CAMBRIDGE
International Education

Syllabus

Cambridge International AS & A Level Classical Studies 9274

Use this syllabus for exams in 2028, 2029 and 2030.
Exams are available in the November series.



Version 2

For the purposes of screen readers, any mention in this document of Cambridge IGCSE refers to Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education.

Cambridge Pathway

Why choose Cambridge?

We work with schools worldwide to build an education that shapes knowledge, understanding and skills. Together, we give learners the confidence they need to thrive and make a positive impact in a changing world.

As part of the University of Cambridge, we offer a globally trusted and flexible framework for education from age 3 to 19, informed by research, experience, and listening to educators.

With recognised qualifications, high-quality resources, comprehensive support and valuable insights, we help schools prepare every student for the opportunities and challenges ahead.

Qualifications that are recognised and valued worldwide

From the world's top-ranked universities to local higher education institutions, Cambridge qualifications open doors to a world of opportunities.

Setting a global standard

With over 160 years of experience in delivering fair, valid and reliable assessments to students worldwide, we offer a global, recognised performance standard for international education.

Your path, your way

Schools can adapt our curriculum, high-quality teaching and learning resources and flexible assessments to their local context. Our aligned offer helps Cambridge schools support every learner to reach their potential and thrive.

Learning with lasting impact

Cambridge learners build subject knowledge and conceptual understanding, and develop a broad range of skills, learning habits and attributes to help make them ready for the world.

Improving learning outcomes through data-led insight and action

Our trusted baseline and diagnostic assessments, together with our insights and evaluation service, help schools turn data into knowledge and actionable insights, to inform teaching decisions and improve learner outcomes.

Bringing together a community of experts

We bring together the collective knowledge of experts and our diverse community of educators worldwide, supporting them to learn from one another and share ideas and information.

Tackling the climate crisis together

We believe that education is key to tackling the climate crisis. Together with Cambridge schools, we can empower young people with the skills and knowledge to take action on climate change, helping them be ready for the world.

School feedback: 'We think the Cambridge curriculum is superb preparation for university.'

Feedback from: Christoph Guttentag, Dean of Undergraduate Admissions, Duke University, USA

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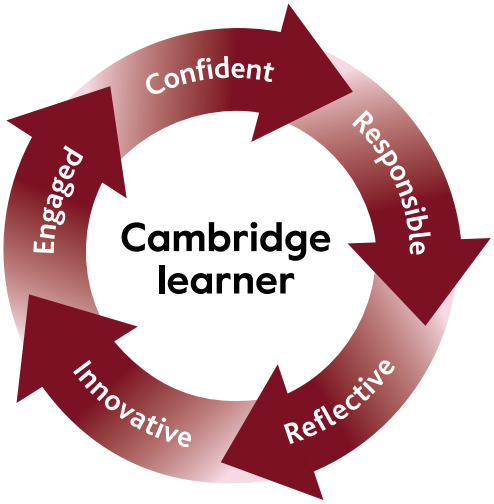
Important: Changes to this syllabus

For information about changes to this syllabus for 2028, 2029 and 2030, go to page 52.

1 Why choose this syllabus?

Key benefits

The best motivation for a student is a real passion for the subject they are learning. Cambridge International AS & A Level give schools flexibility to offer a broad and balanced curriculum with a choice of over 50 subjects. Students can select the subjects they love and that they are best at, enabling them to reach their potential and thrive.



Following a Cambridge International AS & A Level programme helps students develop abilities which universities value highly, including:

- a deep subject knowledge
- conceptual understanding and higher-level thinking skills
- presenting ordered and coherent arguments
- independent learning and research.

Cambridge International AS & A Level Classical Studies develops a set of transferable skills. The multi-disciplinary nature of Classical Studies combines different areas of study such as literature, history of art and history and leads to a greater understanding of the relationship between different intellectual disciplines, encouraging learners to make connections between them.

Our approach in Cambridge International AS & A Level Classical Studies supports the development of learners who are:

confident, exploring, interpreting and evaluating a wide range of Classical source material.

responsible, acquiring knowledge and skills through independent reading and study.

reflective, considering how the Classical world has influenced their own society and reflecting on what they can learn from Classical societies.

innovative, considering new viewpoints and interpretations of texts, historical sources, artefacts and buildings.

engaged, developing their understanding of the Classical world and pursuing different perspectives and ideas.

School feedback: 'Cambridge students develop a deep understanding of subjects and independent thinking skills.'

Feedback from: Principal, Rockledge High School, USA

Key concepts

Key concepts are essential ideas that help students develop a deep understanding of their subject and make links between different aspects. Key concepts may open up new ways of thinking about, understanding or interpreting the important things to be learned.

Good teaching and learning will incorporate and reinforce a subject's key concepts to help students gain:

- a greater depth as well as breadth of subject knowledge
- confidence, especially in applying knowledge and skills in new situations
- the vocabulary to discuss their subject conceptually and show how different aspects link together
- a level of mastery of their subject to help them enter higher education.

Carefully introducing and developing key concepts at the right time will help to underpin the teaching. You may identify additional key concepts which will also enrich teaching and learning.

