

Examiners' report

GCSE

CLASSICAL GREEK

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

J292

For first teaching in 2016

J292/04 Summer 2025 series

Contents

Introduction	3
Paper 4 series overview	4
Question 1 (a) (i)	5
Question 1 (a) (ii)	5
Question 1 (b)	5
Question 1 (c)	6
Question 2 (a)	7
Question 2 (b)	8
Question 3 (a)	9
Question 3 (b)	9
Question 4 (a)	10
Question 4 (b)	11
Question 5	12
Question 6*	14
Question 7	15
Question 8*	16

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.

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Paper 4 series overview

The content of the Homer paper this year – the moving encounter on the walls of Troy between Hector, Andromache and Astyanax – clearly inspired many of the candidates. The overall standard was high, and many approached the longer questions with a sensitivity that disclosed an emotional involvement with their reading. The 10-mark essays in particular revealed thoughtful responses about Hector's dilemma, the conflict between defender and protector; 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 responded to the pressures of the exam to achieve 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 specific line references • made close reference to the passages to discuss style or content points • quoted Greek and translated into English accurately • displayed good knowledge of the set text as a whole (for the 10-mark essay question), without allowing the wider story of Hector and Andromache to take over • displayed a close familiarity, sensitivity and engagement with the text.	• did not respond to the question asked • did not pay attention to the specific line references given • did not quote Greek and/or offer an accurate English translation • allowed the wider story of Hector and Andromache to dominate the 10-mark essay question at the expense of the prescribed text • were less familiar with the set text.

Question 1 (a) (i)

1 Read the passage and answer the questions.

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Homer, *Illiad* 6, lines 1-2 © OCR Anthology for Classical Greek GCSE, Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. Passage removed due to third party copyright restrictions.

(a)

(i) to whom is Hector speaking?

..... [1]

The responses to this question were mostly fine. Examiners required the plural 'servants' (vel sim.) rather than the singular.

Question 1 (a) (ii)

(ii) what does he want to know?

..... [1]

This question was universally well answered.

Question 1 (b)

(b) write down **two** possibilities that Hector considers.

1

2

[2]

Homer, *Illiad* 6, lines 3-4 © OCR Anthology for Classical Greek GCSE, Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. Passage removed due to third party copyright restrictions.

There was potential for complication to set in here, but the MS allowed leeway as to the precise relationship between Andromache and the women she might have gone to visit.

Question 1 (c)

- (c) : what does Hector suggest about the Trojans' feelings towards Athene? Refer to the **Greek** in your answer.

.....

.....

..... [2]

Homer, *Illiad* 6, lines 4-5 © OCR Anthology for Classical Greek GCSE, Bloomsbury Academic, 2016.
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Examiners accepted any valid interpretation with evidence, but it was difficult to accept 'the Trojans **like**' Athene, when the text says they try to 'appease' the 'terrible goddess'. Those responses which simply translated the whole of the quoted section (ἐνθα περ...ἰλάσκονται) were not given a mark for the interpretation/personal response.

Exemplar 1

The Trojans fear Athene, as she is described
as "δεινὴν", meaning terrible.

This response answers the question by providing an interpretation/personal response, with a suggestion as to the Trojans' feelings ('the Trojans fear Athene'); and it supports the point with a reference to the Greek plus translation ('she is described as δεινὴν meaning terrible'). Note that the Greek must be quoted **and** translated for the second mark.

Question 2 (a)

2 Read the passage and answer the questions.

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Homer, *Iliad* 6, lines 407–413

(a) (lines 1–4): what reasons does Andromache give for being upset?

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [4]

Many candidates ignored the specificity of the lines in the question. Candidates should also ensure they give 4 marks of content for a 4-mark question. These two issues meant that many responses achieved fewer marks than they might have done, though stronger responses still achieved 4 marks. The first point – Hector's strength will destroy him – was commonly missed.

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 2 (b)

(b) 4–7): how does Andromache try to gain Hector's sympathy?

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

1

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2

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[4]

Homer, *Illiad* 6, lines 4-7 © OCR Anthology for Classical Greek GCSE, Bloomsbury Academic, 2016.
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This 4-mark question (with no requirement for style analysis) was answered well. However, as with Question 2 (a), many candidates ignored the specificity of the lines in the question and so lost marks.

