

Examiners' report

GCSE

CLASSICAL GREEK

**OCR Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in
Classical Greek**

J292

For first teaching in 2016

J292/05 Summer 2025 series

Contents

Introduction	3
Paper 5 series overview	4
Question 1 (a) (i)	5
Question 1 (a) (ii)	5
Question 1 (b)	6
Question 1 (c)	6
Question 2	7
Question 3 (a) (i)	8
Question 3 (a) (ii)	9
Question 3 (b)	9
Question 4	10
Question 5	12
Question 6*	13
Question 7 (a)	14
Question 7 (b)	14
Question 7 (c)	15
Question 8*	15

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 [Teach Cambridge](#).

Would you prefer a Word version?

Did you know that you can save this PDF as a Word file using Acrobat Professional?

Simply click on **File > Export to** and select **Microsoft Word**

(If you have opened this PDF in your browser you will need to save it first. Simply right click anywhere on the page and select **Save as . . .** to save the PDF. Then open the PDF in Acrobat Professional.)

If you do not have access to Acrobat Professional there are a number of **free** applications available that will also convert PDF to Word (search for PDF to Word converter).

Paper 5 series overview

The content of the Euripides paper this year – Medea's dilemma, Creon's decision to exile her and her plotting against her enemies – clearly inspired many of the candidates. The overall standard was high and for many candidates the longer questions unearthed an emotional involvement with their reading. Many of the shorter questions allowed all candidates to gain good marks, while more able candidates and those with a keen attention to detail could gather marks across the paper. The 10-mark essays provoked considered responses about Medea's words and thoughts; only a very few candidates appear to have run out of time on this question. Once again, great credit goes to the candidates and their teachers for their determination, in sometimes difficult circumstances, to work at the wonderful study of Greek literature. Candidates displayed a remarkable facility in Greek and achieved some magnificent responses.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
• responded to the questions asked, paying attention to the specific line references of any particular question • made close reference to the passages to discuss style or content points • quoted Greek and translated into English accurately • displayed good knowledge of the whole set text (for the 10-mark essay question), without allowing the wider story of Medea and her children to dominate • displayed a close familiarity, sensitivity and engagement with the text.	• did not respond to the question asked • did not pay attention to specific line references, where given • did not quote Greek and/or offer an accurate English translation • allowed the wider story of Medea and her children to dominate the 10-mark essay question at the expense of the set text, OR discussed seemingly prepared essays on the role of women • were less familiar with the set text.

Question 1 (a) (i)

- 1 Read the passage and answer the questions.

**Euripides, *Medea*, lines 230-236 © Judith Affleck;
Clive Letchford, *OCR Anthology for Classical Greek
GCSE 2025-2026, Bloomsbury Academic, 2023.*
Item removed due to third party copyright.**

Euripides, *Medea*, lines 230–236

- (a) ἀθλιώτατον φύτόν (line 2):
- (i) how does Medea describe women here?

..... [1]

This was a straightforward question, though it was not uncommon for some candidates to omit the superlative.

Question 1 (a) (ii)

- (ii) what has Jason done to make Medea feel this way?

.....

..... [1]

This question was well answered. Examiners allowed Jason 'has' married or 'is going to' marry Glauce.

Question 1 (b)

- (b) ἄς ... λαβεῖν (lines 3–5): what impression does Medea give of Greek marriage here? Explain your answer.

.....

.....

..... [2]

Some candidates offered only a translation and did not answer the question explaining the impression of Greek marriage. Those responses which simply translated the whole of the quoted section (ἄς...λαβεῖν) did not score a mark for the interpretation/personal response.

Exemplar 1

Medea presents marriage as restrictive for women, as she says that they must take a master of their body, implying that they do not have freedom. [2]

This response answers the question by providing an interpretation/personal response ('Medea presents marriage as restrictive for women') and explains the answer with reference to the text ('she says that they must take a master of their body').

Question 1 (c)

- (c) κᾶν ... χρηστόν (lines 6–7): what does Medea say is the greatest challenge?

.....

..... [1]

This was a straightforward question for those who understood it. The point of ἢ κακὸν λαβεῖν ἢ χρηστόν was not a comparison between a husband (or man) who was 'bad' or 'useful', but between a husband who was 'bad' or 'good'. Examiners did not accept 'choose' as a translation of λαβεῖν.

Question 2

2 Read the passage and answer the question.

**Euripides, *Medea*, lines 248-251 © Judith Affleck;
Clive Letchford, OCR Anthology for *Classical Greek*
GCSE 2025-2026, Bloomsbury Academic, 2023.
Item removed due to third party copyright restrictions.**

Translation:

They say that we live a life without danger at home,
while they fight with the spear, but they are reasoning
badly; I would choose to stand by a shield three times,
rather than give birth once.

