

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

H408

For first teaching in 2017

H408/34 Summer 2022 series

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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 are 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](#).

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Paper 34 series overview

This is only the second time there has been a full examination session for this paper, owing to national restrictions imposed by Covid-19. Centres therefore had access only to one previous Principal Examiner report, written after the 2019 session. It is clear, however, that some of the recommendations made in that report have been implemented – for example, there was much greater awareness of overall chronology, although this was by no means universal.

Use of scholars in the Section B responses has progressed well from 2019. Most candidates could name at least two, and sometimes as many as five, of the scholars whose works they had consulted. There was also good use of online resources, such as the Bryn Mawr lectures. However, some candidates seemed to have learned a list of generic quotations, which they inserted without fully considering whether they contributed to the discussion at that point.

As in 2019, the Key Thinker questions focused on Cleisthenes. His tribal reforms can be difficult to explain, and candidates who had a good recall of a diagram/map of the new Tribes, available in a large number of publications, did better than those who attempted to recall a written explanation they had only partially understood. There was also widespread confusion between the reforms of Solon and those of Cleisthenes.

Unlike in 2019, there was little evidence of candidates running out of time. Many chose to answer the higher-tariff questions first. This conferred no particular advantage, but in some cases – notably with Questions 7 and 8 – this meant they did not realise that they could have used Source A in their responses. Candidates who answered Question 7 before Question 6 often included in their responses to Question 7 material which really belonged to Question 6. They then omitted that material from their responses to Question 6 and thus disadvantaged themselves.

It is important that candidates look carefully at all the questions on the Key Thinkers before answering any of them, even if they intend to answer the 20-mark question first. Answering the questions out of order also increases the risk of accidentally omitting one of the 10-mark questions. A small number of candidates disadvantaged themselves in this way.

There were several instances of Question 9 being misnumbered as 8. Fortunately, the mistake was easily detectable, and the responses were marked in line with the correct mark scheme. We would urge candidates to make sure that their responses are always correctly numbered.

In general, there was reasonable knowledge of the prescribed literary sources, with many candidates being aware of the original context. One major area of confusion was the Aristophanes extracts. Some based their arguments in Question 9 on the mistaken belief that the extracts quoted from *Knights*, *Wasps* and *Assemblywomen* were the complete plays. Less successful candidates were also under the impression that the prescribed extracts from Plato comprised the whole of *Republic*.

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"> made a short plan of their responses to the 20- and 30- mark questions explained the reforms of Cleisthenes accurately, using the correct terminology displayed good knowledge of the prescribed sources and Key Thinkers integrated well-targeted quotations from scholars into their argument in their Section B response thought carefully about what was required for the 10-, 20- and 30-mark questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> answered Question 7 before Question 6, so not taking into account the progression between the two questions confused the authors and/or content of the various prescribed sources (see discussion of Question 9 below) confused the reforms of Solon with the reforms of Cleisthenes.

Assessment for learning

Some candidates showed misunderstanding of how BC dates work, with dates between 440 and 400 BC described as being 'the early 5th century.' Such candidates therefore stated or implied that some, or all, of the prescribed sources predated Solon and/or Cleisthenes. Where possible, teachers are advised to make sure that candidates understand the timeline and direction of travel for the historical material in this component. Others had not appreciated that the reforms of Cleisthenes did not follow on immediately from the archonship of Solon.

Many candidates had not realised the fragmentary nature of the evidence about the lives of Solon and Cleisthenes, asserting that they died or were expelled immediately after implementing their reforms. They then used this 'fact' as evidence in Question 7.

Many candidates confused the Council of 500 (*Boule*) with the Areopagus. This may be because in some modern publications there are references to 'the Council of the Areopagus'. There was also confusion between the 5th century jury-courts and the Areopagus.

Section A

Question 1

Source A

Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.36.3 – 2.37

1 Who is making the speech in **Source A**?

[1]

The majority of candidates gave the correct response.

Question 2

2 Who are 'the dead' in line 1 of **Source A**? Make **two** points.

[2]

Most candidates answered this competently, the main omission being specific reference to the Peloponnesian War. There was also some confusion with the Persian Wars.

Question 3

3 Explain how the speaker in **Source A** praises Athens and its constitution.

[10]

The majority of candidates were able to give competent responses, with clear and close reference to Source A. Better responses quoted sections of the passage and gave a good analysis of why each particular phrase praised Athens. Less successful responses quoted sections of the passage, without any real analysis of why the phrase quoted was praising Athens and its constitution. Some responses featured lengthy historical context – explaining whether the points Pericles was making were justified, which was not the question. Responses which just quoted phrases from the passage – often in bullet-points – were unable to gain any AO2 marks, as there was no discussion or explanation.

