

CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/11
Greek Civilisation

General comments

There were a few outstanding scripts on this paper this examination session but there were significantly more very weak scripts where there was little accurate knowledge on display. Alexander and Socrates were the most popular topics by some distance and there was only a handful of candidates who tackled the Vase-Painting topic. Examiners were interested to note that there were many more essays this year than in previous years and that there was a marked decline in the numbers tackling the commentary questions. For many, the essay was not a good choice as there was a tendency for candidates to manipulate the question to their knowledge rather than tailor their knowledge to the question. There was very little evidence of planning this year. It was felt that planning would have helped many candidates to stay on track and avoid straying from the topic under discussion.

In addition, Examiners would like Centres to be aware of the following points:

- there was evidence of clear enjoyment and enthusiasm in the responses of many candidates;
- there was often a great deal of personal response in evidence – but it needed to be much more securely tied to the question and the text/material;
- some scripts with loose/additional pages had not been secured accurately or securely enough;
- many candidates did not read the question carefully enough and so missed the point of what they were being asked to do;
- quality of written communication was very variable;
- the quality of the spelling, especially of names and technical names, was even more variable;
- some candidates were unable to express their answers clearly and logically;
- legibility was much improved in comparison to previous years;
- candidates appeared to use their time well – at least there was no evidence of candidates being short of time;
- all answers need to be carefully labelled;
- commentary questions must not be answered in an essay format.

Comments on specific questions

SECTION ONE: Alexander the Great

Question 1

- (i) Only about half the candidature knew Olympias came from, Epirus.
- (ii) Virtually every one who tackled this question knew that Olympias claimed that Zeus was the father of Alexander.
- (iii) Candidates generally knew one of the two heroes required but not two. Zeus and Apollo were often cited as heroes for this question.
- (iv) Candidates knew that Alexander and Olympias had to leave after this incident but the details were often a little vague.
- (v) The responses ranged from the very detailed and accurate to those which had no knowledge of the circumstances surrounding Philip's death (e.g. poisoned by Olympias, forced to commit suicide). Spelling of Pausanias was erratic and often unrecognisable as such – Philtetes, Pausentes and Pautentius.

- (vi) Candidates generally had a sound knowledge of Alexander's relationships with his parents, being able to point out Alexander's personal closeness to his mother, and the arguments with his father. A number of answers dealt only with the information in the passage.

Question 2

Most candidates were able to discuss reasons for Alexander's successes in battle. Many responses were rather too general in their comments, with a lack of reference to specific battles, while others did mention specific instances. The majority of candidates only discussed Alexander himself, without considering any contribution made by his generals.

Question 3

Although this was a popular question, it received some of the most disappointing answers. This was one of the questions where there was strong evidence that candidates had not read the question carefully enough. There were many general essays on Alexander's self-promotion as 'Alexander the Great' or his military success. Of those which focused on the places Alexander visited, many did not discuss Troy despite it being mentioned in the question. The best answers discussed Alexander's visits to Troy, Siwah and Gordium.

SECTION TWO: Socrates

Question 4

- (i) Most candidates knew that Socrates was charged with impiety.
- (ii) A surprisingly large number of candidates did not know that the god referred to in the passage was Apollo. The majority had some variation on the idea of Socrates being the wisest man alive.
- (iii) The question about the size of the jury which tried Socrates was better done than in previous years.
- (iv) There were very few candidates who could give the name of even one of the young men who were alleged to have been corrupted by Socrates. It was quite common for the names of the prosecutors to be offered instead.
- (v) Most were able to describe aspects of the Socratic Method with reasonable accuracy, even if they were not always able to use the correct terminology.
- (vi) A wide range of answers was offered to the question of whether the Athenians were right to convict Socrates of corrupting the young. Better answers focused on the corrupting the young aspect of the question, although many simply discussed whether the Athenians were right to convict Socrates, bringing in references to his behaviour during the trial. Few answers were balanced enough to present a counter-argument.

Question 5

Most who answered this question knew the basic structure and argument of *Crito* and were able to use this knowledge to formulate a decent argument. Many did not mention, or only briefly mentioned, the role of the Laws of Athens.