Euripides, *Medea*, lines 248–251

How does Medea emphasise her disagreement with the view that women's lives are easy?

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

1

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

[4]

This 4-mark question (with translation) requires at least one aspect of stylistic analysis.

κακῶς φρονοῦντες was a common and accepted response by those who said its positioning drew attention to men's lack of sensible reasoning, or linked it to the indeterminate 'they say' in λέγουσι.

Less successful responses referred to the 'contrast of ἀπαξ' without mentioning the contrasting τοῖς; or that 'men fought using an ἀσπίδα' without reference to what women did. In order to develop their points these candidates needed to expand the contextual comparison with further Greek quotation and discussion of the contrast of childbirth vs war.

'Emphatic positioning' was a very common style offering, and examiners are increasingly seeing responses where 'juxtaposition' is used to mean 'contrast'. Centres are encouraged to discuss alliteration with candidates as it is not a fail-safe style point.

The practice by some candidates of quoting and translating entire clauses sometimes made it hard to tell whether the crucial word had been understood correctly. If a longer passage or sentence is quoted with focus on a particular word, giving the specific Greek and English word as well is prudent.

Question 3 (a) (i)

3 Read the passage and answer the questions.

**Euripides, *Medea*, lines 259-266 © Judith Affleck;
Clive Letchford, *OCR Anthology for Classical Greek
GCSE 2025-2026*, Bloomsbury Academic, 2023.
Item removed due to third party copyright restrictions.**

Euripides, *Medea*, lines 259–266

(a) τοσοῦτον ... σιγᾶν (lines 1–5):

(i) how does Medea ask the Chorus to help her?

.....

.....

.....

..... [3]

This question was very well answered. However, too many candidates opted to write part of their response in the marginal spaces, which are not scanned, and candidates are encouraged instead to make use of the additional answer space at the end of the paper.

Question 3 (a) (ii)

(ii) why is Medea angry with Creon as well as with Jason?

.....
 [1]

Again this question was very well answered. One common error was that Creon was banishing her from his land, but this event had not yet happened in the text.

Question 3 (b)

(b) γυνή ... μαιφονωτέρα (lines 5–8): what contrast does Medea make in these lines about the character of women?

.....

 [4]

There were 4 marks available for this question. Candidates are advised to count the number of points they think they have written, as some responses fell short of the required number. More able candidates and those with a keen attention to detail achieved the full 4 marks.

A common error was to omit that women are full of fear 'in other matters'. This and the second point were often conflated in less successful responses: 'women are full of fear and cowardly when it comes to combat'.

Question 4

- 4 Read the passage and answer the question.

**Euripides, *Medea*, lines 277-279 © Judith Affleck;
Clive Letchford, *OCR Anthology for Classical Greek
GCSE 2025-2026*, Bloomsbury Academic, 2023.
Item removed due to third party copyright restrictions.**

Euripides, *Medea*, lines 277–279

How does Medea attempt to gain sympathy in these lines?

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

1

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

[4]

This 4-mark question (with no requirement for style analysis) received a range of responses.

There was some confusion regarding πάντα δὴ κάλων: while the more successful responses accurately recognised this to mean ‘all the rope (indeed)’, others translated it as ‘at full sail’. Examiners were looking for an accurate understanding of the Greek in context. The interpretation of the metaphor encouraged a variety of different responses and examiners didn’t probe too closely provided the Greek was understood and the question was answered.

The other nautical metaphor οὐκ ἔστιν ἄτης εὐπρόσοιστος ἔκβασις (‘there is no easy landing place from ruin’) was rarely recognised as a metaphor and so presented fewer problems to candidates.

Commentary on πανώλης ἢ τάλαιν’ ἀπόλλυμαι was often very good and wide-ranging, including discussion of tricolon and hyperbole; but its translation (‘Wretched, I am utterly ruined and destroyed’) caused more difficulties, showing some uncertainty as to the individual words, even from candidates who intelligently drew attention to the prefix παν- meaning ‘utterly’.

Exemplar 2

2 Medea also uses two sea-fairing metaphors to ~~re~~ emphasise how lost and hopeless she is. For example, 'ἐχθροὶ...κ' ἄλωv' means 'for my enemies are letting out full sail against me'. This puts into perspective for the audience who would have been very familiar with the sea and battles that use ships, how she is very much a victim of her enemies, who ~~are~~^{is} Creon in this case, as they are attacking her. [4]

In this response, the candidate employs ellipsis (ἐχθροὶ...κ' ἄλωv) and misunderstands the metaphor to offer an inaccurate translation ('full sail against me'). However, the commentary before and after the quote is sufficient to help this response achieve a ✓? for this point and, ultimately, a mark of 3/4 overall.

Question 5

- 5 Read the passage and answer the question.

**Euripides, *Medea*, lines 358-362 © Judith Affleck;
Clive Letchford, OCR Anthology for Classical Greek
GCSE 2025-2026, Bloomsbury Academic, 2023.
Item removed due to third party copyright restrictions.**

Euripides, *Medea*, lines 358–362

Translate this passage into English.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [5]

The translation for this question was generally well done. Difficulties, when they came, were found in the omission of the 'little' words such as *ποτε*, the first *ἦ* and *ὥς*.

Question 6*

6* Read the passage and answer the question.

**Euripides, *Medea*, lines 376-385 © Judith Affleck;
Clive Letchford, *OCR Anthology for Classical Greek*
GCSE 2025-2026, Bloomsbury Academic, 2023.
Item removed due to third party copyright restrictions.**

Euripides, *Medea*, lines 376–385

How does Medea show that she is thinking very carefully about her plans?

In your answer you may wish to consider:

- the methods she considers
- her reasoning for rejecting or accepting these methods

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

[8]

This 8-mark question produced some excellent work and it was not uncommon for responses to achieve the top level, showing how well centres had taught and prepared their candidates. These candidates made very good points about Medea deliberating between different methods and considering the consequences if she failed.

Examiners noted that candidates used ellipsis more carefully this year: candidates frequently translated all omitted words, and it is evident and gratifying to see that centres are delivering the message that an English translation should accurately match its Greek quotation.

Candidates are reminded to refer only to the passage in the question and not to comment on events from elsewhere in the set text.

Candidates are also encouraged to use paragraphs to separate their points and to offer a range of style points. Some candidates wrote excellent answers but did not include any stylistic points – limiting their response to Level 2.

Some candidates continued to offer examples of alliteration which were unlikely to achieve success, such as: 'the alliteration of -o- sounds in οὐκ οἶδ' ὅποιά πρῶτον ἐγχειρῶ emphasises how many ways to murder Medea can choose,' and 'the alliteration of -e- sounds in ἐμοῖς ἐχθροῖς γέλων emphasises the disgust Medea feels'.

Others argued that almost every word at the start or end of a line was emphatically placed, or cited 'emphatic positioning' more than once, sometimes even three or four times, in a response. Examiners are looking for a variety of different style points and the more successful responses included, for example, the mimetic 'surrounding' word order (or pleonasm) of ὑφάψω δῶμα νυμφικὸν πυρί; the superlatives κράτιστα and μάλιστα; and the semantic field of murder.

Question 7 (a)

7 Read the passage and answer the questions.

**Euripides, Medea, lines 403-406 © Judith Affleck;
Clive Letchford, OCR Anthology for Classical Greek
GCSE 2025-2026, Bloomsbury Academic, 2023.
Item removed due to third party copyright restrictions.**

Euripides, *Medea*, lines 403–406

- (a) ἔρπ' ἐς τὸ δεινόν· νῦν ἄγων εὐψυχίας (line 1): pick out and translate the **Greek word** which Medea uses to describe what she plans to do.

Greek word:

English translation:

[2]

The majority of responses understood that just one word was required for this question. Some candidates chose ἄγων over δεινόν, which was permitted.

Question 7 (b)

- (b) ὀρᾷς ... γάμοις (lines 2–3): what makes it important to Medea that she carries out her plan?

.....

.....

..... [2]

Some candidates omitted the first point, 'she has suffered', not realising it was required as part of the answer; however, the overwhelming majority accurately recognised that Medea did not want to incur laughter. Some candidates wrote answers outside the parameters of the question.

Reading the question under exam pressure



As good practice, candidates should always highlight specific lines of text mentioned in a particular question. This will help avoid errors of straying into irrelevant text and content.

Question 7 (c)

- (c) γεγῶσαν ἐσθλοῦ πατρὸς Ἡλίου τ' ἄπο (line 4): why do you think Medea reminds herself about this?

.....

.....

..... [2]

This question was generally well answered.

Question 8*

- 8* To what extent do you think Medea is justified in thinking and speaking as she does?

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]

Question 6 (the 8-mark question) had already prepared candidates to consider Medea's murderous planning, and responses to this final question allowed further exploration of any justification for Medea's words and thoughts.

There were some very good answers that showed a deep understanding of the text and the wider story. It was clear that candidates had a personal response to their reading.

