



**General Certificate of Education
June 2011**

Classical Civilisation 2020

CIV3C: Greek Tragedy

Report on the Examination

Further copies of this Report on the Examination are available from: aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2011 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

Copyright

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334).
Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX.

CIV3C Greek Tragedy

General Comments

As is now usual for CIV3, this was by far the most popular of the four options. The standard of the best work was again extremely high, and there were some scripts of outstanding quality. Many candidates had well-developed analytical skills which they demonstrated in their answers to the 10 and 20-mark questions. As last year, there was less evidence than in the previous specification of difficulty in time-management, though a significant number of candidates still devoted too much time to the 20-mark essay at the evident expense of the 40-mark synoptic answer question. There was encouraging evidence of sophisticated judgement, sensitivity and perception, particularly in responses to the synoptic questions, and of some excellent and committed teaching. A pleasing number of centres had empowered their students to use the appropriate technical language. Once again, however, the examiners noted some candidates with extremely poor writing and spelling skills. There is still a visible tendency for the less sophisticated candidates to provide narrative rather than analytical answers, or to use everything they remember about a particular topic, whether appropriate to the question or not. More generally, there is a noticeable failure to support statements with references to the play.

Section One

Option A

Options A and B were answered by roughly the same numbers of candidates.

Few candidates named the audience as a recipient of Creon's anger in Question 01, but many did recognise the presence of the Chorus and were able to point to Creon's edict forbidding the burial of Polynices, and Antigone caught in the act of contravention. Few mentioned Creon's justification for his actions as the reason for the speech. Responses to Question 02 competently covered the back history of the situation, and tended to handle Creon's view of his position well; they were less sure of the conceptions of gender-roles which lie behind Antigone's actions and Creon's response to her behaviour towards him, though they dealt with the treatment of Ismene well. Question 03 was well answered by many candidates, who were able to cite Creon's major characteristics as portrayed elsewhere in the play and to note the effect of the *anagnorisis* sequence on his later fortune and behaviour.

Option B

Answers to Question 04 were aware of Phaedra's passion for Hippolytus, but the nuances surrounding it were rather less assured. Few candidates mentioned the knowledge of the Chorus. Most were aware that the Nurse was the agent for advising Hippolytus, and also that this was against Phaedra's knowledge and instructions. A few recognised that Phaedra overheard Hippolytus' sexist rant. Most candidates answered Question 05 by recognising Hippolytus' sense of entrapment. His own insecurities received less attention than his misogyny, impulsiveness, arrogance, emphasis on virtue and purity, and loyalty to some gods and not others. Few referred to the play, which is also true of responses to Question 06; these referred to the essentials of the differences of response between Phaedra and the Nurse to the situation, but were less aware of the effects of honour codes, social class, and concepts of the foreign which underlie both characters' reactions.

Section Two

Option C

Question 07 was significantly the less popular of the two synoptic questions; good answers were able to link the presentational convention of no more than three speaking characters and a Chorus in each scene with knowledge of the four plays to provide a well-supported commentary on the effects this convention has on their plots and characterisation. The best were able to explore the wider implications for characterisation, variety, pace, and storytelling with specific illustrations from the prescribed plays.

Option D

Option D was both popular and extremely well-handled by the best candidates, though the quality of answers covered the whole spectrum. The best answers formulated and discussed their chosen issues with great thoroughness, supporting these with examples from all the plays in an evaluative fashion. For many candidates, however, answering this question still entailed giving a bare bones synopsis of each play, adding a few comments about family which, in terms of inherent values, appeared to refer to a 21st century nuclear family rather than a family of the 5th century Athens in which the plays were written. In particular, the formal role of Athenian women (when mentioned) frequently seemed based on misunderstood information. Candidates often failed to realise that it is impossible to use a single family model for the entire Athenian population.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion