



General Certificate of Secondary Education

Classical Civilisation

**40204 – Greece and Rome: An Evaluative
Study**

Report on the Examination

2010 examination – June series

Further copies of this Report are available to download from the AQA Website: www.aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2010 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.

Greece and Rome: An Evaluative Study (40204)

General Comments

The most popular topic in this, the first year of Controlled Assessment, was Topic G, Nero. The most popular task was Task G2, Nero, hero or villain? Of the 24 centres who entered candidates, eight chose this task. The next most popular topic was Topic A, Homer, *Iliad*, with four centres completing Task A1, the comparison between Achilles and Hector. There were candidates for all other topics except for Topic B, Greek Comedy. There were, however, very few responses to the tasks on Topic D, Athenian Democracy.

Despite the initial concerns about the practicalities of Controlled Assessment, centres were able to prepare their candidates well, and the candidates themselves produced work that fulfilled all the requirements of the specification. Centres have obviously worked hard to ensure that their candidates got the most out of this new form of assessment. Both teachers and candidates should be extremely proud of what they produced this summer.

Administration was generally completed well, with fewer clerical errors than in the legacy specification. Teachers ensured that all candidates signed the Candidate Record Forms, a requirement of the Ofqual Code of Practice, although they occasionally forgot to include the candidate or centre number. Teachers should also remember to complete the Centre Declaration Sheet correctly and include this with the sample; this must always be signed by the Head of Centre or his or her representative.

Research and Planning

The moderators were delighted to receive with the samples some examples of research diaries and essay plans which showed how the candidates had gone about researching their chosen topics. Centres obviously spent part of the available teaching time ensuring that candidates had the skills necessary to complete their research. Teachers are reminded of the requirement to record any feedback they give to individual candidates during the research and planning stage in the diaries and to ensure that bibliographies are kept up to date. It became obvious during the moderation process that a well organised essay plan was essential if candidates were to perform to their best. Those who had chosen and organised their material sensibly, and written an essay plan, produced work that scored much more highly as they were able to maintain a focused argument, backed up by detailed evidence and reference to the source material.

While the specification states that 'the research diary should not include lengthy passages which the candidate simply copies out in the final assessment', it is a good idea for candidates to include shorter quotations, from both primary and secondary sources, which they can use to support their opinions. These quotations should always be correctly attributed.

The bullet points provided with the tasks are a good starting point for the research undertaken, but the moderators do not expect every essay to follow exactly the same argument, supported by the same claims, opinions and evidence. The bullet points do, however, give candidates some ideas about aspects of the chosen topic that will be useful in providing an answer to the set task. Candidates should ensure that they always focus on the question asked, selecting relevant materials during this stage rather than writing everything they know about the topic.

Analysis and Evaluation

Moderators saw a wide variety of assignments, both handwritten and word processed. Both are equally acceptable. There was a great deal of variation in the length of the assignments submitted for assessment. While the word limit of 2000 words is a recommendation only, assignments which are shorter than 1000 words are unlikely to score highly. As stated above, candidates who had used the research and planning time well and produced a detailed essay

plan were able to make better use of their time to write a well organised assignment focusing closely on the question set.

Those who chose topics which used pictorial source material generally presented it to good advantage in their assignments, remembering that photographs, plans etc. needed to be integrated into the text. Those who chose Task E2, which asked candidates to write their own metamorphosis and analyse their success, showed particular skill and enthusiasm in their assignments.

Most candidates performed best in AO1 (Knowledge), with most gaining marks in Level 4 or above. Many candidates also scored well on AO2 (Understanding). To reach the higher levels of the mark scheme, candidates needed to demonstrate understanding of the central aspects of their chosen question. This includes understanding of the culture, civilisation and contemporary society being studied, and, where appropriate, an awareness of the limitations of the primary sources.

AO3 (Evaluation and Personal Response) caused the most problems for candidates. This assessment is worth 50% of the final mark, and candidates had obviously been advised to use as many of their own opinions as possible in their assignments. However, these opinions must be supported by evidence of a classical nature and must also be relevant to the title posed in the question to gain credit. Balance, lack of bias, and a willingness to state one's own opinions (not merely repeating those given in secondary sources) are the key to reaching the higher levels here. To succeed, the candidates must go beyond narrative and must fully engage with the sources, their aims and limitations. It was encouraging to see the number of candidates who had immersed themselves in the culture and society they were studying.

A narrative response will always limit a candidate to Level 2 in AO2 and AO3. An attempt to evaluate, analyse or respond to the evidence presented provides the key to higher marks. Repetition of the same material should be avoided if possible, even in a conclusion.

Candidates should use an appropriate form and style of writing in their assignments. Sometimes the sense of the argument is lost when the English is awkward. Due attention should also be paid to presentation. Quality of Written Communication is assessed throughout the assignment in both AO1 and AO3. This includes not only spelling, punctuation and grammar, but the candidate's ability to select and use an appropriate form and style of writing. The first task on each topic should usually be answered as a traditional essay. The second task usually encourages a different approach. It was disappointing to see a number of straightforward essays in response to Task G2 when the task clearly demanded a newspaper article.

Marking

Moderators are pleased to report that most of the centres who entered candidates this year had understood the requirements of the new specification and submitted marks that were, for the most part, within tolerance. Internal standardising appeared to have taken place effectively in most of those centres where the work had been marked by more than one teacher. Annotation and summative comments on assignments and Candidate Record Forms were helpful as they allowed moderators to see exactly why particular marks had been awarded. It is a requirement of the specification that teachers show clearly how the marks have been awarded in relation to the marking criteria.

While marking was generally accurate, a few centres submitted marks which were outside tolerance. Reasons for this included work which was significantly shorter than the 2000 word limit being awarded high level marks where there was insufficient material to justify these marks. Some centres failed to take into account an inappropriate form and style of writing when

marking Task G2; a candidate who ignores the instruction to write a newspaper article and instead writes an essay should not be given a mark at the top of Level 5 in AO3. To reach the top mark, a candidate must fulfil all aspects of the level descriptor, including the final bullet point: 'An appropriate form and style of writing is used.' Conversely, teachers occasionally failed to give adequate credit in AO3 for candidates' own opinions and evaluations where these were not expressed in the first person.

These comments aside, the moderators were very impressed with the work they saw. Teachers should be justifiably proud of their candidates in this, the first year of the new specification.