The key concepts for Cambridge International AS & A Level Classical Studies are:

- **Interpretation**
  Our knowledge of the Classical world is based on interpreting the materials that have been left to us. Students will consider the different ways that a source can be interpreted and how the Classical world has been subsequently reconstructed and presented by historians and classicists.
- **Judgement**
  The study of the Classical world involves forming opinions based on the evidence that is available to us. Students will consider the value of different source material, studying the differing depictions of the same subject matter and learning to make an overall judgement.
- **Significance**
  The importance attached to an event, individual or entity in the past, whether at the time or subsequent to it. Students will study societies, literature and people in the context of their own time and their legacy in today's world.
- **Context**
  Artefacts and literature can only be fully understood by placing them in their social and historical setting and considering the context of the society in which they were produced.
- **Similarity and Difference**
  The similarities and differences between not only different cultures within the Classical world and our own but also between people, events and situations.
- **Intention**
  The study of the Classical world involves a wide range of material. Considering the reasons behind its creation is crucial to understanding the significance and potential bias inherent in the evidence.

Qualifications that are recognised and valued worldwide

Cambridge qualifications prepare and equip learners with the skills they need to thrive at university and beyond. The world's best higher education institutions recognise our qualifications and value the critical thinking skills, independent research abilities and deep subject knowledge that Cambridge learners bring.

We continually work with universities and colleges in every part of the world to ensure that they understand and accept our qualifications. More than 2500 universities in over 90 countries formally recognise Cambridge qualifications, with many more accepting our qualifications on application.

UK ENIC, the national agency in the UK for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills, has carried out an independent benchmarking study of Cambridge International AS & A Level and found it to be comparable to the standard of AS & A Level in the UK. This means students can be confident that their Cambridge International AS & A Level qualifications are accepted as equivalent, grade for grade, to UK AS & A Levels by leading universities worldwide.

A choice of assessment routes

Cambridge International AS & A Level offers a choice of assessment routes with staged assessment available in many subjects: Cambridge International AS Level can be offered as a standalone qualification or as part of a progression to Cambridge International A Level.

Cambridge International AS Level Classical Studies makes up the first half of the Cambridge International A Level course in Classical Studies and provides a foundation for the study of Classical Studies at Cambridge International A Level. The AS Level can also be delivered as a standalone qualification. Depending on local university entrance requirements, students may be able to use it to progress directly to university courses in Classical Studies or some other subjects. It is also suitable as part of a course of general education.

Cambridge International A Level Classical Studies provides a foundation for the study of Classical Studies or related courses in higher education. Equally it is suitable as part of a course of general education.

For more information about the relationship between the Cambridge International AS Level and Cambridge International A Level see the 'Assessment overview' section of the Syllabus overview.

Visit **www.cambridgeinternational.org/recognition-search** and university websites for the most up-to-date higher education entry requirements.

Learn more: **www.cambridgeinternational.org/recognition**

Supporting teachers

We believe education works best when teaching and learning are closely aligned to the curriculum, resources and assessment. Our high-quality teaching support helps to maximise teaching time and enables teachers to engage learners of all backgrounds and abilities.

We aim to provide the following support for each Cambridge qualification:

- Syllabus
- Specimen question papers and mark schemes
- Specimen paper answers
- Schemes of Work
- Example candidate responses
- Past papers and mark schemes
- Principal examiner reports for teachers

These resources are available on the School Support Hub at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/support**, our secure online site for Cambridge teachers. Your exams officer can provide you with a login.

Additional teaching & learning resources are also available for many syllabuses and vary according to the nature of the subject and the structure of the assessment of each syllabus. These can include ready-built lesson materials, digital resources and multimedia for the classroom and homework, guidance on assessment and much more. Beyond the resources available on the Schools Support Hub, a wide range of endorsed textbooks and associated teaching and learning support are available from Cambridge at **www.cambridge.org/education** and from other publishers. Resources vary according to the nature of the subject and the structure of the assessment of each syllabus.

You can also contact our global Cambridge community or talk to a senior examiner on our discussion forums.

Sign up for email notifications about changes to syllabuses, including new and revised products and services, at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/syllabusupdates**

Professional development

Find the next step on your professional development journey:

- **Introduction courses** – An introduction to Cambridge programmes and qualifications. For teachers who are new to Cambridge programmes or new to a specific syllabus.
- **Focus on Teaching courses** – These are for teachers who want to explore a specific area of teaching and learning within a syllabus or programme.
- **Focus on Assessment courses** – These are for teachers who want to understand the assessment of a syllabus in greater depth.
- **Marking workshops** – These workshops help you become more familiar with what examiners are looking for, and provide an opportunity to raise questions and share your experiences of the syllabus.
- **Enrichment Professional Development** – Transform your approach to teaching with our Enrichment workshops. Each workshop focuses on a specific area of teaching and learning practice.
- **Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications (PDQs)** – Practice-based programmes that transform professional learning for practicing teachers. Available at Certificate and Diploma level.

For more information visit **www.cambridgeinternational.org/support-and-training-for-schools**

Supporting exams officers

We provide comprehensive support and guidance for all Cambridge exams officers.
Find out more at: **www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide**

2 Syllabus overview

Aims

The aims describe the purposes of a course based on this syllabus.

Students following a course based on this syllabus will:

- develop an understanding of Greek and Roman civilisation, and an appreciation of the Classical world
- acquire an understanding of the core foundations of Western traditions of architecture, art, history, literature, and political thought – traditions which have had major influences on the shape of the modern world
- develop their awareness of diversity in civilisations by understanding cultures, values and assumptions, which are different from contemporary views
- develop a personal response to a range of material from the Greek and Roman world.