Question 4

After a short period of political upheaval between 510 and 508, Cleisthenes became the leading politician in Athens and made wide-ranging reforms.

4 Give the name of the king of Sparta who Cleisthenes and his followers drove out of Athens.

[1]

This was answered correctly by some candidates. There was a range of incorrect responses, including the names of a large number of Athenians from different periods.

Question 5

5 Cleisthenes reformed the tribal system. How many tribes did he create?

[1]

The majority gave the correct answer. There was evidence of confusion between Tribes and Trittyes.

Question 6

6 Explain how effectively Cleisthenes' reform of the tribal system broke down the old tribal and political divisions which had caused problems and conflict in Attica.

[10]

Most candidates knew that there had been conflicts in the 6th century BC but confused the pre-*Peisistratid* factions (Coast, Plains, Hills) with the *Cleisthenic* Regions (City, Coast, Inland). There was evidence of confusion between Regions, Demes, Tribes and Trittyes. Some attributed Solon's law reforms and/or the *seisachtheia* to Cleisthenes. Successful responses explained the new tribal system simply and clearly. Less successful explanations started with the Demes and displayed considerable confusion over terminology.

Assessment for learning

It is best if candidates start their explanation of these reforms with the Regions, and progress via Trittyes to the new Tribes. Candidates should also be reminded that the Tribal Generals (*Stratego*) were introduced after Cleisthenes' disappearance from the scene and are not relevant to this question.

Question 7*

7* 'Cleisthenes' reforms laid the foundations for the developed Athenian democracy.'

Explain how far you agree with this statement. Justify your response.

You may use **Source A** as a starting point in your answer.

[20]

Successful responses to this question showed knowledge of some, or most, of the features of the developed (i.e., late 5th century) democracy and their responses were organised thematically. Some referred to points made in Source A. They were also able to show the extent to which these features had evolved from the reforms of Cleisthenes. Some responses also included valid discussions of the role of Solon in paving the way for Cleisthenes or an appropriately balanced examination of the respective contributions of Solon and Cleisthenes. Again, the most successful and succinct of these were organised thematically.

Less successful responses ignored the implications of the phrase 'laid the foundations'. These discussed only or largely the reforms of Ephialtes and Pericles, talking about how they 'set up' democracy by building on the foundations laid by Cleisthenes. Other less successful responses focused largely on the reforms of Solon with limited reference to Cleisthenes.

Some responses were less successful than they could have been because candidates had gone out of their way to include reference to scholars in their responses. Reference to modern scholars is never required for any Section A questions. Here is an extract from one such response.

Exemplar 1

7	(cont.)	<p>The political reforms of Cleisthenes however can be seen as the foundations of the later democratic system to a great extent. The creation of the boule of 500 helps to solidify the political nature of the new deme structure, whilst also suggesting that a body with probouleutic function was necessary, thus proving that the ekklesia was functioning regularly and efficiently and extensively in the system, allowing for every citizen to participate.</p>
		<p>whilst the system set up by Cleisthenes was not fully evolved - for example the political role of the polemarch was later removed - it is possible to see these organs of democracy as proof that the citizen body was 'fully disillusioned from aristocratic control of the state' (Thorley) and thus crucial in the evolution of democracy backed by an increasingly zealous democratic mindset.</p>
		<p>However, Thorley is clear that democracy may not have been Cleisthenes' intention. For example, whilst Ath.Pol. suggests that demes were allocated to tribes by lot, it could be argued that they, more than</p>
7	(cont.)	<p>coincidentally, favour the Alcmaeonid family. Therefore, manipulation of reform</p>

This was a very well-argued response overall, and it was clear that the candidate had read widely round the topic. The candidate's eagerness to discuss the views of scholars and the primary sources, however, adversely affected the response to the question. The candidate demonstrates a sufficiently wide range of relevant factual material for the AO1 mark to be at the top of Level 3. The response fulfilled the AO2 criteria for the lower end of Level 4. With more careful thought about what the question actually required, the candidate could have achieved a Level 5 mark.

Section B overview

In this section, candidates are given an opportunity to display the breadth of their knowledge of the prescribed sources and the extent of their own research. To that end, one question usually enables candidates to have a free choice of prescribed source materials, while the other guides the candidates to specific authors or works. Whichever question the candidate chooses, it is important to read the question carefully and consider exactly what is required.

