

**A LEVEL**

**Examiners' report**

# **ANCIENT HISTORY**

---

**H407**

For first teaching in 2017

**H407/12 Summer 2022 series**

# Contents

Introduction .....	3
Paper 12 series overview .....	4
Section A overview .....	5
Question 1* .....	5
Question 2* .....	6
Question 3 .....	9
Section B overview .....	13
Question 4 .....	13
Question 5* .....	14
Question 6* .....	14

## Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

### Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

To support student revision, advance information was published about the focus of exams for Summer 2022 assessments. Advance information was available for most GCSE, AS and A Level subjects, Core Maths, FSMQ, and Cambridge Nationals Information Technologies. You can find more information on our [website](#).

#### Would you prefer a Word version?

Did you know that you can save this PDF as a Word file using Acrobat Professional?

Simply click on **File > Export to** and select **Microsoft Word**

(If you have opened this PDF in your browser you will need to save it first. Simply right click anywhere on the page and select **Save as . . .** to save the PDF. Then open the PDF in Acrobat Professional.)

If you do not have access to Acrobat Professional there are a number of **free** applications available that will also convert PDF to Word (search for PDF to Word converter).

## Paper 12 series overview

The first summer series since 2019 produced some excellent examination scripts with the most successful responses showing the right blend of analysis, factual detail and support from the sources. Each question provided a challenge and, overall, the challenge was met.

The period 478-446 BC was less well known than 446-431; knowledge of 460-446 was low in some responses. Dates were hit and miss for such examples as Naxos, Thasos and events of the First Peloponnesian War, but there seemed to be a better grasp of the material on the 430s and 420s.

The period 413-404 BC was generally well-known, at least as far as key events were mentioned, such as battles and the role of individuals; less clear were the details of the events shortly after Sicily and there was confusion about the dealings with Persia during the latter years of the War.

There was some good engagement with the modern interpretation, but candidates should remember that they are expected to engage with the claims made in the extract based on how convincing the interpretation is, rather than basing their response on how far the ancient sources support the factual claims made.

The assessment objectives are heavily weighted towards using, analysing and evaluating ancient source material. Answers which give a broad narrative or offer unsubstantiated statements such as ‘the sources show that...’ are unlikely to achieve marks in AO3 beyond the lower two bands.

The vast majority of candidates coped well in the time available with very few examples seen of candidates demonstrably running out of time.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• had a secure knowledge of the period studied</li> <li>• had a precise and clear grasp of the chronology</li> <li>• selected sources focused on the specific terms of the question</li> <li>• prioritised the explanation in response to the terms of the question, using evidence and knowledge in support</li> <li>• demonstrated evaluation focused on the reliability of the specific point being made.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attributed an event incorrectly to a person/group</li> <li>• did not focus on the main issue of the question but offered a generalised account of the period</li> <li>• provided a narrative of events, not an analysis</li> <li>• offered generic evaluation.</li> </ul>

## Section A overview

Overall candidates showed a good understanding of the main events in the period 492–404 BC. Responses both in the essay questions and the modern interpretation made good use of the evidence to reach convincing conclusions.

The more successful responses stuck to the precise terms of the question; the evaluation of the evidence used was often convincing and pertinent. To repeat the advice from the previous series: evaluation of the sources must be specific to the point being made.

### Question 1\*

#### **Section A: Relations between Greek states and between Greek and non-Greek states, 492–404 BC**

- 1\* To what extent do you think fear of Persia dominated the relationships between Greek states during the period 478 to 446 BC?

You must use and analyse the ancient sources you have studied as well as your own knowledge to support your answer. **[30]**

This was significantly the less popular of the two optional questions but responses to which still achieved marks in the highest levels. Largely the responses stuck to the prescribed dates with only a few responses focusing their analysis on the Persian or Peloponnesian Wars.

Answers focused on fear of Persia until Thasos (465 BC) or Ithome (462 BC) and then responses tended to focus on Athens' imperialism - Egypt and Cyprus were largely ignored so that the analysis was limited even until 449.

There was some good understanding of the problems with the Peace of Callias, but less clear was any discussion regarding the likelihood of a Peace with such little evidence. The importance of the 30 Years Peace 446 was generally not dealt with as evidence of the change in relations. A common error or misunderstanding was the issue of the Long Wall built in 450s, often confused with the city walls built by Themistocles in 470s, especially when the argument then developed into a discussion of the importance of Peiraeus over Sparta's annoyance.

