



GENERAL COMMENTS

Most students completed the 2013 Classical Studies examination well and their work showed adequate knowledge of the texts. Section A answers were more specific than answers in 2012, but sometimes didn't address all parts of the question. Section B essays were generally relevant to the statement students were responding to and there was more evidence of planning. However, essays tended to be descriptive, narrative or general comparisons of the texts. Careful and thoughtful analysis was uncommon.

Many students tackled the essay first and left the short answer questions until last; however, the majority of students still followed the order of the questions on the paper. Only a few attempted more than two questions in Section A, and no students attempted to write two Section B essays.

Section A responses needed to be comprehensive to earn full marks. Some students did not give enough detail in their responses. Other students wrote less on 10-mark questions than on five-mark questions in Section A.

Memorised and obviously prepared Section B essays were few, although many students wrote general comparisons between the works. This would be remedied by careful attention to the statement in the question, defining and using the terms in the statement. Sociohistorical material was often prepared in advance and not linked to the topic.

Many students would have benefitted by responding with greater specificity and supporting each point from the texts.

Students should aim to convey a sense of the context in which the works were produced and the characters of the classical writers and artists who produced them. Many students were able to identify techniques, but did not show a strong grasp of why and how those techniques were used by classical writers.

Timing was an issue for some students. It is suggested that students follow the suggested time allocation, which is 30 minutes for each Section A question and 60 minutes for the essay.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding errors resulting in a total less than 100 per cent.

Section A – Individual study

Most students understood the questions well. Some didn't make enough use of the passages and images provided. Few students showed a detailed knowledge of the immediate context of extracts.

Question chosen	none	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
%	1	37	24	7	9	9	0	1	12

Part a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	3	8	19	33	25	12	3.2

Part b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	5	5	19	34	26	12	3.1

Part c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	3	3	7	9	13	17	21	15	8	3	1	5.1



Homer, *The Iliad*, Book 16

Question 1a.

Many students didn't appear to know who Cebriones was. The better responses demonstrated a real appreciation of Homer's descriptive language and conveyed the attack on the senses in Homer's description of the fighting, and the pathos of the still body of Cebriones in the centre of this maelstrom.

Question 1b.

Question 1b. was done well. Students enjoyed describing the pathos of Cebriones. Most students found plenty of instances of pathos and the good answers pointed out Homer's use of the apostrophe and its effect. They also noted the reference to Hector's approaching death at the end of the passage.

Question 1c.

Many students ignored the word 'significance' and simply narrated the story of Book 16, without explaining the meaningful links between events and the themes. Most responded that the death of Patroclus triggered Achilles's return to the battlefield and ultimately the death of Hector – *the death of Patroclus ultimately provides the catalyst that propels the greatest of the Achaeans back into the grim work of war*. Better answers gave a sense of Book 16 in its focus on Patroclus – his behaviour at the beginning of the book, his transformation and his aristeia, observed and managed by the gods. The best answers explained the nature of the heroic code as exemplified by Patroclus. Some students mentioned the roles of Zeus and Apollo in his death, which was an important point. Some erroneously claimed that Zeus arranged the death of Patroclus in revenge for the killing of Sarpedon. Other students correctly pointed out that it was hubristic of Patroclus to continue his attack after Apollo ordered him to retreat. Most students found plenty to write and this was, overall, a well-handled question.

Sophocles, *Antigone*

Question 2a.

Most students answered Question 2a. well, although some didn't mention the civil war and Creon's reason for denying Polynices burial.

Question 2b.

In part b., most students supported their assessment of Antigone's tone and found instances of her belittling Creon without trouble. Better responses showed how and why her words were belittling. Good answers commenced with a statement – *Antigone's reply to Creon is didactic, scornful and passionate; Antigone's tone is one of recalcitrance, defiance, mockery and contempt* – and followed up by illustrating from the passage. Many observations were insightful.

Question 2c.

Most part c. answers identified the important ideas of state law versus divine law, our duty to the dead and family responsibilities. There was a tendency for some modern ideas to creep into students' responses; conscientious objection and the individual versus the state are modern ideas. Some also asserted that Antigone was masculine, on the grounds that only men spoke in public. This isn't persuasive by itself, although Creon does say that 'she is the man if the victory goes to her'. More convincing responses discussed Classical ideas, hubris and the need for moderation. Some students failed to address the techniques used by Sophocles, and much of the discussion of techniques tended to be superficial, consisting of lists rather than analysis. Few students identified rhetorical techniques, but most students found good material in the passage for exploring ideas: *How could I keep from knowing? -is, perhaps, the playwright's way of commenting on the pervasive reminders of mortality*.

