



**General Certificate of Education  
June 2012**

**Classical Civilisation 2020**

**CIV1B: Athenian Democracy**

***Report on the Examination***

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## CIV1B Athenian Democracy

### Section One

#### Option A

Nearly twice as many students chose this option as chose Option B. In Question 01, most students showed adequate knowledge of the circumstances in which Cleisthenes came to power, although some dwelt a little too much on details relating to Hipparchus' murder and the last years of Hippias' tyranny. References to the expulsion of the Alcmaeonids and the curse were credited if they were clearly related to the context of 510-508 BC.

Question 02 was answered well by students who understood what demes were. However, there was widespread confusion between demes and tribes and sometimes, therefore, too much emphasis on the effect of the tribal reforms on Athenian national politics. Many students were aware of the demes' role in preselecting students for the *Boule*, but there was a tendency to believe wrongly that demarchs were the demes' representatives on the *Boule*, or that they were somehow middle-men between demes and the national government. Many students confused demarchs with deme-judges, apparently unaware that the latter, instituted by Peisistratus, seem to have disappeared in Cleisthenes' reforms and do not turn up again until the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century. For these reasons the overall performance on this question was less accomplished than on Question 07.

Most students understood the significance of 'far-reaching' as the evaluative focus of Question 03. Tribes, demes and *trittyes* were sometimes confused as in Question 02, as were from time to time the four Ionic tribes and Solon's property classes. In discussing the *Boule*, some students wrongly believed that the *prytaneis* acted as the *Boule* during their prytany and therefore that the *Boule* did not meet daily as a single body. However, in general students showed sound understanding of the significance both of the tribal reforms and of (changes to) the *Boule*. Most students regarded ostracism as a means to avoid tyranny, though there were mistakes of detail, particularly the incorrect belief that candidates for ostracism were nominated in advance, but also misunderstandings that ostracism was a judicial process or a reform of Peisistratus' and Hippias' practice of exiling noble families. Some students also wrongly believed that the archaeological evidence suggesting attempted fraud in the 480s implies the use of official scribes. As a counterbalance to the argument, the majority of students identified the archons and the Areopagus as institutions where Cleisthenes did not attempt far-reaching reform.

#### Option B

Most students gained at least one mark in Question 04, although some wrongly thought that citizens, or the parents of citizens, merely had to be born in Athens. Far more gained both marks in Question 05, but a minority claimed that *bouleutai* served for a prytany, apparently believing, contrary to what Aristotle explicitly states, that the full *Boule* did not meet daily. Answers to Question 06 were also usually accurate, though some students suggested 18 or 20 as the minimum age.

In Question 07, most students understood that the author divided Athenians into two groups, and that he used value language to describe these socio-economic categories. Most also realised that he did not approve of democracy as such, but acknowledged that the *demos* used its structures well to defend their own interests as a group. As a result a pleasing number of students obtained a mark in Level 4.

Most answers to Question 08 were based on good knowledge of the workings of democracy in the late 5<sup>th</sup> century, although some students were liable to take Aristophanes' comic complaints about juries in *Wasps* too literally. Few essays fully addressed the issue of how Athenians understood freedom (and some referred anachronistically to Solon's removal of debt-bondage), but the best answers referred confidently to concepts such as *atimia* and the ideal of self-determination. Consequently the overall performance was slightly higher than in Question 03.

## Section Two

### Option C

In Question 09, most students demonstrated sound knowledge of Solon's reforms and understood the failure of the *seisachtheia* to address all the economic problems. Likewise, the view that Peisistratus stabilised the economy while allowing Solon's constitution to operate under supervision and stable conditions was well-argued, and many went on to argue persuasively that this made the *demos* keen for further reform in 510-508 BC. However, some students interpreted 'aftermath' too extensively and wrote at length on the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C., and even the reforms of Ephialtes and Pericles.

### Option D

A relatively small number of students chose Question 10 on *Wasps* and there was a smaller percentage of excellent answers. One of the reasons for this was that some students were uncertain what the Athenians understood a good citizen to be and so tended to write without a sharp evaluative focus. Those who dismissed Philocleon as not being a good citizen from the outset gained credit provided that, as always, they argued their case persuasively. The minority of students who immediately expressed the view that the change in Philocleon was not the main source of humour and then simply listed other sources of humour which they could identify in the play did not fare as well, since they did not properly address the central issue in the question.

## Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

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