Question 6

The question of whether Socrates was the 'bravest, wisest and most just' was a popular one. 'Bravest' was dealt with best, with most quoting his attitude in the trial of the generals and the arrest of Leon of Salamis, although there was great confusion as to his specific role in the trial after the Battle of Arginusae. His attitude to death was also cited as an example of his bravery. These, together with his refusal to escape, were also used as an example of Socrates being 'most just'. Few candidates tackled the question of Socrates being the wisest man with any conviction, or discussion. A few answers focused a little too generally on Socrates' refusal to save himself at the expense of his principles. References to specific works were limited, with *Crito* featuring most often. Better answers did include mention of Socrates' actions after Arginusae, and resisting the Thirty Tyrants as examples of him abiding by his principles, as well as quoting his attitude at his trial as proof that he refused to compromise. Virtually all the answers agreed that Socrates was a man of high moral principles, but the evidence and discussion varied greatly in quality.

SECTION THREE: Aristophanes

Question 7

- (i) Most candidates recognised the section of the play from which the passage was taken as the *parodos*. A substantial minority thought the section of the play was the *parabasis*.
- (ii) The majority of the candidates were able to explain that the Chorus were wearing Jurymen's cloaks to show that they were jurors. Some thought that their stings identified them as jurors
- (iii) There was some confusion over the exact charge brought against Laches. Some confused Laches with Labes and mentioned cheese stealing.
- (iv) Most knew who Cleon was, but lack of knowledge about the Athenian political system confused some and many were unable to explain why the Chorus speak favourably of him.
- (v) The question about how the Chorus show their desire to attend court was mostly well done, with candidates being able to select and explain appropriate examples.
- (vi) Some good answers to this question on how and why the Athenian legal system is mocked and criticised in *Wasps*. There were many, however, who wrote in general terms, without specific examples from the play. The best answers tended to discuss mockery and criticism separately. As with many of the longer questions on this paper, there was evidence that the question had not been read carefully enough and so many did not make reference beyond the passage.

Question 8

The answers to the question on what Aristophanes wanted to teach grown-ups in *Frogs* varied in quality. Candidates had a sound knowledge of the text and a good knowledge of the messages in the play. Many candidates were not only able to make reference to and explain the *agon* between Aeschylus and Euripides but also to include the question of Alcibiades, the contributions of the Chorus and the depiction of Dionysus. Many candidates had also benefited from some detailed and effective teaching of the contemporary background to the plays, in particular the Peloponnesian War. Candidates tended to concentrate on either the political or the social messages, but not both. In some cases, a few candidates were unclear as to what Aeschylus and Euripides represented, or even which poet Dionysus was aiming to bring back.

Question 9

Although this question, about which is the more successful of the two plays studied, was not particularly popular, answers showed a variety of opinions, with both plays being found to be more successful. The candidates were able to pick out examples of humour from the plays, even if not always characterising them correctly. Several essays were unbalanced, with almost no discussion of one or either of the plays, which limited the marks available. Some of the better answers included an analysis of the difficulties for a modern audience in understanding aspects of the plays, which limits the appreciation of the humour seen.

There was a decent knowledge and understanding of the purpose of comedy, what happened in the plays and the message behind them but only stronger responses made a direct comparison between the two plays and gave explanations to support their opinions. Some candidates tended to focus their answers on humour and such work often felt like prepared essays. Whilst some candidates had a sound knowledge of both plays, this occasionally led to narrative at the expense of analysis.

SECTION FOUR: Greek Vase Painting

Question 10

- (i) Almost all the candidates identified the type of pot as a dinos.
- (ii) Candidates were less convincing when it came to explaining how the pot was used.
- (iii) All candidates found some feature of the shape of the pot to discuss but few could develop their answers sufficiently to access all the marks available.

- (iv) Most were able to identify the painter.
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- (vi) Most candidates were able to discuss both the Sophilos Dinos and a scene from the Francois Vase. In many cases, however, the discussion was limited to description of the two scenes. A few answers offered good comparisons between the scenes. Of course, many compared the two wedding scenes, with the occasional resultant confusion.

Question 11

There were only three responses to the question of which vase-painter deserves the accolade of being the 'master story-teller'. Candidates had some knowledge of painters and their pots but precise detail was lacking and/or was not used effectively to answer the question.

Question 12

The question about bravery and heroism was equally unpopular. Of those who did tackle it, scenes of warfare, such as the scene from the Berlin Painter's Achilles and Hector krater, were the order of the day. The Niobid Painter's krater was mentioned, but candidates were not able to use it to argue a convincing case. The Kleophrades Painter's hydria was sometimes used to refute the quotation, but there were virtually no other pots to provide counter balance to the quotation.