We are an education organisation and politically neutral. The contents of this syllabus, examination papers and associated materials do not endorse any political view. We endeavour to treat all aspects of the exam process neutrally.

Content overview

In this syllabus, Classical Studies is defined as the study of the civilisations of Greece and Rome in the Classical period. All sources are studied in English and no knowledge of Classical Greek or Latin is required.

Paper 1 – Greek Civilisation

Candidates study **one** topic from:

- Alexander the Great
- Aristophanes
- Themes in Greek Vase Painting

Paper 2 – Roman Civilisation

Candidates study **one** topic from:

- Augustus
- Virgil's *Aeneid*
- Architecture of the Roman City

Paper 3 – Classical History

Candidates study **one** topic from:

- Athens and Sparta
- Emperors and Subjects: Claudius, Nero, Domitian and Trajan

Paper 4 – Greek Literature

Candidates study **one** topic from:

- Greek Tragedy
- Homeric Epic

School feedback: 'Cambridge International AS & A Levels prepare students well for university because they've learnt to go into a subject in considerable depth. There's that ability to really understand the depth and richness and the detail of a subject. It's a wonderful preparation for what they are going to face at university.'

Feedback from: US Higher Education Advisory Council

Assessment overview

AS Level candidates take two compulsory papers, Paper 1 and Paper 2. A Level candidates take four compulsory papers, Papers 1, 2, 3 and 4.

All AS Level candidates take:

Paper 1

Greek Civilisation 1 hour 30 minutes
50 marks

Structured question and essay questions.

Candidates answer questions on **one** topic from a choice of Alexander the Great, Aristophanes or Themes in Greek Vase Painting.

Candidates answer **two** questions, one compulsory source-based question and one essay question on their chosen topic.

Externally assessed

50% of the AS Level

25% of the A Level

And:

Paper 2

Roman Civilisation 1 hour 30 minutes
50 marks

Structured question and essay questions.

Candidates answer questions on **one** topic from a choice of Augustus, Virgil's *Aeneid* or Architecture of the Roman City.

Candidates answer **two** questions, one compulsory source-based question and one essay question on their chosen topic.

Externally assessed

50% of the AS Level

25% of the A Level

A Level candidates also take:

Paper 3

Classical History 1 hour 30 minutes
50 marks

Source-based question and essay questions.

Candidates answer questions on **either** Athens and Sparta **or** Emperors and Subjects.

Candidates answer **two** questions, one compulsory source-based question and one essay question on their chosen topic.

Externally assessed

25% of the A Level

And:

Paper 4

Greek Literature 1 hour 30 minutes
50 marks

Source-based question and essay questions.

Candidates answer questions on **either** Greek Tragedy **or** Homeric Epic.

Candidates answer **two** questions, one compulsory source-based question and one essay question on their chosen topic.

Externally assessed

25% of the A Level

Information on availability is in the **Before you start** section.

There are two or more routes for Cambridge International AS & A Level Classical Studies:

	Route	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3	Paper 4
1	**AS Level only** (Candidates take all AS components in the same exam series)	yes	yes	no	no
2	**A Level** (staged over two years) Year 1 AS Level*	yes	yes	no	no
	Year 2 Complete the A Level			yes	yes
3	**A Level** (Candidates take all components in the same exam series)	yes	yes	yes	yes

* Candidates carry forward their AS Level marks subject to the rules and time limits described in the *Cambridge Handbook*. See **Making entries** for more information about carrying forward marks.

Candidates following an AS Level route are eligible for grades a–e. Candidates following an A Level route are eligible for grades A*–E.

Assessment objectives

The assessment objectives (AOs) are:

AO1 Knowledge and understanding

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of literary, cultural, material or historical sources in their appropriate contexts.

AO2 Analysis and evaluation

Analyse, evaluate and respond to literary, cultural, material or historical sources to produce coherent and reasoned arguments.

Weighting for assessment objectives

The approximate weightings allocated to each of the assessment objectives (AOs) are summarised below.

Assessment objectives as a percentage of the qualification

Assessment objective	Weighting in AS Level %	Weighting in A Level %
AO1 Knowledge and understanding	50	45
AO2 Analysis and evaluation	50	55
Total	100	100

Assessment objectives as a percentage of each component

Assessment objective	Weighting in components %			
	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3	Paper 4
AO1 Knowledge and understanding	50	50	40	40
AO2 Analysis and evaluation	50	50	60	60
Total	100	100	100	100

3 Subject content

Classical Studies involves the study of the civilisations of Greece and Rome in the Classical period. The topics allow candidates to survey the culture, literature, history and politics of the Classical period as well as studying significant individuals.

This syllabus gives you the flexibility to design a course that will interest, challenge and engage your learners. Where appropriate you are responsible for selecting resources and examples, topics and subject contexts to support your learners' study. These should be appropriate for the learners' age, cultural background and learning context as well as complying with your school policies and local legal requirements.

All sources are studied in English and no knowledge of Classical Greek or Latin is necessary.

Sources for study

No specific edition or translation of a literary source is set because some editions may not be accessible in all parts of the world. Centres may use any complete translation in their teaching.

For the literary topics (Aristophanes in Paper 1 and Virgil's *Aeneid* in Paper 2, Greek Tragedy and Homeric Epic in Paper 4) where questions relating to specific lines of a literary source may be used, the syllabus indicates which translation/edition will be used on question papers.

Paper 1 – Greek Civilisation

Paper 1 Greek Civilisation allows students to explore the history, literature or material culture of the Classical Greek world.

These different topics allow teachers flexibility in designing a course that meets the needs and interests of their students.

Candidates choose **one** topic from:

Either

Topic A – Alexander the Great

or

Topic B – Aristophanes

or

Topic C – Themes in Greek Vase Painting

Topic A – Alexander the Great

This topic focuses on the life and career of Alexander the Great as seen through the eyes of his biographers.

Candidates will be expected to have a knowledge of the main events of his life, success and relationships, with a focus on his impact and his legacy.

This topic will develop candidates' historical analysis skills, requiring them to offer critical evaluation of the life of Alexander the Great and the character, career and success of Alexander in context.

Candidates will study a selection of biographical works and other sources on Alexander the Great with particular reference to his:

- family, childhood and upbringing
- campaigns and travels
- military achievements and the reasons for them
- rule of his empire and Persian influences on Alexander
- relationships with others
- attitude towards religion and mythology
- personal and imperial legacy.

Content

Candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

Alexander's family, childhood and upbringing

- his relationship with, and the influence of, his mother and father
- the effect on Alexander of the relationship between his parents
- the influence of his teachers, especially Aristotle
- his ambitions and attitudes as a young man, as shown by the taming of Bucephalus
- the assassination of his father.

The purpose of Alexander's campaigns and travels

- the attack on Persia
- his travels to Egypt, especially Siwah
- the march east beyond the Persian Empire
- the crossing of the Gedrosian desert
- his desire to push further east
- his return to Babylon after the Indian campaign.

The reality of Alexander's military achievements and the reasons for them

- the military achievement of being victorious in every battle
- the battles of Granicus, Issus, Gaugamela, Hydaspes
- the sieges of Tyre, Gaza, the Sogdian Rock and Aornus
- the significance of his strategic and tactical skill
- the role of his personal bravery and leadership
- the role of others in his military achievements
- his army.

Alexander's rule of his empire and Persian influences on Alexander

- administration of Macedonia – Antipater as regent
- the League of Corinth
- keeping the structure and administrators of the Persian Empire
- respecting local customs in areas he conquered
- adoption of Persian dress and customs
- his Policy of Fusion
- the intermarriage of Macedonians and Persians, including his own marriages
- the effect of these policies on his men.

Alexander's relationships with others

Alexander's relationship with and treatment of:

- Friends:
  - his lifelong friendship with Hephaestion
  - his reliance on his friends, such as Ptolemy and Seleucus
  - the murder of Cleitus
  - the executions of Callisthenes, Philotas and Parmenio
- His men:
  - the change in his relationship with his men from 'first among equals' to Persian style monarchy
  - opposition to his policies
- Enemies:
  - respect for enemies such as Darius III and Porus
  - harsh treatment of opponents such as Thebes and Tyre.

Alexander's attitude towards religion and mythology and his personal reputation

- his belief in his own divinity
- the use of oracles and omens
- his supposed descent from Heracles, Perseus and Achilles
- his attempts to outdo heroes of the past
- *pothos* events
- his portrayal on coins
- his use of Lysippos as 'court sculptor'.

Alexander's personal and imperial legacy

- the reasons for the title 'the Great'
- the legacy of his military successes
- his influence on later leaders
- his portrayal in art, such as his sarcophagus and the House of the Faun mosaic
- the collapse of his empire
- the establishment of the Hellenistic kingdoms
- the spread of Greek culture throughout the Eastern Mediterranean.

Sources for study:

Literary sources

Arrian *The Campaigns of Alexander* Books 1, 2, 5

Plutarch *Life of Alexander*

Teachers are free to use any complete translation of the literary sources. The literary sources are available in Penguin Classics editions and may also be found in several paperback collections.

Visual and material sources

Images of Alexander

- mosaic from the House of the Faun, Pompeii (Museo Archeologico Nazionali, Naples)
- the Alexander sarcophagus (Archaeology Museums, Istanbul)
- Marble copy of head of Alexander from a statue by Lysippos

Images of Alexander on coins

- silver decadrachm of Alexander c.324 BCE
- silver Porus Medallion showing Alexander on Bucephalus attacking Porus on an elephant/Alexander holding a thunderbolt and a spear (British Museum)

Candidates will be expected to understand the nature of the visual and material sources, and the problems in their use as evidence.

Topic B – Aristophanes

The plays of Aristophanes are the best known and most complete examples of comic drama from the Classical world. This topic provides students with the opportunity to study some examples of 'Old Comedy' from fifth century BCE Athens. They will explore the idea of humour and what an ancient Athenian audience found humorous but also consider the socio-political attitudes and values of fifth century Athens through the distorting lens of comedy.

Candidates will be expected to have an outline knowledge of the socio-political context of the plays and the place of comic drama within the framework of the state-sponsored festivals in Athens. Detailed historical knowledge of Athens in the fifth century BCE will **not** be required. An outline knowledge of the main events of the Peloponnesian War in relation to the plays should be understood.

