



**General Certificate of Education  
January 2012**

**Classical Civilisation 2020**

**CIV1C: Aristophanes and Athens**

***Report on the Examination***

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## CIV1C Aristophanes and Athens

The best answers demonstrated an enthusiastic and informed appreciation of Aristophanes' comedies. The main general weaknesses were in answers to the 10-mark questions, in which there was often a paucity of reference to the passage in support of the argument, and in those to the 30-mark questions, which tended to be too brief, sometimes indeed being shorter than the essays worth 20 marks.

### Section 1

#### Option A

Considerably more students chose Option A on a passage of dialogue from *The Knights* than Option B on a passage by the Chorus from *Peace*. Less than a third answered Question 01 correctly. A high proportion failed to appreciate the specific details that were required by the emboldened 'finally' in the question and made more general comments about the Paphlagonian stealing from Thepeople, or referred to Pylos. However, answers to the other short factual questions were generally better. In Question 02 almost all students made some mention of the oracle, and many provided enough detail to gain full marks, although a significant minority who misread the question answered as though it were the Paphlagonian that Demosthenes had made great and referred to the Pylos campaign (again), suggesting that Demosthenes' actions, or inactivity, there had made the Paphlagonian (Cleon) so successful. Questions 03 and 04 were, on the whole, answered more accurately.

Successful answers to Question 05 adopted an evaluative approach and used a range of examples illustrating different methods of entertaining the audience from across the entire passage to support the argument. Weaker answers did not make a sufficiently detailed analysis of the passage as a whole or demonstrate understanding of the variety of Aristophanes' techniques.

Question 06 provided students with the opportunity to use a range of different approaches. Weaker answers tended to respond to only one or two of the suggestions in the bullet-points, mainly focusing on how likeable the Paphlagonian and Sausage-seller are shown to be. By contrast, the best answers assessed the seriousness of the issues raised during the play and took into account the political and military events happening around the time of its production.

#### Option B

Question 07 was handled well, with students only occasionally muddling *parodos* with *parabasis*. Similarly, in Question 08 a high number of students correctly referred to the specific details of pulling *Peace* out of the cave with ropes. In Question 09 students tended to gain either both marks or neither, some ignoring the phrase 'apart from the return of peace' in the question and referring to the Peace of Nicias rather than Trygaeus' nuptials.

Weaknesses in the answers to Question 10 were similar to those in the corresponding Question 05, in particular a failure to support judgements with sufficient evidence from the passage despite the explicit instruction to do so in the wording of the question. As a consequence, although half the students gained a mark in Level 3, very few reached Level 4.

The general standard of answers to Question 11 was slightly lower than that for Question 06. Weaker answers tended to concentrate on Cleon to the exclusion of much else, sometimes bringing in the Paphlagonian from *The Knights* despite the clear indication in the question that it was about 'the rest of *Peace*'. However, stronger answers made a very good attempt to focus

on the exact terms of the question, and in reaching an overall judgement made good reference to both individuals and types of character.

## Section 2

### Option C

There was very little difference between the numbers of students choosing Questions 12 and 13, although the standard of answers to the former tended to be slightly better. Question 12 provided the opportunity to show knowledge and understanding of the details and structures of *The Acharnians* and *Peace*. Accordingly, good answers presented a case that assessed the first half of the plays and then compared, or contrasted, their success with scenes from the rest of the play. Weaker responses tended to refer only to scenes in the second half of the plays, and in some cases discussed just one play.

### Option D

Question 13 did not ask for a list of where Aristophanes is at his funniest, but for a balanced evaluative argument leading to a judgement whether or not his treatment of tragic playwrights and tragedy creates the funniest moments. Students who ignored the precise terms of the question did not score well, nor did those who merely listed occasions when there were some references to tragic playwrights and their plays without an attempt to construct an argument or evaluate. However, there were many good answers that did engage directly with the question and demonstrated both good knowledge and strong argument, even if *The Knights* tended to be ignored without even some brief negative argument.

## 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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