



**General Certificate of Education  
January 2012**

**Classical Civilisation 2020**

**CIV1B: Athenian Democracy**

***Report on the Examination***

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## CIV1B Athenian Democracy

### Section 1

#### Option A

Almost all students chose this option on Solon in preference to Option B on Aristophanes' *Wasps*. Answers to the factual Questions 01 and 02 were generally excellent.

Question 03 also elicited a pleasing number of good answers that carried out an informed analysis of a range of issues in order to assess the seriousness of the problems facing Solon. Weaker answers tended either to omit or to misunderstand the problems associated with the central issue of debt. In some cases there was an inability to reorganise learnt material to respond to the exact requirements of the question, with the result that more attention was given to solutions than to problems.

The best answers to Question 04 came from the students who paused to analyse carefully what the quotation meant so that they could shape their argument to address the particular issues it raised. Students may have come to the examination with the fixed idea that Solon's main aim was to achieve *eunomia*, for example, but if so the argument needed to be structured in such a way that the links between the student's view and the terms of the question were made clear. Most students had a broad understanding of the significance of Solon's produce-based classes even when precise knowledge was lacking, but they sometimes failed to carry forward the implications through the whole essay, so that at the end the Areopagus was being described as still aristocratic without taking into account the change to timocratic qualifications mentioned earlier, however slow its overall impact might be. Discussion of the judicial reforms was not always expressed in a way that showed clear understanding of their significance; in many cases more care was needed in distinguishing between prosecuting and convicting, and between defending and appealing, and remembering that the last was performed in the *Heliaia* before one's peers. Third-party redress did **not** introduce modern-day lawyers into the Athenian judicial process (as a reading of *Wasps*, though from a later period, should have made clear).

#### Option B

Of the very few students who attempted this option, most demonstrated sound knowledge of the trial of Labes in Question 05, sometimes giving considerably more than the five details required.

However, answers to Question 06 were not always as successful, both because they were not sufficiently analytical and evaluative in approach and because they made too few supporting references to the passage.

The best answers to Question 07 demonstrated a very good appreciation of Aristophanes' purposes in writing *Wasps* and supported the argument with perceptive insights and apposite details from across the whole play. For a few students it appeared to have been unmemorable, if not incomprehensible.

## Section 2

### Option C

As in Section 1, the vast majority of students chose Question 08 on Cleisthenes rather than Question 09 on the democracy in the later 5<sup>th</sup> century. Most students showed some understanding of the circumstances in which Cleisthenes came to power, although some muddled the details, and they seemed to be less surprised by the issue than many were in Question 04 on Solon. What subsequently tended to let students down was imprecision both in describing the reforms and in explaining their effects and significance. Many answers to this 30-mark question were no longer than answers to a 20-mark question and did not make full use of the opportunity to give more key details and more tightly argued analysis. However, the best developed a clearly structured argument that responded to the precise issue raised by this particular question and sustained a clear, informed and balanced point of view.

### Option D

Although considerably fewer in number, answers to Question 09 tended to be of a slightly higher standard than those to Question 08. In particular, there was a noticeably greater percentage of essays at the top of Level 4 and in Level 5. These demonstrated impressive knowledge and understanding of democratic bodies and procedures at both deme and national level, and with good control of the material structured a very convincing argument. By contrast, weaker answers lacked knowledge of significant detail and failed to explain how, and how far, the various institutions gave male citizens a voice.

### Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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