This topic will develop candidates' literary analysis and appreciation skills, requiring them to offer critical analysis of, and personal response to, the plays. This will include the religious, cultural and social values portrayed in the plays, the use of different comic techniques and the historical and political context of when they were written and performed.

Candidates study three plays by Aristophanes in their entirety:

- *Lysistrata*
- *Acharnians*
- *Frogs*

Content

Candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

The nature of comedy

- the plot and structure of the plays
- actors and the way they are used in 'Old Comedy'
- the use and role of the Chorus including the parabasis (choral ode addressed to the audience)
- the use of masks and costume
- the conventions for performance and staging including:
  - the use of the theatrical space
  - props and effects
- the social and political context of the plays.

The experience of watching comedy

- social, moral and political messages of the plays
- possible interpretations of themes and messages by ancient and modern audiences
- possible reactions to comic techniques by ancient and modern audiences.

Comic techniques

- Types and sources of humour, including:
  - characterisation
  - disguise
  - fantasy
  - language and imagery
  - mistaken identity
  - parody
  - physical humour
  - political and social references
  - role reversal
  - satire
  - scatological humour
  - sexual innuendo
  - visual humour.
- Themes including:
  - slaves and masters
  - men and women
  - escapism and reality
  - moral purpose
  - nature of Greek tragedy: Aeschylus and Euripides
  - government – key institutions and politicians as referred to in the plays
  - individual and the state
  - justice and fairness
  - love and hate
  - war and peace.

Sources for study:

Aristophanes *Lysistrata*
Aristophanes *Acharnians*
Aristophanes *Frogs*

Each of the plays should be read in its entirety.

Teachers are free to use any complete translation of the plays. Where a passage is printed on a question paper it will be from the following translations/editions:

Aristophanes, *Lysistrata and Other Plays*, trans. Sommerstein, A, 2003, Penguin

Aristophanes, *Frogs and Other Plays*: trans. Barrett, D, rev. Dutta, S, 2007, Penguin

Extracts printed on the question papers will continue to be taken from these editions even if they go out of print, as centres may use any complete translation.

Topic C – Themes in Greek Vase Painting

The principal focus of this topic is on the art of Greek vase painting and how artists in the sixth and fifth centuries BCE developed new styles in composition, design and techniques to innovate and achieve the visual effect. Through the study of Greek vases students will also engage with the historical, religious and social aspects of the Greek world depicted on Greek vases.

Candidates will study a selection of Greek vases from two themes:

- Mythology – Trojan War
- Everyday life – the daily life of women.

This topic will develop candidates' visual and analytical skills, requiring them to offer critical analysis and personal response to the artistic achievements of the Greek vase painters.

Candidates should be able to:

- demonstrate skills in the assessment of visual materials
- express their personal response
- refer to specific vases
- critically evaluate the effect of the composition and techniques used
- explain and substantiate the arguments in their response.

Simple sketch diagrams/drawings may be included in answers to support analysis/evaluation, but will **not** be required.

Content

Candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

Function

- shapes of pots
- uses of pots.

Materials

- clay
- added colour and slip.

Techniques

- black-figure technique:
  - use of added colour
  - incision
- red-figure technique:
  - use of different sized brushes
  - use of diluted slip.

Stylistic features and development

- added white paint for female flesh
- frontal eye in profile head
- long fingers and feet
- decorative motifs
- drapery
- bi-lingual pots
- use of black-figure decorative motifs
- profile eye
- Miniaturist style
- Grand style
- Pioneer and Mannerist movements.

Composition

- dominant verticals, horizontals and diagonals
- pose – profile, frontal, ¾ view
- portrayal of anatomy
- foreshortening and torsion
- movement
- emotion.

Themes

- **Mythology** – Trojan War
- **Everyday Life** – the daily life of women.

Sources for study:

Trojan War	The daily life of women
Sophilos – wedding of Peleus and Thetis *dinos* [British Museum]	**Amasis Painter – wedding procession** *ovoid lekythos* [Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York]
Kleitias – François Vase *volute krater* [National Archaeological Museum, Florence]	**Marlay Painter** *Red-figure pyxis* [British Museum CR 1920]
Painter of the Tyrrhenian Group – Neoptolemus kills Polyxena *amphora* [British Museum]	**Eretria Painter** *Epinetron c.430–420 BCE* [National Archaeological Museum, Athens 1629]
Exekias – Achilles and Ajax *belly amphora* [Vatican Museum]	**Antimenes Painter c520 – women collecting water** *hydria* [British Museum]
Exekias – Achilles and Penthesilea *neck amphora* [British Museum]	**Edinburgh Painter – shower house** *neck amphora* [once Berlin]
Judgement of Paris *amphora* [British Museum]	**Brygos Painter – symposiast and dancing girl** *kylix* [British Museum]
Death of Priam and Astyanax, attributed to Group E/Persephone Painter *belly amphora* [British Museum]	**Brygos Painter – young man being sick** *kylix* [Martin von Wagner Museum]
Achilles carrying the body of Penthesilea *hydria* [British Museum] **Penthesilea Painter** *kylix* [Staatliche Antikensammlungen in Munich]	*Red-figure oinochoe* [Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York]
Lysippides Painter & Andokides Painter – Achilles and Ajax playing dice *bi-lingual belly amphora* [Museum of Fine Arts, Boston]	*Red-figure hydria* [British Museum E219]
Euphronios – death of Sarpedon *Calyx krater* [Museum of Cerveteri]	**Kleophrades Painter** *loutrophoros* [Louvre, Paris]