In addition, the most successful responses looked at specific events after the Persian War which showed fear/apprehension from the Greeks towards the Persians, such as the actions led by the Athenians in places such as Egypt. These responses also then considered the changing relationship with Athens and the rest of the Greeks to good effect, often arguing that while initially, the Greeks were fearful of the Persians, the growth of Athenian power very quickly came to dominate the relationships between Greek states.

More successful responses were closely focused on the ancient source material, which helped to support and develop responses. Less successful responses were not able to give specific examples to show how relationships developed after the Persian War but instead gave a general sense that Athens' power was more of an issue.

### Avoid generic evaluation

Candidates seem well aware that for marks in the highest levels there must be an evaluation of what the sources tell us. Considerations such as genre, date, motives of bias, hostility or favour, whether primary or secondary information are all relevant discussion points when evaluating, but what is put forward needs to be more than generic.

Evaluation should be focused on the specific point being made and credible reasons offered why this particular information from the source should be treated with some caution. It is not enough to quote Aristophanes and then state that as a comic poet his words are exaggerated, or state that Plutarch is unreliable because he is writing centuries after the events about which he is writing.

## Question 2\*

**2\*** 'Thucydides was essentially correct that it was the growth of Athenian power which led to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War in 431 BC.' To what extent do you agree with this view?

You must use and analyse the ancient sources you have studied as well as your own knowledge to support your answer. **[30]**

This question was attempted by the vast majority of candidates. Answers were often very focused on the precise terms of the question, with the reference by Thucydides seemingly well known.

Almost all responses used information from the Corcyra, Potidaea, and Megara issues but with varying levels of success. More successful responses moved outside the 430s and developed an argument based on the breakdowns of the relationship in the 470s-60s for Sparta's attitude to Athens. These responses showed an understanding of the whole period as far as 431 and the inter-state relations, placing the immediate causes in a context.

Megara: it is commonly stated that Pericles thought it a trifle - he does not. In his speech he says 'Let none of you think that we should be going to war for a trifle if we refuse to revoke the Megarian decree. It is a point they make much of...'

Evaluation of Aristophanes was not always convincing, e.g. 'there must be some truth for it to be funny' – very rarely did candidates ever explain which part of the prostitute story is based in truth.

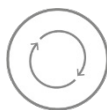
Plutarch was often used to support Thucydides, ignoring that he was probably using Thucydides.

The most successful responses gave a good range of examples in the build up to war in 431BC, with the very strongest going back to the First Peloponnesian War and the inter-war period to demonstrate a pattern of behaviour by Athens which would have caused conflict with Sparta and other Greek states. Again, more successful responses used a range of source material to support their arguments, and the coverage of Corinth pushing for conflict was often a well explained point. Less successful responses tried to focus on the events leading to 431BC, but this was often quite vague or focused on a few examples – primarily Megara. Less successful responses did not contain a great deal of evidence from sources.

Many responses tended to give a good level of detail and examples, but did not fully explain why these events would lead to the outbreak of conflict, leaving this implicit in their response. This meant that these responses were unable to get into Level 5 of the mark scheme.

On the whole, the examiners were pleased with the depth of analysis for this challenging question.

## Assessment for learning



It is important for centres to make sure that candidates study the precise terms of the question before planning their responses. This question makes it explicit that candidates should assess the reasons for the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War in 431BC. Examiners commented that many candidates used examples of Athenian aggression from after the war began including even events from 20 years later. Similarly, extensive information from the Persian Wars was not always made relevant. Often the candidates who showed evidence of planning their responses scored the better marks, and so it is recommended that candidates should try to think about their arguments and plan their supporting evidence before they start writing.

## Exemplar 1

Before the war, Athens were gaining money from greek & non greek states, ~~we~~ we have <sup>ancient</sup> inscriptions that help support this, ~~idea~~, showing that Athens were becoming more and more richer by basically forcing smaller states to pay, with constant threat of invasion.

However, as mentioned before, although Athens had a booming income and constant expanding territory, their position inside became weakened after the outbreak of the plague. Their skilled commander pericles died leaving them at an even more vulnerable position.

This then set off a domino effect in Athens which basically triggered more and more failures on Athens part.



Exemplar 1 shows some idea of a key issue which is relevant to the question – the idea of Athens' increasingly aggressive and imperialistic attitude and behaviour towards allies. However, the claim is unsupported and significantly lacks detail. There is a reference to inscriptions (presumably tribute lists or decrees) but again this is not developed and so cannot be given any credit in AO3.

The next point about the plague and Pericles' death is not made relevant and is presented in an underdeveloped and unclear way. The lack of any supporting evidence and the impression of the chronology and detail means this paragraph would gain very little credit.

### Question 3

3 Read the interpretation below.

How convincing do you find the authors' interpretation of the reasons why Sparta won the Peloponnesian War?

You must use your knowledge of the historical period and the ancient sources you have studied to analyse and evaluate the authors' interpretation. **[20]**

The majority of responses received marks in the second highest level which shows a good understanding of the technique in how to deal with a modern interpretation question but perhaps responses did not go beyond simply looking at the extent to which the claims by the authors are supported by the ancient sources. Candidates are encouraged in these questions to engage with 'how convincing' using their own ideas and thoughts, which will be given full credit so long as they are coherent and credible.

'Inevitable' was not always dealt with and midrange responses focused instead on various theories as to why Athens had become so weak by 404BC. Sometimes these were too far-fetched with candidates citing the plague, Brasidas' campaigns and even the disaster in Sicily as the decisive factors for the eventual Athenian loss.

Candidates could have used Thucydides' comments in 2.65 to support the view from the interpretation but there appeared to be very little knowledge of this. There was some good detail of Xenophon as well as Plutarch *Lysander* in analysing the events at the end of the period.

More successful responses remained closely focused on the content of the interpretation and tackled a range of points raised by the historians.

The best responses tended to focus on three main arguments of the interpretation and used a wide range of specific detail from contextual knowledge and/or source material in support.

Less successful responses did not focus on the interpretation and instead wrote a response on why Athens lost the war. As a result, these responses could not achieve above Level 3 on the mark scheme.

The coverage of Persian intervention varied a great deal, with many responses either ignoring the issue (mentioned in the interpretation) or gave a very brief explanation of the role of Darius/Cyrus.

Better responses knew the main terms of the agreement with Sparta and were able to use specific battles to demonstrate the impact of Persian aid.

A number of responses gave views from other historians, which is not a requirement for the specification and often added very little value to their explanation. It would best for candidates to focus on the interpretation and how far contextual knowledge and/or ancient sources support this.

In discussing how convincing candidates found the authors' interpretation, several found themselves finding it very agreeable. To access the top level candidates really had to consider the question of inevitability mentioned in the opening words of the interpretation. There were also several points of confusion among the less successful responses, including: where Thucydides stops and Xenophon starts, some candidates stating that Thucydides never mentioned the Persians; Aegospotami and Arginusae, and even Amphipolis. Candidates should also read the interpretation carefully, several finding it unconvincing because Persian funding had not stopped before the end of the war, thus essentially misunderstanding what the passage was saying. The gist of the argument was that if the Athenians had not lost at Aegospotami due to their own carelessness, the death of Darius might have meant the ending of Persian funding and thus the feasibility of a continued Spartan naval presence. Several candidates thought that Cyrus' friendship with Lysander would have been enough to ensure its continuity, ignoring the fact that Cyrus had already been recalled by Darius. It was not surprising that candidates were unaware of the succession issues within Persia, but knowledge of them was not necessary to gain high marks.

Many candidates did produce balanced arguments with evidence on the one hand of Thucydides' picking out Decelea as a decisive factor, the ongoing effects of the Sicilian disaster, the banishment of Alcibiades and then the generals after Arginusae, as opposed to the fact that Athens did hold on for eight years after Sicily and the occupation of Decelea and rebuilt her navy on several occasions and enjoyed considerable success, defeating the Spartan navy several times. Many also pointed out the importance of individuals - Lysander, Cyrus, Alcibiades in particular.

With most responses mid or upper-mid in terms of range, there is certainly scope next year for candidates to be braver and analyse the interpretation based on their own ideas and beliefs.

## Exemplar 2

Despite having this understanding, the Spartans did not man a navy of their own until after Athens' ~~defeat~~ Syracuse campaign where it was proven that Athens could be defeated at sea and that naval forces could be used successfully against them. But even with Siceliot and Italiot forces mentioned by Xenophon at the battle of Cyzicos, and at that point using Persian funding to ~~be~~ furnish its own navy rather than relying on Corinth's treasures, the ~~Spartans~~ Spartans were defeated again at Arginusai in 406, losing about 70 ships. In both cases, Athens rejected peace offers, but the Spartans were able to acquire more ships and gave the navy to Lysander. Having both suffered losses, it's questionable whether Sparta or Athens had more experienced sailors, or if it was a matter of Lysander's skill as an admiral. In the latter case, Athens had executed 6 strategoi and forced two others into exile, so the carelessness at Aegospotami is only ~~their~~ their fault. Had they not done so, they may have won against Lysander, but it is still doubtful as ~~the~~ Aristophanes wrote in the Knights; "The generals are ~~numerous~~ numerous, but they're not ~~so~~ good for much!"