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Paper 9274/21
Roman Civilisation

General comments

Virgil remains the most popular topic on the specification, with virtually all candidates tackling questions from this section. It is disappointing that Juvenal seems to have lost quite a number of fans. Many of the comments made in the introduction to 9274/11/12/13 are relevant to this paper, too.

Comments on specific questions

SECTION ONE: Augustus

Question 1

- (i) Only about half of the candidature knew about the battle of Philippi and Augustus's vow. There were many general answers.
- (ii) The question about Julia and her husbands was well answered.
- (iii) Candidates were able to offer relevant details about Julius Caesar.
- (iv) Few candidates seemed to know anything about Vesta. Consequently, her importance to the Romans was beyond the majority of most candidates.
- (v) Again, few candidates could identify the connection between Augustus and Apollo.
- (vi) Many answers ignored the emphasis on Augustus's personal wealth in the question, discussing instead how Augustus got hold of power and kept it in general terms. There were some good answers, using both the passage and other ways he used his wealth. Quite a few candidates limited themselves to only discussing the passage.

Question 2

Knowledge of the wars fought by Octavian varied. Many candidates were able to discuss all five campaigns, but quite a few limited themselves to a smaller number. Knowledge varied from the very precise to the very confused. The best answers analysed the reasons for Octavian's victories, but many answers were much more narrative in approach, describing the 'how' without discussing the 'why'. To access the higher levels of marks, candidates must offer a more analytical approach to their answers.

Question 3

Candidates generally had a good knowledge of the different titles and honours offered to Octavian. Most concentrated on the political powers (*Maius Imperium*, *Tribunicia Potestas*) and either ignored, or mentioned in passing, the personal honours he received. Candidates were generally able to analyse why he turned down titles such as Romulus, and dictator, and comment on the success of his policy concerning the honours he was offered.

SECTION TWO: Virgil

Question 4

- (i) Most candidates knew that Aeneas was addressing Dido, but fewer knew that the occasion was the banquet given by Dido in Aeneas's honour.

- (ii) Most were able to remember that Hector and Panthus had said that Troy was under attack and that Aeneas had to leave. Too many answers conflated the words of both characters and only the best were able to recall anything that Panthus had said with any precision.
- (iii) The simile question was generally tackled much better than in previous years. More candidates had taken on board the need to identify and quote specific elements of the simile and to relate and explain how it applied to the Trojans' situation.
- (iv) Recall of the trick Aeneas played was patchy.
- (v) Too many candidates did not achieve a decent mark because of some of the following points:
 - (a) They did not relate the details to the question and just talked about how the fall of Troy is depicted.
 - (b) If they were focused on the question, they only used the passage or did not refer to the Passage.
 - (c) They did not appreciate the value of developing a counter argument or did not see the fall of Troy as anything other than a tragedy.
- (iv) Knowledge of events outside the passage was too patchy.

Question 5

This was the most popular essay question not only in this section but also on the whole paper. Too many candidates used it as an opportunity to use their knowledge of female gods to supplement and, in many cases, supplant and supercede their recall of mortal women. Most candidates were able to make reference to Dido and Creusa. Some remembered Helen as being responsible for the start of the Trojan War. Very few made reference to Anna, could talk about Dido in any meaningful depth or even analyse their contribution. Quite a few candidates went beyond the set books, and mentioned Lavinia, Amata, and the burning of the ships in Book 5. A large number of candidates focused their answer on immortal women, either as a comparison to mortal women, or seemingly as a re-creation of an essay done previously in class.

Question 6

The essay on how Virgil praises Augustus was generally well done and there were some interesting and, at times, quite sophisticated responses. Nearly all responses were able to make some reference to one of the three main patriotic passages in the Aeneid. It was encouraging that so many responses went beyond this and linked Aeneas and Augustus' characters and could also draw upon their knowledge and understanding of the contemporary Augustan backdrop and the values the emperor was trying to restore and nurture. Some responses were too vague in their knowledge of the epic and would be advised to identify and revise more fully key passages, which will enable them to flesh out their responses.