Candidates used ellipsis much more carefully this year: it was frequently seen that candidates translated all omitted words, and examiners hope that candidates are acting on the message that English translations should accurately match the Greek quotation. If this is not done, it will limit the mark given. A common error in translation was the omission of 'another' in οὐ γὰρ ἔτ' ἄλλη ἔσται θαλπωρὴ ('for no longer will there be **another** consolation').

Some responses gave only limited development. For example, 'Andromache says that it would be better for her "to sink beneath the earth" (χθόνα δύνειν) if she were to lose Hector, hence creating sympathy for her situation'. This response is really only evidence from the passage and a paraphrase of the question, and so requires further discussion/development.

Question 3 (a)

3 Read the passage and answer the questions.

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Homer, *Illiad* 6, line 1 © OCR Anthology for Classical Greek GCSE, Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. Passage removed due to third party copyright restrictions.

Homer, *Illiad* 6, lines 433–437

(a) (line 1): where does Andromache suggest Hector positions the troops?

..... [1]

This question was universally well answered.

Question 3 (b)

(b) (lines 1–5): what does Andromache say to show that she thinks this is the best place?

.....

 [4]

Homer, *Illiad* 6, lines 1-5 © OCR Anthology for Classical Greek GCSE, Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. Passage removed due to third party copyright restrictions.

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

A common error was the omission of μάλιστα from the accessibility of the πόλις or the erroneous inclusion of μάλιστα in the scaling of the τεῖχος. Other candidates did not make separate points about the πόλις and the τεῖχος, but paired them together - thus achieving only one mark. The MS allowed both the πόλις and the τεῖχος to be either climbed or accessed (ἀμβατός/ἐπίδρομον).

ἀμφ' also caused problems, despite (or because of) appearing twice in the lines set.

Question 4 (a)

4 Read the passage and answer the questions.

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Homer, *Illiad* 6, lines 1-3 © OCR Anthology for Classical Greek GCSE, Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. Passage removed due to third party copyright restrictions.

Homer, *Illiad* 6, lines 441–446

- (a) (lines 1–3): what does Hector appear to think of Andromache's suggestion?
Give a reason for your answer.

.....

.....

..... [2]

Many candidates achieved both marks for this question. Others gave answers which went outside the specified lines of the question, or did not suggest what Hector thought of Andromache's plan. In a longer passage of this nature, which has more than one question attached to it, candidates should highlight those lines being tested.

Personal response questions



Some questions require an interpretation or personal response, backed up with evidence from the text. In addition to providing a translation, candidates need to offer an interpretation or personal response. Simply translating the quoted section will not achieve full marks.

Question 4 (b)

- (b) (lines 4–6): pick out and translate the **Greek word** which shows what Hector wants to achieve for himself.

Greek word:

English translation:

[2]

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This question was very well answered. Candidates are reminded the question asks for a Greek **word**, not words; and that to give alternative translations (e.g. 'glory/honour') is to risk losing a mark through harmful addition.

Question 5

5 Read the passage and answer the question.

Homer, *Illiad* 6, lines 467-470 © OCR Anthology for Classical Greek GCSE, Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. Passage removed due to third party copyright restrictions.

Translation:

The son, shrieking, leant back towards the bosom of his well-girdled nanny, terrified at the sight of his dear father, afraid of both the bronze and the horsehair plume, having noticed the plume nodding dreadfully from the very top of the helmet.

Homer, *Iliad* 6, lines 467–470

How does Homer emphasise the frightening effect of Hector's appearance on his son?

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

1

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2

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[4]

This 4-mark question (with translation) requires at least one aspect of stylistic analysis. δεινὸν was commonly referenced, though sometimes underdone, with some candidates saying the helmet rather than the plume was nodding 'dreadfully'. Others accurately picked up on the 'semantic field of fear', quoting, translating and commenting on ἰάχων, ἀτυχθεῖς and ταρβήσας.

Saying that a word is 'an adverb' requires additional comment on the effect of this word choice. Similarly, to say that 'the position of ἀτυχθεῖς ('terrified') emphasises the terror of Astyanax' also requires an explanation of **how** the position emphasises the boy's terror.

Candidates are reminded of the importance of an accurate translation: if a word is quoted from the Greek, it requires attention in the translation. A few candidates quoted the Greek without a translation, or gave a translation without Greek, and lost marks for doing so. Some candidates gave long quotations without making clear the meaning of individual words quoted.

