

## Teacher Resource Bank

GCE Classical Civilisation

Information for Students



## INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

### Why study Classical Civilisation?

Classical Civilisation offers a wide choice of topics in the areas of archaeology, architecture, art, history and politics, literature and philosophy. The topics cover many aspects of classical civilisation which have been significant in the development of the modern world. The influence of the classical world is all around us. We are all familiar with Greek and Roman myths and legends – Hollywood loves stories like the fall of Troy – but the influence of these two cultures on our everyday lives is wider than that. For example, the Greeks gave us democracy and theatre; the Romans brought us roads and baths. Classical Civilisation gives you the chance to study some of these contributions in their original, classical contexts.

A study of Classical Civilisation complements many other popular A levels, including Art, Drama and Theatre Studies, English Literature, Government and Politics, History, History of Art, and Philosophy, as well as a study of the classical languages (Classical Greek and Latin).

Most schools and colleges teach a limited number of topics from those on offer, but, whichever topics you study, the course will help you to develop critical and evaluative skills which will enable you to go on to Higher Education to study a wide range of subjects including Classical Civilisation and Ancient History.

### Before you start

You do **not** need to have studied GCSE Classical Civilisation before you start this course. Indeed, for the majority of our A level students, this is their first opportunity to study the culture and achievements of the classical world. However, if you have studied GCSE Classical Civilisation, the A level course will broaden your knowledge of the classical world and introduce you to new topics.

You will study written sources in English translation and so you do not need to know any Classical Greek or Latin.

### What you will study

The A level Classical Civilisation specification is topic based. During the course, you will study four topics, one taken from each unit. A list of the topics is given below. You will find a short introduction to each of the topics on the following pages.

AS Unit 1	AS Unit 2
<b>Option A</b> Greek Architecture and Sculpture	<b>Option A</b> Homer, Iliad
<b>Option B</b> Athenian Democracy	<b>Option B</b> Homer, Odyssey
<b>Option C</b> Aristophanes and Athens	<b>Option C</b> Athenian Vase Painting
<b>Option D</b> Women in Athens and Rome	<b>Option D</b> Athenian Imperialism
<b>Option E</b> Menander and Plautus	<b>Option E</b> Roman Architecture and Town Planning
<b>Option F</b> The Life and Times of Cicero	<b>Option F</b> The Second Punic War

<b>A2 Unit 3</b>	<b>A2 Unit 4</b>
<b>Option A</b> Mycenaean Civilisation	<b>Option A</b> Socrates and Athens
<b>Option B</b> The Persian Wars	<b>Option B</b> Alexander
<b>Option C</b> Greek Tragedy	<b>Option C</b> Roman Epic
<b>Option D</b> Augustus and the Foundation of the Principate	<b>Option D</b> Tiberius and Claudius

## AS Unit 1

### Greek Architecture and Sculpture

Why do so many buildings have columns along the front?

If you choose this topic, you will study the development of Greek public buildings and sculpture in the 6<sup>th</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. Buildings will include the world famous Parthenon on the Athenian Acropolis and the Temple of Zeus at Olympia, home of the Olympic Games. The sculptures you study will show the advances the Greeks made in the portrayal of the human figure, both clothed and nude, and their success in retelling myths pictorially.

### Athenian Democracy

Most of us in the West now think the best system of government is democracy, but this was not always so. Why not?

In this option, you will study the political development of Athens in the 6<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, the way democracy operated in Athens, and some the politicians who were responsible for the many reforms. You will also read contemporary views of democracy in action, including Aristophanes' satirical comedy, *The Wasps*.

### Aristophanes and Athens

What makes you laugh? Did the Athenians find the same things funny?

The Athenian loved their drama festivals, and you can study the works of one of their most famous playwrights in this topic. You will read three of Aristophanes' comedies so you can find out for yourself what these plays can tell us about Athens in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC and about what the Athenians found funny.

### Women in Athens and Rome

The recent sexual revolution in Britain has brought enormous changes to relations between men and women. But what were women's lives like in the classical world?

In this topic you will look at women in both Athens and Rome and will be able to make your own judgements based on various sources, including a cross-dressing comedy by the Athenian Aristophanes and a chauvinistic satire by the Roman Juvenal.

### Menander and Plautus

Relationships – between family and between men and women – and misunderstandings form the basis of a lot of modern comedy. But have people always found these things funny?

In this topic you will read an Athenian play in which a mischievous god makes a mortal fall in love, and three Roman plays in which a girl is stolen from her parents by pirates, a clever servant plays a trick on his master and a god disguises himself as a man to seduce his wife, and you will be able to make your own judgements on what the Athenians and Romans found funny.

### The Life and Times of Cicero

Politics in Republican Rome was a dangerous business. Not only was Julius Caesar brutally stabbed to death, but so were the great general Pompey and the orator and politician Cicero. Why so much bloodshed?