SECTION THREE: *Juvenal*

Question 7

- (i) Most candidates were fine on the salutatio but not all displayed any awareness of the errands/jobs a client would have undertaken on behalf of their patron.
- (ii) Most candidates were able to explain who Varro was.
- (iii) The question on satiric technique was largely well done and a big improvement on previous years. Nearly all candidates could successfully identify three satiric techniques and it was pleasing to see more candidates analysing their satiric effect in greater detail.
- (iv) Not all candidates understood that the question required them to use both the passage and the satire as a whole. Many would have benefitted from considering how the satire's structure contributed to its success. That said, many candidates displayed a detailed knowledge and understanding of its content and could apply this quite adeptly to the given question.

Question 8

This was not a popular question and while candidates had little problem in recalling what happens in *Satire* 3, it would be worth practising the application of this knowledge to the given question in class. Many had clearly spent considerable time learning the text and would have been handsomely rewarded with just a little more effort and practice in applying this.

Question 9

It was encouraging to see the number of responses which used their introduction to define what constitutes a successful satire and to use this as a springboard into their essay. Many essays identified Juvenal's main two purposes as entertaining and teaching and included a number of 'ingredients' he uses to cook up a successful satire. Candidates would be well advised to provide evidence and specific examples for each 'ingredient' as a way of demonstrating a full knowledge of the Satires. To just say that Juvenal uses anger effectively in his satires is a rather half-cooked approach.

SECTION FOUR: Roman Architecture

Question 10

- (i) Only about half the candidature could identify the building as a theatre, with the rest identifying it as an amphitheatre.
- (ii) Despite the error in (i), everyone knew the form of entertainment held in this building.
- (iii) There was some confusion over how such buildings were paid for, with many mentioning state funding and taxes. Even if the benefactors were mentioned, very few wrote about the inscriptions.
- (iv) Although many could mention four features of the building, not many got all the details appropriate to those pictured in the photograph.
- (v) Some candidates struggled to mention two more features which had not already been discussed in (iv). The most common example mentioned was the altar. The *bisellia* were rarely mentioned.
- (vi) A full range of other buildings was discussed, including arches. Examples employed included the Colosseum, the Pantheon and the Baths of Hadrian. Specific details of buildings were often sketchy, and although some attempt was made to discuss both useful and beautiful, this was not always successful. The choice of building often affected the quality of the argument. Candidates found it easy to discuss the idea of beauty but how to discuss the usefulness of a particular type of building eluded many.

Question 11

Candidates were generally pretty good on recall about the Colosseum but some struggled to find another example of an amphitheatre. The most common examples used tended to be theatres rather than amphitheatres. The amphitheatre at Capua was the most usual example of an amphitheatre used but details were often sketchy. Candidates were generally fine on the functionality of the Colosseum but more thought was needed to apply the knowledge to the question posed and identifying the different elements within the question.

Question 12

The Colosseum, aqueducts and triumphal arches were prominent in many essays about the use of the arch but only stronger answers had taken time to extrapolate the different elements required by the question. Those which saw that the question was providing a plan and structure for them to use and follow tended to produce more successful responses. Many would have benefited from adopting this approach. The functional element of the question tended to be better dealt with than the visually appealing element.

CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/22
Roman Civilisation

General comments

Virgil remains the most popular topic on the specification, with virtually all candidates tackling questions from this section. It is disappointing that Juvenal seems to have lost quite a number of fans. Many of the comments made in the introduction to 9274/11/12/13 are relevant to this paper, too.

Comments on specific questions

SECTION ONE: Augustus

Question 1

- (i) Only about half of the candidature knew about the battle of Philippi and Augustus's vow. There were many general answers.
- (ii) The question about Julia and her husbands was well answered.
- (iii) Candidates were able to offer relevant details about Julius Caesar.
- (iv) Few candidates seemed to know anything about Vesta. Consequently, her importance to the Romans was beyond the majority of most candidates.
- (v) Again, few candidates could identify the connection between Augustus and Apollo.
- (vi) Many answers ignored the emphasis on Augustus's personal wealth in the question, discussing instead how Augustus got hold of power and kept it in general terms. There were some good answers, using both the passage and other ways he used his wealth. Quite a few candidates limited themselves to only discussing the passage.

Question 2

Knowledge of the wars fought by Octavian varied. Many candidates were able to discuss all five campaigns, but quite a few limited themselves to a smaller number. Knowledge varied from the very precise to the very confused. The best answers analysed the reasons for Octavian's victories, but many answers were much more narrative in approach, describing the 'how' without discussing the 'why'. To access the higher levels of marks, candidates must offer a more analytical approach to their answers.

