



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Monday 2 June 2025 – Morning

GCSE (9–1) Classical Civilisation

J199/22 Roman City Life

Insert

Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes



INSTRUCTIONS

- Do **not** send this Insert for marking. Keep it in the centre or recycle it.

INFORMATION

- The questions tell you which source you need to use.
- This document has **8** pages.

ADVICE

- Read this Insert carefully **before** you start your answers.

Section A

Culture

Source A: Mosaic showing some theatre masks**Source B: A wealthy Roman mourns the death of his slave**

And, indeed, at the moment of writing, I am in considerable distress: for a delightful youth, my reader Sosthenes, has just died, and I fear that his death has affected me more than that of a slave should do.

Cicero, Letters to Atticus 1.12

Source C: Pliny discusses a monument put up for Pallas, a freedman of the emperor

I noticed the other day on the Tiburtine Road a monument to Pallas with this inscription:

‘To Pallas, because of his loyal service, the senate decreed the honours given to those of praetorian rank together with five million sesterces. However, Pallas was content to take the honours alone.’

This inscription convinced me how unreal and empty honours are when thrown away on such vile and disreputable rascals as Pallas. Yet the scoundrel has the cheek to accept one honour and refuse another, and then parade it as proof of his wisdom! But why should I lose my temper? It is better to laugh at it.

Pliny, Letters 7.29 (extracts)

Source D: A wealthy Roman complains about the noise in the public baths

Listen, on all sides noises of every sort echo around me. I am living right above a public bath. Imagine now every sort of voice which can sicken the ears. When strong men train and lift dumb-bells, when they are in pain or pretend they are, I hear groans; whenever they let out their breath I hear whistling and gasping. When I chance upon some lazy fellow who is happy with a cheap massage, I hear the slap of a hand laid on his shoulders, which makes different sounds depending on whether it is flat or hollow. If the scorer turns up and begins to count the balls, I am done for. Add now the man kicking up a row and the thief who is caught and the man who thinks he sounds good singing in the bath, add those who jump into the pool with an enormous splash. Think also of the hair-plucker, who never shuts up except when he is pulling hairs out of armpits and makes someone else shout out instead of him. Think of the different shouts of the drinks-seller and the sausage-seller and the pastry-seller and all the cook-shop owners selling their wares, each with his own personal cry.

Seneca, Letters 56.1–2 (extracts)

Source E: The outdoor dining area of the House of Octavius Quartio



Section B

Literature

Source F: Juvenal describes living in Rome

Many an invalid dies from insomnia here, though the illness 232
 Itself is caused by partially digested food, that clings tight
 To the fevered stomach; for, where can you lodge and enjoy
 A good night's sleep? You have to be filthy rich to find rest
 In Rome. That's the source of our sickness. The endless traffic
 In narrow twisting streets, and the swearing at stranded cattle,
 Would deprive a Claudius of sleep, or the seals on the shore.
 When duty calls, the crowd gives way as the rich man's litter,
 Rushes by, right in their faces, like some vast Liburnian galley,
 While he reads, writes, sleeps inside, while sped on his way:
 You know how a chair with shut windows makes you drowsy!
 Yet, he gets there first: 243
 Do you see all the smoke that rises, to celebrate a hand-out? 249
 There's a hundred diners each followed by his portable kitchen.
 Corbulo, that huge general, could scarce carry all those vast pots,
 With all the rest that the poor little slave transports, on his head.

Juvenal, Satires 3 232–243, 249–252

Source G: Horace describes his relationship with his patron Maecenas

Seven, nearer eight years have passed now since Maecenas
 Began to count me among his friends, yet up to now
 He's merely been willing to let me share his carriage
 When travelling, and confide nuggets like these to me:
 'What's the time, now?' 'Can the Thracian Chicken beat Syrus?'
 'These frosty mornings will chill you if you're not careful.'
 And whatever else it's safe to drop in a careless ear.
 All that time, every hour of the day, yours truly has
 Grown more envied. If he's watched the Games with me
 Or played ball on the Campus, all cry: 'Fortune's child!'
 Should a chilling rumour fill the streets, from the Rostra,
 Whoever meets me asks my views: 'My good friend,
 Since you, so much nearer the gods, must know, have you
 Heard any news of the Dacians?' Not a thing. 'Oh,
 You're always teasing us!' May the gods strike me
 If I have! 'Well then, where does Caesar intend to grant
 His men the land he promised, Italy, Sicily?'
 When I swear I know nothing, they wonderingly take me
 For a remarkably deep and reticent mortal indeed.

Horace, Satires 2.6 40–58

Source H: Ofellus argues that people should not eat fashionable and grand food

'I'd love to see something huge served in a huge dish,'
Cries a throat that would be worthy of the Harpies.
Come you Southerlies and spoil their fare! And yet
However fresh the boar and turbot they already stink,
Since too much richness upsets a weakened stomach,
Gorged, it much prefers radishes and bitter leaves.
Yet poor man's food's not wholly absent from the feasts
Of kings: cheap eggs, black olives hold their place. It's not
So long since the auctioneer Gallonius' serving sturgeon,
Caused a scandal. And the sea hid as much turbot, then.
Yet turbot were still safe, and storks safe in their nests,
Till a creative 'praetor' led you astray! So that now,
If someone proclaimed roast seagulls were tasty,
The youth of Rome, so easily seduced, would agree.

Horace, Satires 2.2 39–52

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