Aristophanes, *The Birds*

Question 3a.

In Question 3a., students who simply pointed out how Poseidon and Heracles are described were awarded a medium mark. Better responses discussed the irreverence of Aristophanes's play and why it was acceptable to depict gods in this way.

Question 3b.

In part b., a few students addressed the fact that the Triballian god represented barbarians and that his portrayal was an assertion of Greek superiority over foreigners: *the Triballian contributes to the humour by representing the despised barbarian, inarticulate and uncouth*.



Question 3c.

In part c., even fewer students mentioned the claim of Xenophanes that people make gods in their own images, as the basis of this jibe. Most students were able to establish that Peisthetaerus was manipulative and he understood the psychology of his dupes very well.

Not many students were able to convincingly link the passage to the play broadly. Most reverted to narrative, demonstrating that they knew the sequence of events in the play, but not the significance of those events. Some argued successfully that *The Birds* deals with persuasion and the passage is a good example of this. The character of the Athenians was rarely mentioned. Students should be aware of the characterisation of the Athenians attributed by Thucydides to the Corinthians in Book 1, 70–71, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*. In *The Birds* an Athenian usurps the power of Zeus by defeating three gods in debate. He has already won the confidence of the birds and outmanoeuvred a procession of tricksters like himself. What does that say about Athens and the Athenian character?

The Temple of Zeus at Olympia

Questions 4a.–c.

These questions were not done very well. Many students were at a loss to explain the politics behind the construction of the temple; they were vague about Nike, and analysis of the ideas and techniques of the metopes was often reduced to a description of the figures, which was quite detailed in many cases. Simple observations such as the following would have improved many answers.

Many answers linked the temple to Athens and particularly to Athenian triumph in the Persian Wars. Not only is this historically inaccurate, but the works themselves are very Doric in their character. Few responses gave a sense of the character of the temple and its artworks. Some did see, in the representations of Athena and Heracles working together, the alliance of Ionian brains with Dorian brawn. Better responses addressed competition, the focus on winning at all costs, the shame of defeat, and the stiff restraint of early Classical sculpture, moderation and balance, and the techniques used to represent them.

Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Book 8

Question 5a.

In part a., students who knew Book 8 had no trouble identifying the future site of Rome and finding three or four reasons for Evander's warm welcome of Aeneas.

Question 5b.

Most responses to part b. found evidence of Virgil's description of the monster's appearance, his actions, his intentions and his effect on others. The better answers explained what Cacus represented to Virgil. Weaker answers relied on mentioning 'alliteration', which is dubious because the alliteration in our translation is the work of the translator, not Virgil.

Question 5c.

The significance of the story was well understood by most students who answered part c. Most saw it as an allegory of good overcoming evil, foretelling Aeneas prevailing over Turnus and Augustus over Antony. Better responses had plenty to say about destiny and were able to link the past and future skilfully. Some students relished the opportunity this question gave them: *Throughout Book 8 Virgil uses allusions, metaphors, and sometimes, in the case of the shield, direct description to portray Augustan propaganda.*

Caesar, *The Conquest of Gaul*, Books 4 and 5

Questions 6a.–c.

No students attempted the analysis of the passage from *The Conquest of Gaul* this year.

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*

Question 7a.

There was some uncertainty over who relates the story of Pygmalion, so both Orpheus and Ovid were accepted as answers. Most answers identified the Propoetides as prostitutes who offended Pygmalion with their shamelessness. The obvious difference between this story and others in Book 10 is that it ends happily – it isn't a story of doomed love. This was well answered.



Question 7b.

The better answers observed the progression from innocent desire to an unsettling obsession conveyed by a description of Pygmalion’s actions. This question called for a close examination of the succession of changes in Pygmalion’s behaviour that accompanied the metamorphosis of the statue.

Question 7c.

Many students struggled to find significance in the extract. They mentioned that Ovid was ‘playful’, but could have made more of his irony and his commentary on human psychology. They might have noted the ability of love to confound reason and enslave the lover. Some did observe the implication of the line ‘So cleverly did his art conceal its art’ – that humans suffer more from self-deception than any other form of deception.

The Colosseum

Question 8a.

Question 8a. was done well. Most students knew Vespasian’s reasons for choosing the site and many were able to describe the drainage system and the foundations in detail.

Question 8b.

The engineering feat was the focus of most answers, not the role of the hypogeum. To earn full marks students needed to mention the kind of spectacle that the hypogeum made possible, its purpose and effects – the hunt, single combat, the battlefield, sudden danger, suspense and terror.

Question 8c.