Question 3

Candidates generally had a good knowledge of the different titles and honours offered to Octavian. Most concentrated on the political powers (*Maius Imperium, Tribunicia Potestas*) and either ignored, or mentioned in passing, the personal honours he received. Candidates were generally able to analyse why he turned down titles such as Romulus, and dictator, and comment on the success of his policy concerning the honours he was offered.

SECTION TWO: Virgil

Question 4

- (i) Most candidates knew that Aeneas was addressing Dido, but fewer knew that the occasion was the banquet given by Dido in Aeneas's honour.

- (ii) Most were able to remember that Hector and Panthus had said that Troy was under attack and that Aeneas had to leave. Too many answers conflated the words of both characters and only the best were able to recall anything that Panthus had said with any precision.
- (iii) The simile question was generally tackled much better than in previous years. More candidates had taken on board the need to identify and quote specific elements of the simile and to relate and explain how it applied to the Trojans' situation.
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SECTION THREE: Juvenal

Question 7

- (i) Most candidates were fine on the salutatio but not all displayed any awareness of the errands/jobs a client would have undertaken on behalf of their patron.
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SECTION FOUR: Roman Architecture

Question 10

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CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/23
Roman Civilisation

General comments

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CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/03

History: Sources and Evidence

The majority of candidates attempted **Question 1** on the Greek world, so this report is largely based on the responses to that question. This question did not work precisely as expected, as a large number of those attempting it interpreted the word 'sources' to refer the passages printed on the paper, rather than to the texts studied during the year (such as the three specified sources, Herodotus, Thucydides and Aristophanes). Discussion at standardisation resulted in a flexible approach to the responses of candidates.

Essay length varied considerably: there were a few very short responses, though the majority of answers were developed in greater detail. There was clear evidence of careful construction of an argument in many cases; this could be very helpful in ensuring that the passages on the paper were used appropriately as part of the response to the question. There remain however a minority of essays that made no clear reference to the passages at all, but rather focused on the topic of the question, often in a rather sweeping manner. There were a few weaker responses that did to some extent paraphrase the passages on the paper without communicating an understanding of the wider context. However the best answers were able to select relevant aspects of the passages, including the extract from de Ste Croix, and place these effectively within the wider context of the period.

For the most part essays were reasonably presented; handwriting was clear and spelling of classical names was consistent (though 'Peloponnesian' proved challenging for some).

Relatively few candidates evaluated the sources they used (whether the passages on the paper or those drawn from memory). The question was intended to ask candidates to reflect on the nature of our surviving sources, but relatively few candidates took up this aspect of the question. One of the difficulties in our study of this period is that so much of the surviving evidence reflects an Athenian perspective, even if our evidence is not always favourable to Athens. The same problem can also be found in the Roman topic, though a number of candidates commented on the peculiar position of Josephus. There were some interesting discussions of the Thucydides passage, and a few responses considered the difficulty we have in reconstructing the Spartan perspective on the changes in the relationship between Athens and Sparta during this period.

A number of candidates were able to bring in an impressively wide range of further reading, including both other relevant ancient sources (such as Aristotle or the Old Oligarch) and modern authorities, sometimes with relevant material directly quoted or paraphrased. Whilst direct quotation is not a requirement of this assessment, credit was given where it was used effectively to show understanding of the evidence for the period studied. However, uncritical quotation of the views of modern scholars does not necessarily advance an argument.

The best answers communicated very clearly a well-grounded understanding of the wider context. In **Question 1** this was often demonstrated by a clear sense of the chronology of the period which allowed a sensible discussion of the changing relationship between the two states; but some weaker responses were unclear about the dating of events within the fifth century. The Melian dialogue provides an interesting example: this was referred to by a number of candidates as showing the negative aspect of Athenian domination of the Aegean sea, but not all were clear about the date of the event, its relationship to the start of the war in 431 BC and its significance for the Delian League. Some candidates resorted to a generalised descriptive narrative of what they could remember of the fifth century, though in most cases they did make comments relevant to the main part of the question at various points. The best candidates were well aware of the crisis points in the fifth century, from the events of the Persian Wars, through the uneasy peace which gave way to the first Peloponnesian War, and the finally the outbreak of the main war in 431 BC. Many candidates were able to use the de Ste Croix passage to good effect, and took from it the steer to discuss Sparta's position within the Peloponnesian League and the significance of Corinth, especially in the lead up to war in the 430s BC.