continued

Sources for study continued**:**

Trojan War continued	**The daily life of women (continued)**
Sosias Painter – Achilles bandages the wounded Patroklos *kylix* [Antikensammlung Berlin]	**Eretria Painter c.430 BCE** *Red-figure amphoriskos* [Ashmolean Museum, Oxford G303]
Berlin Painter – Achilles and Hector/ Memnon *volute krater* [British Museum]	**Amasis Painter – women weaving** *ovoid lekythos* [Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York]
Kleophrades Painter – fall of Troy *hydria* [National Archaeological Museum, Naples]	**B598 – women wool-working** *epinetron* [British Museum]
Troilos Painter – Troilos and Polyxena *hydria* [British Museum]	**Douris kylix – woman roving** *kylix* [Altes Museum, Berlin]
Euthymides – Hector arming *belly amphora* [Staatliche Antikensammlungen in Munich]	**Brygos Painter – woman spinning** *jug* [British Museum]
Niobid Painter – death of Achilles *pelike* [Kunstsammlungen, Ruhr-Universität Bochum]	**Leningrad Painter – woman painting in workshop** *hydria (kalpis):* [Torno collection, Milan]

Paper 2 – Roman Civilisation

Paper 2 Roman Civilisation allows students to explore the history, literature or material culture of the Roman world.

These different topics allow teachers flexibility in designing a course that meets the needs and interests of their students.

Candidates choose **one** topic from:

Either

Topic A – Augustus

or

Topic B – Virgil's *Aeneid*

or

Topic C – Architecture of the Roman City

Topic A – Augustus

This topic focuses on the life and career of Augustus as seen through sources. Octavian, later known as the Emperor Augustus, oversaw a fundamental change in the politics of Rome from a staunchly anti-monarchical republic to a system of one-man rule through careful adoption of official titles and duties and management of his image and public opinion.

Candidates will be expected to have a knowledge of the main events of his life, career and relationships with a focus on his impact and his legacy.

This topic will develop candidates' historical analysis skills, requiring them to offer critical evaluation of the life of Augustus and the character, career and legacy of Augustus in context.

Candidates will study a selection of biographical works and other sources on Augustus with particular reference to his:

- rise to power
- consolidation of power
- relationships with the Senate, including provincial administration
- foreign and frontier policy
- attitude towards religion and his use of religious imagery
- social legislation
- dealings with his family and his desire for a successor
- concern for his reputation and use of propaganda
- legacy and importance.

Content

Candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

Augustus' rise to power

- his connection with Julius Caesar
- his relationships with, and use of, other people, such as Mark Antony and Cicero
- the legality of his actions in seizing power
- the Second Triumvirate
- his military campaigns (44–31 BCE).

Augustus' consolidation of power

- his legal and constitutional position after Actium
- the reasons for the settlements of 27 and 23 BCE
- the details of the settlements of 27 and 23 BCE
- the power given by *maius imperium proconsulare* and *tribunicia potestas*
- the role of his personal *auctoritas*
- his legal and constitutional position after 23 BCE
- opposition to his rule, including assassination attempts.

Augustus' relationships with the Senate, including provincial administration

- the relative powers of Augustus and the Senate
- roles given to Senators and *Equites*
- the distinction between Imperial and Senatorial provinces
- the appointment of governors of Imperial provinces, especially Egypt
- administration of provinces and the collection of taxes.

Augustus' foreign and frontier policy

- consolidation of the frontiers
- annexation of territory up to the Danube
- attempts to advance the German frontier to the Elbe
- the Varian disaster and its consequences
- dealings with Parthia, especially the restoration of the standards lost by Crassus.

Augustus' attitude towards religion and his use of religious imagery

- his personal religious beliefs
- the restoration of traditional practices, such as the Lupercal feast and the Dance of the *Salii*
- the restoration of damaged temples
- the building of new temples
- the holding of the Secular Games
- his role as *Pontifex Maximus* and assumption of other priesthoods
- religious imagery of Augustus in literature and sculpture
- the cult of Rome and Augustus in the Eastern Empire.

Augustus' social legislation

- laws against adultery
- laws on marriage
- laws rewarding mothers of three children
- the relative ineffectiveness of the laws
- his role as *Censor*.

Augustus' dealings with his family and his desire for a successor

- his use of his sister Octavia in his dealings with Mark Antony
- his marriage to Livia and the Claudian connection this gave him
- his portrayal of his family in a traditional Roman way
- the use of his daughter Julia in dynastic marriages
- Tiberius and Drusus as generals on the German frontier
- his reasons for wanting a member of his family to succeed him
- his methods of introducing potential successors to the people of Rome and the Empire
- the loss of his potential successors
- his relationship with Tiberius.

Augustus' concern for his reputation and his use of propaganda

- his portrayal of himself as a traditional Roman
- his claim to have no more power than anyone else
- his acceptance of certain titles and honours and rejection of others
- his association with Aeneas and Romulus
- the publishing of the *Res Gestae* and their dissemination across the Empire
- his portrayal in sculpture
- his portrayal, and the portrayal of his family, in poetry
- his portrayal, and the portrayal of his family, on coins
- the rebuilding of Rome and the construction of new buildings
- the closing of the Gates of War in the Temple of Janus.

