's cave, Odysseus displays only good qualities.' How far do you agree with this assessment? Use **Source F** as a starting point and your own knowledge in your answer. [8]

There were some very fine responses to this question, but Odysseus came in for some undeserved harsh criticism. They often did not consider the context of the blinding; while Odysseus could reasonably be rebuked for not heeding his crew in entering, many felt his decision to get Polyphemus drunk and blind him was cruel, even alleging on some occasions that Polyphemus was hospitable. Others equally missed the point in praising Odysseus for generosity in sharing his wine. There were also some errors in responses, notably stating that Odysseus killed Polyphemus.

Many candidates had not read the question carefully enough. A lot wrote about his hubris and shouting out his name, but this did not happen in the cave.

Better responses made a point on the passage, such as his leadership before moving on to a couple of examples of his intelligence, with a counter argument at the events at the cave before Polyphemus' return.

Misconception



Candidates need to be particularly careful about words such as 'during' in this question and 'just' in Question 18(a). These limit the range of appropriate responses and are designed to get candidates to focus on a particular part of a story. Many candidates seem to see the words that tell them which episode to consider and then proceed to write whatever they know about a topic.

Question 23

- 23** 'Fate and the gods are the most important factor in the shaping of the plot of the *Odyssey*.' To what extent do you agree with this assessment? **[15]**

Candidates showed impressive knowledge of what the gods do. Most candidates discussed Polyphemus' curse, Circe, Hermes and Athena. Credit was also given for discussion of Aeolus, although his divinity is questionable. Discussion typically featured about how each incident aided Odysseus, which was often repetitive. Encouragingly, some candidates chose to bring the Sun god and Calypso into the story.

Weaker responses chose not to discuss other factors, but most responses did discuss at least one other factor. This was typically Odysseus himself or the crew, but there were some excellent ideas that focused on the presence of themes such as *xenia*, *nostos* or revenge prompted actions.

Where candidate did discuss factors, few candidates attempted to analyse which was the most important factor. This was one of the main factors that distinguished responses from the top level.

Question 24

- 24** 'The build up to Odysseus's recovery of his kingdom is more exciting and interesting to read than the battle in the hall.'
To what extent do you agree with this assessment? **[15]**

This question generally produced good AO1 knowledge of different parts of the text, but often did not compare the different parts to the degree that was needed. Most candidates saw the build-up as going right back to the start of Odysseus' journey in Book 9, which was a bit of stretch considering the events happened 10 books and 10 years before the events in the palace, but examiners did credit discussion of Polyphemus, Circe et al. This often meant that the comparison was between Books 9-10 and Books 19, 21 and 22. Those who did use the earlier books often had very little on the battle itself.

Those who went back to Books 9 and 10 focused on the fantasy elements and the monsters in the early books in discussing the excitement, whereas those who focused purely on Books 19, 21 and 22 focused more on tension and irony. The latter approach tended to produce better quality analysis and also meant that candidates did not simply retell facts that they had used in their response to Question 22.

In discussing early books, candidates often said they preferred the gore or the involvement of the gods, ignoring the fact that both are as common in the latter books.

Many candidates made statements that were appropriate to both parts they discussed, but said that elements were only present in one part, such as stating gore was not present in different books.

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We've made it easier for Exams Officers to download copies of your candidates' completed papers or 'scripts'. Your centre can use these scripts to decide whether to request a review of marking and to support teaching and learning.

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