In **Question 2** the Terrento passage provided a springboard for some candidates to discuss the different responses of provincials in various parts of the empire (in some cases well beyond those specified in the texts studied), and a number noted the impact of Roman culture on different classes. Some answers were admirably supported with references to the archaeological record which allowed a critical response to the perspective of the texts. Weaker responses were inclined to bland generalisation about the reaction of the provinces, and some allowed the essay to focus more on the Roman perspective.

Those candidates who were confident about the final stages of the Peloponnesian War were able to develop their answer in **Question 1** with that in mind; but some candidates were rather vague about the sequence of events both during the Pentekontaetia and during the Peloponnesian War itself. It was good to see some interesting discussions of Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, with his rather different view of the causes of the war. Candidates who attempted **Question 2** in some cases were very vague about the chronology of the period, though there were some interesting discussions of the Boudicca passage.

Many candidates are still finding it difficult to achieve a suitable balance between discussion of the passages and the wider context. The responses this year demonstrated a good understanding of the texts studied and a pleasing engagement with the key issues raised by the question. Examiners were pleased to see evidence of planning in many answers, and the majority of candidates were able to keep the question to the fore, so avoiding descriptive narrative.

CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/41

Classical Literature – Sources and Evidence

Key messages

Performance was generally better than the previous year, with few very weak responses. Examiners noted the following points:

- questions were read more carefully;
- printed passages were used much more consistently in responses;
- useful planning was more widespread;
- some responses were let down by poor written communication making their meaning obscure, including widespread misspelling of classical names.

General comments

It was pleasing this year to see candidates engaging with the questions as asked. The majority of candidates focused at least to some extent on the idea of character, for **Question 1**, or forgiveness, for **Question 2**. It was also welcome to observe the very large majority of candidates making reference to all the passages printed on the question paper, which enabled many to begin their arguments on a good footing.

Many candidates began by making a plan, which resulted in good structure, coherency and a clear line of argument. Few candidates seemed to be short of time (or left with an excess of it), and so a brief time spent on a plan would seem to be good practice that candidates might want to replicate in future years.

Spelling of classical names was erratic, sometimes rather eccentric, and could at times lead to confusion. Simple errors were made on key names such as Odysseus and Agamemnon. Marks were not specifically lost for this, but it is not entirely coincidental that candidates who paid attention to detail such as the spelling of names were also more accurate in their thoughts and observations, and made fewer factual errors.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Few candidates responded on Tragedy, but among those that did there was no discrepancy in performance when compared to the majority of candidates who responded on Epic. All candidates attempted to address the importance of a central character, though the opportunity to question the assumption behind the question was not generally taken, e.g. candidates did not explore whether Agamemnon or Clytemnestra, or Medea or Jason, are really the central characters of their respective plays. Better responses showed detailed knowledge of the set plays, and these candidates were clearly practised in drawing comparisons between them. These also showed some discussion of other dramatic unities, picking up from the opening quotation. Less effective responses demonstrated that a play had a central character but did not explore the effectiveness of this.

It would be worth reading the comments below on **Question 2** for further general guidance relevant to this question too.

Question 2

All candidates attempted to address the idea of forgiveness, and the vast majority made at least some reference to the printed passages, generally starting with these and extending out to other or broader examples, which is a sensible approach.

On this question candidates were more willing to challenge the premise of the question, some arguing quite effectively that forgiveness had an important role in epic, if not the most prominent. Stronger candidates kept a clear grip on the idea of forgiveness, while others quickly began to speak more generally about punishment; attempts to explore whether mortals might forgive gods were less than convincing and often suggested a candidate was struggling for further ideas instead of developing points they had already made. This reflects a tendency of the weaker responses to list several narrative examples, often fairly briefly, and attach a simple conclusion to the end, which can show a reasonable knowledge of the texts, but does not address AO2 well, showing little evaluation or judgement.

Stronger responses showed a detailed knowledge of the epics as Homer and Virgil wrote them, but some otherwise promising candidates included detail that belonged only to modern film versions of the Homeric epics. Candidates are advised to use such aids to understanding alongside, rather than instead of, the texts, and it would be helpful for teachers to alert candidates to major inconsistencies and discrepancies. This aside, there was not a high degree of outright factual error. One key misunderstanding, though, involved the return of Hector's body by Achilles to Priam. Many candidates wrongly offered this as an example of forgiveness, although others were aware (as Achilles quite clearly states) that it is not forgiveness of Hector at all, but an acknowledgement of the instructions of the gods (via his mother Thetis) and a response to the thoughts of his own father's potential grief at his death. This is a good example of the level of detailed knowledge that characterised the stronger candidates.