The extract in Exemplar 2 shows a good technique of tackling the modern interpretation question. The candidate is offering an assessment of the claims made in the extract about the inevitability of the Athenian defeat. The candidate is engaging well with 'how convincing', supporting their argument with their own knowledge, which is accurate and detailed, and making some references to Thucydides and Xenophon.

The style is analytical and the arguments are coherent. There is full engagement with the central issue and sub-conclusions are reached.

## Section B overview

Examiners commented that the overall standard of the responses for Depth Study were impressive as candidates engaged well with the questions. Question 5 and Question 6 were as equally popular.

Evaluation of the sources was often good, although there is still a tendency from some candidates to copy out some standard phrases about each source at the end of each question, frequently exactly the same paragraph(s), rather than assessing the reliability of the actual passage they have used as evidence. However, there is the danger shown by some candidates who did try to this merely to repeat the same sentence after every use of the same author. The aim should be to attempt some evaluation of the passage in context.

### Question 4

#### Section B: The Culture and Politics of Athens, c.460–c.399 BC

4 Read the passages below.

How useful are these passages for our understanding the importance of the interaction between comedy and contemporary events? [12]

The quality of responses for this question were varied. Candidates seemed to struggle with mining the passages for relevant information and also struggled to bring in outside knowledge to support or challenge. Most responses covered a few points from the passages, explained the reference in their own words, and then reached a conclusion. The less successful responses ignored one of the passages (often Plutarch) and covered 1 or 2 points only.

More successful responses gave a good range from the passages and used examples such as Cleon and Socrates to good effect to support their analysis (often quoting or referencing Aristophanes).

Some candidates need to be more specific on the detail in these supporting examples, for example, just 'name-dropping' Cleon or Aristophanes, which added little to the response.

Many responses did give some evaluation of the passage authors (Old Oligarch and Plutarch), but this was often quite basic and not linked to the question.

## Question 5\*

- 5\* To what extent do the sources enable us to assess the significance of religious festivals in Athenian culture?

You must use and analyse the ancient sources you have studied as well as your own knowledge to support your answer. **[36]**

The most successful responses for this question gave a good range of different festivals and carefully analysed their importance for Athenian culture, often discussing the religious, political and civic function of the festivals. The most successful responses also used a range of source material to support their response, such as the Parthenon and the Old Oligarch.

Less successful responses struggled to include specific source evidence to support their argument, leading to very content-heavy responses rewarded in AO1 and AO2. These responses also tended to run through a series of different festivals (primarily the Panathenaea, Thesmophoria, City Dionysia and Eleusinian Mysteries) giving a description of the main events and little focus on what their function was in Athenian culture beyond the obvious religious function.

Examiners commented that general knowledge about festivals in Athens seems limited; even the events of the Dionysia and Panathenaia were largely absent, e.g. bringing of Tribute, the display of orphans etc; competitions (significance of the plays was rarely developed).

## Question 6\*

- 6\* How significant were the Persian Wars to the Athenian building programme?

You must use and analyse the ancient sources you have studied as well as your own knowledge to support your answer. **[36]**

The most successful responses were able to look at a range of different buildings to assess the impact of the Persian War and used specific examples to support arguments. Candidates made good use of the buildings of the Acropolis, especially the different aspects of the Parthenon, the Erechtheion and the Temple of Athena Nike. However, many responses did not get in Level 6 due to a lack of a wide range of buildings covered and, often the buildings themselves were not evaluated as a source.

A number of responses gave limited coverage to the impact of Persia before quickly moving on to other interpretations which while valid, ignored the wealth of evidence that demonstrated the influence of the Persian Wars. More coverage of the central theme of the question would be beneficial, as well as looking at the other interpretations (e.g. religion, Athenian dominance etc). Less successful responses tended to argue that the Persian War led to the destruction of Athens, so the building works themselves would only have happened because of the war – which is not directly focused on the concept of the question. There was very little author evaluation, whether of extra written sources or the buildings themselves, which is needed to access higher marks. Author evaluation that was included was often quite basic and not linked to the question.