Candidates also have the opportunity to show the extent to which they have benefited from wider reading of modern scholarship. Most were able to mention three scholars, although in some cases it was difficult to find evidence of the existence of one or more of the cited scholars. Some candidates had used an interesting range of internet-based resources, including web-based lectures from US universities. 'Print' scholars included Barrow, Bowie, Cartledge, Ehrenberg, Hall, AHM Jones, Macdowell, PJ Rhodes, Sommerstein and those discussed in the OCR-endorsed Bloomsbury resource book. Some candidates referred to genuine scholars but attributed to them some irrelevant statements (e.g., 'I agree with Sommerstein, that in *Knights* Cleon is portrayed as a sausage-seller.')

A few candidates were able to highlight diverging views between scholars and make their own evaluation. They gave clear reasons for their views, thus reflecting independent thought and understanding of the prescribed sources.

Question 8*

8* 'For the Athenian democracy to function properly, it was essential for citizens to have good public speaking skills.'

Explain how well the written sources you have studied support this statement. Justify your response. You should refer to the works of **at least three** authors.

[30]

This question was attempted by very few candidates, often with limited success. Several of those had clearly realised that some of the Aristophanes extracts (e.g., *Acharnians*, *Assemblywomen*) could be used to discuss public speaking in the Assembly but then simply provided a summary of the relevant scenes as examples of speeches. Candidates could have used either Source A or the second prescribed extract from Thucydides, on the contrast between Pericles and his successors. The mark scheme indicates the range of evidence available in the prescribed sources and suggests possible points a candidate could have made. A flavour of one very competent response is given below.

Exemplar 2

		Finally, Thucydides counters this with his portrayal of Pericles. Kagan says that a key requirement was leadership, and
		Thucydides supports this by implying Pericles was 'intelligent' and 'incorruptible' and was instrumental in ensuring Athens, and thereby democracy's survival through his rhetorical skill. As Pope correctly states 'the power base of an Athenian statesman depended... on his status as public speaker', and this ^{was} for Thucydides was successfully used by Pericles to help Athenian democracy flourish.

This is the final example selected by one candidate, whose response was rated as being at the top of Level 4. There is good knowledge of the prescribed source material and it is used to comment on the statements made by the two named scholars - particularly Kagan. Other extracts discussed were from the Old Oligarch, Thucydides and several Aristophanes plays. The candidate also showed good understanding of the practicalities of being selected to speak in meetings of the Assembly, using the material from *Acharnians* and *Assemblywomen* as evidence.

Question 9*

9* Plato, the Old Oligarch and Aristophanes all make criticisms of the Athenian democratic system.

Assess which of these authors, in your opinion, makes the most convincing criticisms. In your answer, you should refer to **at least one work** by **each** of these three authors. **[30]**

It was clear that the 'Democracy Critiqued' area had been the subject of considerable discussion, both in class and through routine written work. Most candidates were able to make sensible observations about at least two of the three authors, but several confused Plato and the Old Oligarch, or attributed one of the Aristophanes plays to Plato. Those who had read beyond the prescribed extracts (e.g., the whole of *Knights* or the final section of *Frogs*) were able to make additional pertinent points. Less successful responses provided very uneven treatment of the three authors, indicating that the candidates knew one less well than the others. Some dismissed the Old Oligarch in one sentence, which boiled down to 'We do not know who he is, and he chose to remain anonymous, so his views aren't convincing.' Many responses gave clear indications of the reworking of a previous essay or discussion about 'effectiveness' of the three authors' criticisms, with limited attention to the word 'convincing'. Others drew good distinctions between the extent to which the authors concerned might have convinced both ancient and modern readers/listeners. There was considerable variation in the reference to scholars. Below is a typical extract from a response which gained full marks.

Exemplar 3

		However, I believe Aristophanes is most convincing in his comic plays, and was also most convincing to Athenian citizens at the time. One key criticism
		Aristophanes presents in the choice of bad leadership in the Athenian democracy. This is made obvious in the parabasis of Frogs. Dover describes the main message as good old is good and new is bad, seen in how Aristophanes describes that leaders used to be, and need to be, educated, well born, and rich, compared to the low ones currently chosen, stating they are choosing copper over gold. This critique is made convincing through his depiction of demagogues, particularly Cleon. Cleon is mocked in a variety of plays by Aristophanes. In Knights he is represented by Paphlagon, and holds power due to the demos sitting 'booby-faced' on the Pnyx. Furthermore,

The candidate gives relevant accurate detail from a range of extracts from the plays of Aristophanes. These are linked to what Dover says. The portrayal of Cleon in other plays is discussed, with relevant examples. The candidate also knows how meetings of the Assembly were conducted. There is full evidence of engagement with the word 'convincing'. Elsewhere, the candidate showed equally good knowledge of the prescribed material from Plato and the Old Oligarch and modern commentators on those works.

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