Students focused on the design and construction of barrel vaults and stairs, giving less attention to the segregation of classes and the rigid Roman hierarchy underpinning this spectacular community ritual. Again, students needed to write about more than just the engineering. What factors were involved in moving spectators into and out of the Colosseum? The most important things to preserve were order and the social hierarchy. Several students mentioned that the Colosseum was spared the riots that occurred at other amphitheatres.

Section B

Question chosen	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
%	1	17	17	35	1	10	8	12

Students generally wrote better essays when they qualified their agreement with the statement, or disagreed with it. Simply accepting the statement without examination produced demonstrations, not discussions. The best essays were decisive from the start. They set out what ideas were going to be dealt with: *The ideas of justice and vengeance, gender roles and the role of the gods, are explored by both Homer and Euripides.* They qualified carefully: *Livy, whose quest is not just for truth but also for the improvement of Rome’s morality, does not shy away from bad examples of Roman leaders.*

As in previous years, students performed well on the first criterion. Students’ knowledge of the writers and the texts was impressive. However, in their haste to display their knowledge students often fell short in analysis and argument construction. Many essays were composed chiefly of description and narrative. Discussion of techniques was neglected despite the fact that it was vital to most questions (Questions 3 and 4, in particular).

The statements in the questions were sometimes disingenuous in the way that they invited acceptance. Students needed to be wary of innocuous statements.

Some essays commenced with an argument, but declined into narration and unsupported observations. To avoid this, a better approach is to examine particular relevant scenes or speeches in detail, starting with the evidence and drawing a conclusion when the point is well made. Always argue.

Criterion 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	1	2	3	6	11	13	17	20	14	9	5	6.1

Knowledge of the texts and the sociohistorical contexts was pleasing. A small number of students failed to address the sociohistorical context, probably inadvertently. Much sociohistorical material was unrelated to the essay’s argument because it was pre-prepared – there is nothing wrong with pre-preparing this material, but students should select the relevant parts of what they have prepared for inclusion in their essays instead of writing all they know. Knowledge was



reasonably accurate. Some students showed a very detailed recall of their selected pairing and were able to quote abundantly.

A peculiarity of many essays on the Herodotus/Thucydides pairing was that they focused on the material in the introductions of the two works. Some essays didn't refer to any part of Thucydides's work except Book 1 and did not discuss the account of the Sicilian expedition at all. Perhaps these students would have discussed events in Sicily if they realised that Thucydides' work is not simply a chronicle of the events of a war.

Some Juvenal/Petronius essays focused too much on the personal lives of the authors, which are relevant, but they didn't base their arguments on actual evidence from the works.

Criterion 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	2	4	5	7	11	14	21	17	12	6	2	5.6

There is room for improvement here. Students often gave the impression they were comfortable displaying what they knew, but less comfortable analysing it or supporting assertions about it. The best revision prior to the exam is still to re-read the texts and think about the values and ideas they express, and the techniques used to express them. Many students floundered in their discussion of techniques. They often cited 'direct speech' as a technique common to *The Odyssey* and *The Trojan Women*, a trivial observation that didn't support analysis. Few considered the differences between epic and tragic poetry. Similarly, 'characterisation' was often cited as a technique that all writers appear to use. It doesn't inform an essay unless the student examines how the characterisation is carried out.

Analysis could be simply presented. It is a way of thinking about the text, interrogating the text, and reaching a conclusion. The jury in *The Eumenides* is a remarkable example of immortals and mortals coming together and reaching agreement.

Criterion 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	2	3	6	8	10	13	19	17	13	6	3	5.7

Students were aware of the need to make comparisons between the works. The difficulty for some was producing comparisons that illuminated their argument. There was plenty of juxtaposition of observations and the use of 'whereas ...'. The better students used one text to shed light on the other. This was particularly effective in responses to the Aeneid/Iliad question.

Antithesis is an excellent way to make a point: *Though The Eumenides warns of some of the fundamental alterations being made to Athenian society the play maintains great optimism about the ability of democracy to reconcile opposing groups and dispense justice, optimism that is not present in The Apology.*

Students who wrote on Juvenal and Petronius made much of the contrasting lives of the two writers, but were not as successful in comparing their actual works.

Criterion 4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	1	3	5	7	10	12	19	20	13	6	3	5.8

Students who scored well on this criterion consistently argued their case throughout the essay and produced relevant evidence in support. Those who did not score well tended to build their essay around unsupported observations about the texts, or they simply narrated. It is possible to support an argument without quotation from the texts, but it is difficult. Students should paraphrase if they can't recall quotes accurately. Our best evidence comes from the words of the texts. A single apt quote can do the work of several sentences.