There was generally good detail of the Parthenon (only rarely confused with the Erechtheion); all knew the Persians had destroyed the Acropolis, most that an oath was taken not to rebuild, and that Pericles used the Delian money to fund it. The symbolism of 'civilised versus barbarian' was standard; some could give some detail of the metopes; a few developed the idea with the Athene Nike friezes as far as they are known; again Sounion was mentioned but not always in any detail; so too was Rhamnous and Nemesis; there was some confusion over the two statues of Athene but some knew that there was a connection to the Persian Wars, and a depiction again of Lapiths, etc. There was an occasional reference to the Hephaestion and some use of the Odeon as a tent for Xerxes but not always the use of the timber. The analysis usually argued that the Persian Wars were relevant but there were other issues, e.g. religion/politics which were more significant, which was fine if supported.

---

# Supporting you

---

## Post-results services

If any of your students' results are not as expected, you may wish to consider one of our post-results services. For full information about the options available visit the [OCR website](#).

## Keep up-to-date

We send a weekly roundup to tell you about important updates. You can also sign up for your subject specific updates. If you haven't already, [sign up here](#).

## OCR Professional Development

Attend one of our popular CPD courses to hear directly from a senior assessor or drop in to a Q&A session. Most of our courses are delivered live via an online platform, so you can attend from any location.

Please find details for all our courses on the relevant subject page on our [website](#) or visit [OCR professional development](#).

## Signed up for ExamBuilder?

**ExamBuilder** is the question builder platform for a range of our GCSE, A Level, Cambridge Nationals and Cambridge Technicals qualifications. [Find out more](#).

ExamBuilder is **free for all OCR centres** with an Interchange account and gives you unlimited users per centre. We need an [Interchange](#) username to validate the identity of your centre's first user account for ExamBuilder.

If you do not have an Interchange account please contact your centre administrator (usually the Exams Officer) to request a username, or nominate an existing Interchange user in your department.

## Active Results

Review students' exam performance with our free online results analysis tool. It is available for all GCSEs, AS and A Levels and Cambridge Nationals.

It allows you to:

- review and run analysis reports on exam performance
- analyse results at question and/or topic level
- compare your centre with OCR national averages
- identify trends across the centre
- facilitate effective planning and delivery of courses
- identify areas of the curriculum where students excel or struggle
- help pinpoint strengths and weaknesses of students and teaching departments.

[Find out more](#).



## Need to get in touch?

If you ever have any questions about OCR qualifications or services (including administration, logistics and teaching) please feel free to get in touch with our customer support centre.

Call us on  
**01223 553998**

Alternatively, you can email us on  
**support@ocr.org.uk**

For more information visit

 **ocr.org.uk/qualifications/resource-finder**

 **ocr.org.uk**

 **/ocrexams**

 **/ocrexams**

 **/company/ocr**

 **/ocrexams**

## We really value your feedback

Click to send us an autogenerated email about this resource. Add comments if you want to. Let us know how we can improve this resource or what else you need. Your email address will not be used or shared for any marketing purposes.



**I like this**



**I dislike this**

Please note – web links are correct at date of publication but other websites may change over time. If you have any problems with a link you may want to navigate to that organisation's website for a direct search.



OCR is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge.

For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored. © OCR 2022 Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England. Registered office The Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8EA. Registered company number 3484466. OCR is an exempt charity.

OCR operates academic and vocational qualifications regulated by Ofqual, Qualifications Wales and CCEA as listed in their qualifications registers including A Levels, GCSEs, Cambridge Technicals and Cambridge Nationals.

OCR provides resources to help you deliver our qualifications. These resources do not represent any particular teaching method we expect you to use. We update our resources regularly and aim to make sure content is accurate but please check the OCR website so that you have the most up to date version. OCR cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions in these resources.

Though we make every effort to check our resources, there may be contradictions between published support and the specification, so it is important that you always use information in the latest specification. We indicate any specification changes within the document itself, change the version number and provide a summary of the changes. If you do notice a discrepancy between the specification and a resource, please [contact us](#).

You can copy and distribute this resource freely if you keep the OCR logo and this small print intact and you acknowledge OCR as the originator of the resource.

OCR acknowledges the use of the following content: N/A

Whether you already offer OCR qualifications, are new to OCR or are thinking about switching, you can request more information using our [Expression of Interest form](#).

Please [get in touch](#) if you want to discuss the accessibility of resources we offer to support you in delivering our qualifications.