More able candidates responded to both sides of the argument, arguing that Medea had plenty of reasons to justify her words and thoughts, while acknowledging that murder could never be justified. There were some excellent arguments about how unfair her treatment of Glauce was, especially in light of her speech about women having no rights. There was also some interesting discussion of Medea's manipulation (of the Chorus, of Creon) and her abuse of supplication. It was pleasing to see that candidates have learnt to provide evidence from across the whole text and not simply from the passages printed on the examination paper.

Development was sometimes implicit, with some responses referencing a few examples and then assuming that justification had been proved. Others tried to answer the question without making reference to the text, theorising instead on the justification of extreme behaviour by discussion of women's lives (today and in ancient Greece) or of aspects of the Medea story outside the set text.

It may be instructive to note that excessively long essays do not always equate to high marks. Some candidates wrote essays running to four, five or even six pages in length. Such essays run the risk of losing structure, focus and legibility, which might result in a loss of marks. Candidates should therefore consider spending a minute or two to formulate a plan to provide structure to the essay, which would be time well spent.

Supporting you

Teach Cambridge

Make sure you visit our secure website [Teach Cambridge](#) to find the full range of resources and support for the subjects you teach. This includes secure materials such as set assignments and exemplars, online and on-demand training.

Don't have access? If your school or college teaches any OCR qualifications, please contact your exams officer. You can [forward them this link](#) to help get you started.

Reviews of marking

If any of your students' results are not as expected, you may wish to consider one of our post-results services. For full information about the options available visit the [OCR website](#).

Access to Scripts

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.

Our free, on-demand service, Access to Scripts is available via our single sign-on service, My Cambridge. Step-by-step instructions are on our [website](#).

Keep up-to-date

We send a monthly bulletin to tell you about important updates. You can also sign up for your subject specific updates. If you haven't already, [sign up here](#).

OCR Professional Development

Attend one of our popular professional development courses to hear directly from a senior assessor or drop in to a Q&A session. Most of our courses are delivered live via an online platform, so you can attend from any location.

Please find details for all our courses for your subject on **Teach Cambridge**. You'll also find links to our online courses on NEA marking and support.

Signed up for ExamBuilder?

ExamBuilder is the exam paper builder platform for a range of our qualifications. [Find out more](#).

Free for all OCR centres with an Interchange account, it allows unlimited users per centre. We require an [Interchange](#) username to verify your centre's users for ExamBuilder.

If you do not have an Interchange account, please contact your centre administrator (usually the Exams Officer) to request a username.

Once you have an Interchange username, use the form on [this page](#) to sign up for ExamBuilder, or ask an existing user at your centre to create an ExamBuilder account for you.

Active Results

Review students' exam performance with our free online results analysis tool. It is available for all GCSEs, AS and A Levels and Cambridge Nationals (examined units only).

[Find out more](#).

Tell us what you think

Your feedback plays an important role in how we develop, market, support and resource qualifications now and into the future. We want you and your students to enjoy and get the best out of our qualifications and resources, but to do that we need your honest opinions to tell us whether we're on the right track or not.

You can email your thoughts to resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk or visit our [feedback page](#) to learn more about how you can help us improve our resources.



Designing and testing in [collaboration with you](#) and your students



Helping young people develop an [ethical view of the world](#)



Equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging (EDIB) are [part of everything we do](#)

Contact the team at:

☎ 01223 553998

🖥 ocr.org.uk

To stay up to date with all the relevant news about our qualifications, register for email updates at ocr.org.uk/updates

Visit our Online Support Centre at support.ocr.org.uk



OCR is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge.

OCR is a Company Limited by Guarantee and an exempt charity. Registered in England. Registered office: The Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8EA. Registered company number: 3484466.

We operate academic and vocational qualifications regulated by Ofqual, Qualifications Wales and CCEA as listed in their qualifications registers.

We are committed to providing a fully accessible experience across all our products, platforms, and websites. Find out more about our [accessibility standards](#).

© OCR 2025. All rights reserved. We retain the copyright on all our publications. However, our registered centres are permitted to copy and distribute our material for their own internal use, in line with any specific restrictions detailed in the publication. Find out more about our [copyright policies](#).

We update our publications regularly so please check you have the most up-to-date version.

We cannot be held responsible for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and do not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

When we update our specifications, you'll see a new version number and a summary of the changes. While we do our best to reflect these changes in all associated resources on [Teach Cambridge](#), if you notice any discrepancies, please refer to the latest specification on our website and [let us know](#).

Our resources do not represent any teaching method we expect you to use. We cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions in our resources.