Reading some of Cicero's letters will give you insights into the nature of Roman politics, its corruption and violence as well as its lofty ideals. And one of Cicero's speeches will show you why, whether he was liked or loathed, he was always a force to be reckoned with.

## AS Unit 2

### Homer *Iliad*

What drives you mad with rage? What would you sacrifice to gain the respect you think you deserve? Your best friend? In the *Iliad* Homer explores issues such as love and revenge, honour and shame, heroism and suffering during the epic siege of Troy. And as Achilles and the other humans count the cost, the immortal gods look down carefree from Mount Olympus.

### Homer *Odyssey*

What would you go through to get home to your family? In the *Odyssey* meet the one-eyed cannibal the Cyclops, the enchantress Circe and the seductive Calypso. And, when Odysseus finally arrives home disguised as a beggar, see how he punishes those who would have stolen his wife Penelope and how they spend their first night together in 20 years.

### Athenian Vase Painting

Much Athenian pottery was made to hold drinks at men's parties or offerings to the departed or perfume. It was often highly decorated with intriguing scenes and exotic patterns. Sometimes the pictures represent a myth, sometimes they seem to show a snapshot of daily life. How clearly do the images tell their story? How lifelike are the figures? How well do the designs suit the different kinds of pot? What do the pictures tell us about the way the Athenians lived and what they valued? These are some of the questions you will explore in this topic.

### Athenian Imperialism

For nearly three-quarters of a century Athens had by far the strongest fleet in the Mediterranean Sea. In this topic you will see how Athens built up her formidable power – and lost it. Through the account of the historian Thucydides, who claims to have been an eyewitness to many of the events and who brings the period to life with a series of dramatic debates, you will be able to judge for yourselves the Athenians' motives and ambitions, as well as the reasons for their eventual humiliation and defeat.

### Roman Architecture and Town Planning

'Baths, wine and sex destroy our bodies – but make life worth living.' So reads a graffito at Pompeii. In this topic you will study the archaeological evidence from a number of Roman towns, focussing mainly on Rome and Pompeii, and you will discover how the Romans brought order and convenience to urban living through their skills as town planners and used new materials and technologies to build magnificent venues for pleasure and entertainment, from the leisure complexes of the public baths to the thrills of gladiatorial combat in the amphitheatre.

### The Second Punic War

He had sworn revenge on Rome, and in the winter of 218-217 BC the Carthaginian general Hannibal led 37 elephants and more than a thousand times as many men across the snow and ice of the Alps down into Italy. A series of crushing victories brought Rome almost to its knees but at last, after a humiliating home defeat in Africa, Hannibal fled and took poison to escape the final shame. According to the historian Livy, Hannibal was a man of 'inhuman cruelty, treachery and total disregard for the truth, honour and the gods.' But Livy was a Roman. So what is your judgement? And what became of the elephants?

## A2 Unit 3

### **Mycenaean Civilisation**

The German archaeologist Schliemann, excavating a grave in the citadel of Mycenae, discovered a gold funeral mask and believed he had gazed on the face of the king and general Agamemnon. He was wrong. But how certain can we be of the interpretations we put on archaeological evidence? The Mycenaeans have left us formidable fortresses as well as exquisitely crafted jewellery and other works of art. Were they warriors or traders? How did they organise their society? What gods did they worship and how did they honour their dead? And where did their wealth come from? This topic will enable you to judge how conclusively we can answer questions like these.

### **The Persian Wars**

West versus East: where did this commonly held notion come from? At the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC the tiny states of Greece took on the might of the vast Persian Empire – and won. You will study this archetypal conflict through the writing of the Father of History Herodotus and in Aeschylus' play *The Persians* you will see how the Athenians turned their historic victory at Salamis into myth celebrating Greek freedom, independence and respect for the gods against Persian despotism, servitude and arrogance.

### **Greek Tragedy**

Why does Oedipus gouge out his eyes after his wife Jocasta has hung herself? Why does Hippolytus suffer an agonising death from the horses he trained just because he refuses to make love to his stepmother Phaedra? In this topic you will read four tragedies in which the playwrights Sophocles and Euripides use myths about violent dysfunctional families to explore relationships between men and women, the family and society, the ruler and his people, and human beings and the gods or destiny. Is Antigone wrong to bury her brother against the orders of her uncle and king? Is Medea right to poison her husband's new bride and kill their sons as punishment for his infidelity?

### **Augustus and the Foundation of the Principate**

A cunning, ruthless and brutal warlord who would stop at nothing to ensure his faction was supreme? Or a responsible statesman and benefactor devoted to restoring the peace, prosperity and traditional values which the ambitions of others had destroyed? Augustus would of course want you to believe the latter, as you will see when you read his own spin on his achievements, but a biography of Augustus by Suetonius will give you a more objective view of the man, his motives and methods. So form your own judgements on the leader who revolutionised Roman government, and claimed it was just a return to the republican past.