Centres are encouraged to discuss alliteration with candidates as it is not a fail-safe style point.

Examiners saw many less convincing examples such as 'the alliteration of *n* in νεύοντα νοήσας mirrors the whining of a baby' and 'the alliteration of *n* in νεύοντα νοήσας creates a mood of fear'.

Exemplar 2

2 Hector also emphasises this frightening effect by ~~using~~ using the phrase 'Πατρός φίλου ὄψιν ἀτυχθεῖς', ~~etc.~~ (terrified by the sight of his dear father), as he details 'Πατρός φίλου (dear father)', this contrasts with 'terrified' (ἀτυχθεῖς), as Homer presents how despite the close relationship of father and son, ~~the op being 'dear'~~, the appearance of Hector is so frightening, that it is enough to terrify the boy, at the sight of his own father. [4]

In this response the candidate quotes and correctly translates a fuller phrase, 'πατρός φίλου ὄψιν ἀτυχθεῖς (terrified by the sight of his dear father)'. The candidate then more closely analyses a style point ['as he details πατρός φίλου (dear father), this contrasts with terrified (ἀτυχθεῖς)] and then develops the content and style together to achieve full marks.

Question 6*

6* Read the passage and answer the question.

Homer, *Illiad* 6, lines 472-481 © OCR Anthology for Classical Greek GCSE, Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. Passage removed due to third party copyright restrictions.

Homer, *Iliad* 6, lines 472–481

In this passage, how does Homer emphasise Hector's love for his son **and** his hopes for his future?

In your answer you may wish to consider:

- how Hector treats his son
- Hector's prayers to the gods

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

[8]

This 8-mark question produced many excellent answers and it was not uncommon for responses to achieve the top level, showing how well centres had taught and prepared their candidates. The best responses fully addressed both elements of the question, engaging well with Hector's love for his son and his hopes for his future.

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

Style points caused the occasional difficulty. While single words may at times be enough for a point of content or style, candidates should make sure that the word(s) they choose is/are strong enough to answer the question. Some candidates mistakenly felt that *αὐτίκ'* ('immediately') was enough for a combined style and content point: *αὐτίκ'* on its own has no context and therefore does not emphasise Hector's love for his son; candidates should bring in other words to contextualise and develop their responses, where necessary.

A common omission in translation was *πολλόν*.

Some candidates continued to offer examples of alliteration which were unlikely to achieve success, such as: 'the alliteration in *κρατὸς κόρυθ'* emphasises how quickly Hector removed his helmet'; and 'the alliteration in *κρατὸς κόρυθ'* mirrors Hector's hopes for the future'.

Some argued that almost every word at the start or end of a line was emphatically placed. Others 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, links between Astyanax's name and ἀνάσσειν; the force of παν- in παμφανόωσαν or of ἀρι- in ἀριπρεπέα; the use of the optative καί ποτέ τις εἴποι in Hector's wish.

Question 7

7 Read the passage and answer the question.

Homer, *Iliad* 6, lines 495-499 © OCR Anthology for Classical Greek GCSE, Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. Passage removed due to third party copyright restrictions.

Homer, *Iliad* 6, lines 495–499

Translate this passage into English.

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..... [5]

This year, other than the occasional omission of ἄλοχος φίλη (some candidates translating simply as 'she...') or of ἔπειθ', the translation question caused few difficulties.

Question 8*

8* 'Glory in battle was more important to Hector than his family.'

How far do you agree with this statement?

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 8-mark Question 6 had already prepared candidates with ideas as to how Hector showed love to Astyanax, and responses to this final question allowed candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and reveal their emotional involvement with the text.

There were some thoughtful and sensitive responses which showed an understanding of Hector's conflict and inner turmoil. These responded to both sides of the argument, arguing that both factors were at play and that Hector's glory and love of family were as one. There was plenty to say and it was evident that candidates have learnt to provide evidence from across the whole text and not simply from the examination paper.

Some candidates answered a different essay question, possibly ones they had prepared in class, usually about themes of fate or war rather than how far glory or love for his family were important to Hector. Some of these answers were packed with close references to the text but could not access higher levels of marks since they did not answer the question asked.

A few candidates chose to retell the wider story of Andromache and Hector, losing marks because they veered away from the lines of the set text.

It may be instructive to note that excessively long essays do not always equate with 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.

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