Augustus' legacy and importance

- his transformation of the Republic into an Empire
- the continuation of Rome as an Empire
- his handing over of power to Tiberius
- stability within the frontiers (*Pax Romana*)
- recognition as the first Roman emperor and as a role model for later emperors
- the lasting effect of his rebuilding of Rome.

Sources for study:

Literary sources

Res Gestae Divi Augusti

Suetonius	*The Twelve Caesars – Divine Augustus*
Tacitus	*Annals* 1. 1–10
Horace	*Odes* 4.15
Ovid	*Metamorphoses* Book 15.812–879
Virgil	*Aeneid* Book 1.257–296, Book 6.756–892 and Book 8.608–731

Teachers are free to use any complete translation of the literary sources. All the literary sources are available in Penguin Classics editions and in LACTOR 17 (Age of Augustus).

Visual and material sources

- Prima Porta statue of Augustus
- *Ara Pacis Augustae*
- The Theatre of Marcellus
- Mausoleum of Augustus
- Golden Aureus showing the bare head of Octavian / head of Julius Caesar wearing a laurel wreath (British Museum)
- Silver Denarius showing the bare head of Octavian / the goddess Pax holding a laurel wreath and a cornucopia (British Museum).

Candidates will be expected to understand the nature of the visual and material sources, and the problems in their use as evidence.

Topic B – Virgil's *Aeneid*

Virgil's *Aeneid* had a pivotal place in the canon of Roman literature. This topic provides students with the opportunity to consider both the inspiration Virgil drew from Homer and the influence of Virgil's own cultural and political context on his portrayal of what it was to be a hero in the Roman world.

This topic will develop candidates' literary analysis and appreciation skills, requiring them to offer critical analysis and personal response to the literary achievements of Virgil. This will include the religious, cultural and social values portrayed in the text and the historical and political context of when it was written.

Candidates will study a selection of Books from Virgil's *Aeneid*:

Aeneid: Books 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 12

Content

Candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

Literary techniques

- structure and plot of the epic
- language of the epic including narrative and descriptive techniques and their effects
- characterisation of Aeneas
- characterisation and importance of:
  - Dido
  - Turnus
  - secondary characters such as Anchises, Pallas, Evander.

Social, cultural and religious context

- portrayal and role of women
- role and importance of family
- moral values including *pietas*
- the changing concept of heroism
- attitudes to warfare including *furor* and pathos
- role and importance of gods and goddesses
- relationship between mortals and immortals
- role and importance of fate and destiny.

Historical and political background

- Augustan context in which the *Aeneid* was composed
- theme of Rome's mission and Aeneas' role within this
- extent to which Augustus, his regime and the Roman Empire are promoted within the epic.

Sources for study:

Virgil *Aeneid*: Books 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 12

Candidates are expected to know what happens in the whole epic as wider reading.

Teachers are free to use any complete translation of the *Aeneid*. Where a passage is printed on a question paper it will be from Virgil, *Aeneid*, trans. West, D, 2003, Penguin.

Extracts printed on the question papers will continue to be taken from this edition even if it goes out of print, as centres may use any complete translation.

Topic C – Architecture of the Roman City

The principal focus of this topic is on the architecture, types and functions of buildings in the Roman city and architectural decoration with reference to continuities, developments and changes. Through the study of specific building types and examples of these from several Roman cities, students will also engage with the historical, political, religious, cultural and social aspects of the Roman city.

Candidates will study a selection of the key public and private buildings from:

- Rome
- Ostia
- Pompeii
- Herculaneum.

Individual buildings/structures from other Roman cities are listed in the Sources for study.

This topic will develop candidates' visual and analytical skills, requiring them to offer critical analysis and personal response to both the functional and aesthetic aspects of buildings/structures.

Candidates should be able to:

- demonstrate skills in the assessment of visual materials
- express their personal response
- refer to specific buildings/structures
- critically evaluate both the functional and aesthetic aspects of buildings/structures
- explain and substantiate the arguments in their response.

Simple sketch diagrams/drawings may be included in answers to support analysis/evaluation, but will **not** be required.

Content

Candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

Function

- functions of the different types of buildings/structures in their context
- relationship between buildings/structures and their environment
- relationship between buildings/structures and form and function
- relationship between buildings/structures and their sculptural decoration (if any)
- uses of buildings/structures and their sculptural decoration for religious, social, cultural, political/ propaganda purposes and aesthetic values.

Materials

- effects of different types of materials
  - stone
  - brick
  - marble
  - concrete
  - wood.

Techniques

- origin and development of Roman architectural principles and techniques
- change and innovation
- post and lintel
- arch
- vault
- dome.

Benefactors

- importance of benefactors
- purpose of benefaction
- different types of benefaction
- evidence for prominent individuals.