## A2 Unit 4

### Socrates and Athens

Why did Socrates drink hemlock? Why is Aristophanes' portrayal of Socrates as an atheistic quack scientist and unscrupulous money-grabbing teacher so different from Plato's picture of him as a highly principled ethical philosopher, concerned only for the moral welfare of himself and his fellow citizens and unjustly executed as a corruptor of the young? In this topic you will discover why Socrates aroused such admiration and such suspicion among his contemporaries and how important a contribution his methods and arguments have been to western philosophy.

### Alexander

'His passion was for glory only.' So Arrian sums up his account of Alexander's campaigns. By studying Arrian's history alongside Plutarch's biography, you will be able to judge for yourself Alexander's motives and ambitions, personality and generalship, and his ability to inspire admiration and dread. He was undoubtedly the greatest conqueror of the classical world, but how significant was the achievement of Alexander, who survived forced marches, battles and mutinies only to die of a fever brought on by his binge-drinking aged just 32?

### Roman Epic

Aeneas, his aged father on his shoulders, his little son by his side and his wife following behind as they flee the flames of their homeland Troy and set out as refugees on a divine mission to found Rome. Dido cursing Aeneas and falling on her sword as Aeneas surreptitiously sneaks away to resume his mission after their passionate but illicit love affair. Aeneas, blazing with rage, plunging his sword into the heart of his rival Turnus so that he can marry Lavinia and fulfil his destiny as father of the Roman people. These are just three of the memorable and moving images from Virgil's epic *Aeneid*. In this topic you will see for yourself how Virgil explores the conflict between duty and emotion, the nature of human responsibility to family, country and gods, and what it takes to be a hero in the new age of Emperor Augustus' Rome.

### Tiberius and Claudius

Tiberius was alleged to have been smothered to death by the commander of his bodyguard; Claudius was believed to have been served a dish of poisoned mushrooms by his fourth wife. What were the reasons for these apparent murders? From reading the accounts of the reigns of these two emperors by the historian Tacitus and the biographer Suetonius you will see that many hostile and damning stories circulated. But are they true? Were Tiberius and Claudius really so corrupt and weak? Tiberius was the more maligned, and Claudius – who brought Britain into the Roman Empire – at least had the consolation of being made a god after his death. Look behind the scurrilous anecdotes and spin to see how far we can discover the truth about their achievements.

## How will you be assessed?

### The Assessment Objectives

All A level subjects have a set of Assessment Objectives which have to be addressed in examinations. The Assessment Objectives for A level Classical Civilisation are shown in this table.

- AO1** Recall and deploy relevant knowledge and understanding of literary, cultural, material or historical sources or linguistic forms, in their appropriate contexts
- AO2a** Analyse, evaluate and respond to classical sources (literary, cultural, material, historical or linguistic), as appropriate
- AO2b** Select, organise and present relevant information and argument in a clear, logical, accurate and appropriate form

For **AO1** you will need to remember **facts**, and choose **relevant** facts to answer the question set.

For **AO2a** you will need to **respond** to and **evaluate** the classical sources you have studied. For example, you might need to say how effective an author or artist's techniques are, or how reliable a historical source is.

For **AO2b** you will need to **organise** your answers. As well as giving the relevant facts and responding to them, you will need to construct a clear, logical argument in your longer answers.

### AS examinations 1½ hours 65 marks

In each AS examination you will answer one structured, source-based question (from a choice of two) and one short essay (from a choice of two) on your chosen topic.

Depending on the topic, the source-based questions may be based on a photograph, drawing or plan, or on an extract from one of the texts you have studied. The questions will start with five short, factual questions (assessing AO1), which will be followed by a 10-mark question (AO1 and AO2a) and a 20-mark question (AO1, AO2a and AO2b).

The essay questions will be worth 30 marks and will have bullet points to help you plan your answer. You do not need to refer to all the bullet points in your answer, but you do need to make sure that you include a range of relevant material (AO1), write an evaluative, analytical response (AO2a), and plan your answer so that it is clear and coherent (AO2b) if you want to reach the highest marks.

### A2 examinations 1½ hours 75 marks

As at AS, you will answer two questions in each examination: one structured, source-based question (from a choice of two) and one short essay (from a choice of two) on your chosen topic.

The source-based questions will have the same structure as the source-based questions at AS, but the 10- and 20-mark questions will be slightly more challenging, and you will have less time available to answer these questions.

The essay questions at A2 are longer (40 marks) and you will not be given any bullet points to help you. Again, you will need to make sure you plan your answer and address all three Assessment Objectives to reach the highest marks.

You will also need to make sure you make comparisons between different types of evidence or between personalities or periods of time, and show an understanding of classical society and values. This is because all A levels are required to include 'synoptic' assessment. 'Synoptic' means drawing together knowledge and skills. The 40-mark essays are the synoptic assessment in A level Classical Civilisation.