



**General Certificate of Education
June 2012**

Classical Civilisation 2020

CIV2A: Homer *Iliad*

Report on the Examination

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

Copyright © 2012 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

Copyright

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools and colleges 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 schools and colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the schools and colleges.

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.

CIV2A Homer *Iliad*

General Comments

It was clear that most students who had studied the *Iliad* had done so with zeal and enjoyment. There were very few really poor papers and the majority were a pleasure to read. In Section 1 almost exactly two thirds of students chose Option A, but the minority Option B students slightly outperformed them. The mean marks for the short answer and ten mark questions on both sections were remarkably similar, but more Option B students reached Level 5. Option D was the more popular of the 30-mark questions. Nothing suggests that students were disadvantaged by their choice of question, and the fact that the 'average' student reached the Level 4 border on the demanding Section 2 essays speaks volumes for the effort put in by this year's students. A few general points are worth noting before moving on to look at the individual questions. Throughout the 10, 20 and 30 mark questions, some students still rely on the use of technical terminology at the expense of clear explanation and development. It is fine (although not essential) for schools to encourage the use of a wide range of technical terms, but when students employ these wrongly or in a very unclear manner, they prove to be a hindrance. In addition, most essay titles are phrased to encourage a degree of argument: students who examine both sides of the case and produce evidence from the text in support of their points tend to gain the higher marks; one-sided polemics are rarely as successful.

Section One

Option A

Students generally found few problems with the short questions: almost all identified Phoenix and Ajax as the companions of Odysseus for Question 01, although Nestor and Diomedes were occasionally offered. Similarly, clear, concise and correct answers to Question 02 were the norm. A few students named gifts which were not for immediate delivery and so dropped one or two marks. Students found a lot to talk about from the passage when discussing Achilles' mood (Question 03): very few this year failed to make close reference to the text. Good answers included references to poetic techniques indicating the rising anger, while many went on to relate the passage to the wider context. A few saw the references to Orchemenos and Thebes as unhelpful digression. All in all there was a wealth of helpful examples in the text and most students availed themselves of this to justify their ideas. There were very few poor answers here, with most responses scoring 8 marks or higher. It was a similar story with the essay, Question 04. Students seem to find the earlier books of the *Iliad* easier to deal with and often quoted a good range of knowledge from Book 1 in particular to support their comments on Achilles and Agamemnon; here better answers looked at both sides of the issue rather than simply taking Agamemnon as the villain. There was a tendency however to use Book 9 in a one-sided way, Achilles either being seen as totally justified in his rejection or absolutely culpable for all that follows. Relatively few students referred to Homeric ethics in making their judgement. For the later books timing often seemed an issue, and there were some unbalanced answers which made only brief reference to Books 22 and 24. On occasion, the essays at this point became very narrative led, with a lack of focus on whether or not Achilles was 'justified'. Even when a judgement was made here it was often as an afterthought rather than worked round to by examination of the supporting information. As a result of all these factors, 93% of answers reached Level 3, but only half went on to Level 4 or 5.

Option B

Again, the initial questions caused little concern to most students: Andromache was a rare alternative for Question 05 but nearly all correctly named Priam and Hecabe. For Question 06 few mentioned where the *real* Deiphobus was; the emphasis was invariably on the trickery of Athene. Very occasionally, Apollo was mistakenly seen as carrying out the ruse rather than the goddess. Despite the requirement for 'changes' in character in Question 07 suggesting this question might have proved more complicated than the corresponding Option A alternative, the percentage of students gaining Level 3 or above was identical in both, with slightly more of the Option B students reaching Level 4. Often for Question 07, the response was based around the earlier sections of the passage reflecting Hector's confidence; less often students persisted and were well rewarded for reaching the end of the passage where Hector is 'dismayed'. In Question 08, the weakness of some students was to write a general character sketch of Hector. However, many good comments were included in the better efforts, with some excellent cross references drawing together episodes from widely differing sections of the epic to illustrate the hero's innate strengths and weaknesses: many talked positively of Hector's relationship with Andromache (and occasionally Helen); a weakness of Hector's regularly commented on was his habit of ignoring advice (as from Polydamas in Book 18). Often these essays were a pleasure to read.

Section Two**Option C**

Some students possibly found the ideas here rather complex and this may have had an impact on the clarity of their communication. Key faults included a failure to provide any definition of 'fate'; this was often equated with 'the will of Zeus' without critique, or else taken to indicate a moment-by-moment control of the actions of an individual. Even where mortals were seen to have free will, students tended to grant their actions while alive of little or no importance. Many essays spent most of their time discussing the freedom or otherwise of the gods, with some very good answers. The better essays questioned whether the gods were themselves merely acting out the dictates of fate, for example when Aphrodite rescues Paris from the duel in Book 3. The very best answers itemised different interpretations of what fate was, and examined the implications of each; some with excellent use of the text.

Option D

In Question 10, 'glory' may have seemed more straightforward than 'fate' in Question 09, so students may have found this question more accessible. The example of Simoisius featured regularly, alongside the pathos of Hector's heroic death and the grisly end of Cebriones. The use of terminology (for example '*kleos*' and '*time*') was often confidently handled. When Paris was discussed, most answers tended to see the poem as not glorifying war: only a few saw the disapproval that a contemporary audience would have felt, so that his cowardice could paradoxically be seen as a glorification of war. Some of the best answers used the funeral games as an illustration of the glorifying of war and the centrality of the urge 'always to be the best' as quoted from Book 6, line 208. Overall, students made some very interesting points and brought in some very detailed knowledge. The question seemed to lend itself to sophisticated analysis with most students examining both sides of the argument: Homer the 'journalist', lifting the lid on the horrors of war versus Homer the bard of the heroic age when 'men were real men'.

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