In general, where candidates consistently linked relevant specific material to observations and evaluation, and did so in a way that maintained a clear line of reasoning, they scored very highly. Weaker responses, as well as adopting a narrative approach, tended to generalise, or displayed a mismatch of point and evidence, or alternated between evidence without argument and assertions without evidence.

CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/42

Classical Literature – Sources and Evidence

Key messages

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It would be worth reading the comments below on **Question 2** for further general guidance relevant to this question too.

Question 2

All candidates attempted to address the idea of forgiveness, and the vast majority made at least some reference to the printed passages, generally starting with these and extending out to other or broader examples, which is a sensible approach.

On this question candidates were more willing to challenge the premise of the question, some arguing quite effectively that forgiveness had an important role in epic, if not the most prominent. Stronger candidates kept a clear grip on the idea of forgiveness, while others quickly began to speak more generally about punishment; attempts to explore whether mortals might forgive gods were less than convincing and often suggested a candidate was struggling for further ideas instead of developing points they had already made. This reflects a tendency of the weaker responses to list several narrative examples, often fairly briefly, and attach a simple conclusion to the end, which can show a reasonable knowledge of the texts, but does not address AO2 well, showing little evaluation or judgement.

Stronger responses showed a detailed knowledge of the epics as Homer and Virgil wrote them, but some otherwise promising candidates included detail that belonged only to modern film versions of the Homeric epics. Candidates are advised to use such aids to understanding alongside, rather than instead of, the texts, and it would be helpful for teachers to alert candidates to major inconsistencies and discrepancies. This aside, there was not a high degree of outright factual error. One key misunderstanding, though, involved the return of Hector's body by Achilles to Priam. Many candidates wrongly offered this as an example of forgiveness, although others were aware (as Achilles quite clearly states) that it is not forgiveness of Hector at all, but an acknowledgement of the instructions of the gods (via his mother Thetis) and a response to the thoughts of his own father's potential grief at his death. This is a good example of the level of detailed knowledge that characterised the stronger candidates.

In general, where candidates consistently linked relevant specific material to observations and evaluation, and did so in a way that maintained a clear line of reasoning, they scored very highly. Weaker responses, as well as adopting a narrative approach, tended to generalise, or displayed a mismatch of point and evidence, or alternated between evidence without argument and assertions without evidence.

CLASSICAL STUDIES

Paper 9274/43

Classical Literature – Sources and Evidence

Key messages

Performance was generally better than the previous year, with few very weak responses. Examiners noted the following points:

- questions were read more carefully;
- printed passages were used much more consistently in responses;
- useful planning was more widespread;
- some responses were let down by poor written communication making their meaning obscure, including widespread misspelling of classical names.

General comments

It was pleasing this year to see candidates engaging with the questions as asked. The majority of candidates focused at least to some extent on the idea of character, for **Question 1**, or forgiveness, for **Question 2**. It was also welcome to observe the very large majority of candidates making reference to all the passages printed on the question paper, which enabled many to begin their arguments on a good footing.

Many candidates began by making a plan, which resulted in good structure, coherency and a clear line of argument. Few candidates seemed to be short of time (or left with an excess of it), and so a brief time spent on a plan would seem to be good practice that candidates might want to replicate in future years.

Spelling of classical names was erratic, sometimes rather eccentric, and could at times lead to confusion. Simple errors were made on key names such as Odysseus and Agamemnon. Marks were not specifically lost for this, but it is not entirely coincidental that candidates who paid attention to detail such as the spelling of names were also more accurate in their thoughts and observations, and made fewer factual errors.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Few candidates responded on Tragedy, but among those that did there was no discrepancy in performance when compared to the majority of candidates who responded on Epic. All candidates attempted to address the importance of a central character, though the opportunity to question the assumption behind the question was not generally taken, e.g. candidates did not explore whether Agamemnon or Clytemnestra, or Medea or Jason, are really the central characters of their respective plays. Better responses showed detailed knowledge of the set plays, and these candidates were clearly practised in drawing comparisons between them. These also showed some discussion of other dramatic unities, picking up from the opening quotation. Less effective responses demonstrated that a play had a central character but did not explore the effectiveness of this.

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