Sources for study:	
Amphitheatres	• Colosseum, Rome • Amphitheatre, Pompeii
Aqueducts	• Aqua Claudia, Rome • Pont du Gard, Nîmes
Fora and public buildings	• Trajan's Forum and Trajan's Market, Rome • Basilica of Constantine and Maxentius, Rome • Piazza of the Corporations, Ostia • Great Warehouse, Ostia • Firefighters' Barracks, Ostia • Forum and Eumachia Building, Pompeii
Houses	• Insula/House of Diana, Ostia • Garden Houses, Ostia • House of Menander, Pompeii • House of Octavius Quartio, Pompeii • House of Sallust, Pompeii • House of Julia Felix, Pompeii • House of the Wooden Partition, Herculaneum • House of Stags, Herculaneum • Samnite House, Herculaneum
Public baths	• The baths of Caracalla, Rome • Baths of Mithras, including Mithraeum, Ostia • Stabian baths, Pompeii • Suburban baths, Herculaneum
Temples	• Pantheon, Rome • Temple of Ceres, Ostia • Mithraeum, Ostia • Temple of Jupiter, Pompeii • Temple of Isis, Pompeii • Maison Carrée, Nîmes • Temple of Bacchus, Baalbek
Theatres	• Theatre of Marcellus, Rome • Large theatre, Pompeii
Triumphal arches	• Arch of Titus, Rome • Arch of Constantine, Rome

Paper 3 – Classical History

Paper 3 Classical History allows students to explore the history of either the Greek or the Roman world in more detail.

These topics develop students' knowledge and interest in the military, political, social and cultural history of the Classical world. They will study a range of original source material in its context to consider the significance and impact of events, individuals, culture and the differences and similarities between societies in either the fifth century BCE in Greece or the first and early second century CE in the Roman world.

Candidates choose **one** topic.

Either

Topic A – Athens and Sparta

or

Topic B – Emperors and Subjects: Claudius, Nero, Domitian and Trajan

The assessment will require candidates to respond to a short passage or passages from one of the set sources and answer a broader more thematic essay question. See section 4 Details of the assessment for more detail.

Topic A – Athens and Sparta

This topic focuses on the history of the fifth century BCE as seen through the eyes of authors of the period and later. Candidates will be expected to have a knowledge of the main events of the period (499–404 BCE), but details of specific battles will **not** be required.

This topic will develop candidates' historical analysis skills, requiring them to offer critical evaluation of the impact of the historical events in this period on the people of Athens and Sparta and the contribution of people of different status living in these communities.

Candidates will study a selection of historical, biographical and other sources on Athens and Sparta with particular reference to:

- the roles of men, women and non-citizens in Athens and Sparta
- political systems, functions of different groups within these systems and the influence of individuals on events
- the reasons for, impacts and outcomes of the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars
- alliances with other states
- relationships between the state and outsiders.

Content

Candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

Men and women in Athens

- the status and roles of citizen men in Athens
- the status and roles of women in Athens
- the status and roles of non-citizens in Athens: metics and slaves.

Men and women in Sparta

- the status and roles of citizen men (Spartiates) in Sparta
- the status and roles of women in Sparta
- the status and roles of non-citizens in Sparta: perioikoi and helots.

Political systems

- Athens:
  - the functions of *ecclesia* (assembly), *boulé* (council), *archons* (magistrates) and *strategoi* (generals) in the law making and decision making processes
  - the influence of individuals in the Athenian political system: Themistocles, Cimon, Ephialtes, Pericles, Cleon, Nicias, Alcibiades and Theramenes
  - ostracism.
- Sparta:
  - the functions of the kings, *gerousia*, ephors and assembly in the law making and decision making processes
  - the influence of individuals in the Spartan political system: Leonidas, Pausanias, Hetoimaridas, Sthenelaidas, Archidamus, Brasidas, Gylippus, Lysander.

The impact of war

- The Persian Wars:
  - the reasons for the outbreak of the Persian Wars
  - participation of Athens and Sparta in the Persian Wars as leading states in the Hellenic League
  - the consequences of the Greek victory for Athens and Sparta.
- The Peloponnesian War:
  - the reasons for the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War
  - the impact of the plague in Athens
  - the Pylos debate and the consequences of the campaign
  - Brasidas in Thrace
  - the aftermath of the Sicilian Expedition
  - the reasons for Athens' defeat.

Alliances

- Athens and the Delian League:
  - the formation of the Delian League
  - the changing relationship between Athens and the members of the Delian League
  - the growth of Athenian imperialism
  - the changing importance of the Delian League to Athens.
- Sparta and the Peloponnesian League:
  - the changing relationship between Sparta and members of the Peloponnesian League
  - the changing importance of the Peloponnesian League to Sparta.

The relationship between the state and outsiders

- Athens' view of Sparta
- Sparta's view of Athens.

Sources for study:

Literary sources

Aristophanes	*Acharnians* 510–545 *Knights* 147–395 *Lysistrata* 78–84, 1241–1321 *Peace* 267–295, 619–622, 639–648 *Women at the Thesmophoria* 786–800, 830–842 *Wasps* 891–1008
Aristotle	*The Athenian Constitution* 21–28
Diodorus	*Library of History* 11.46–47, 50, 63
Herodotus	*The Histories* 5.49–51, 75 6.56–60, 102–117, 121–124 7.3, 102, 104, 131–133, 138–139, 141–144, 151, 175, 206–207, 225.3, 228.2 8.2–3, 49–50, 56–63, 74 9.6–8, 10, 17–18, 28, 35, 106
The Old Oligarch	Pseudo-Xenophon's *Constitution of the Athenians*
Plutarch	*Alcibiades* 10, 16, 19, 20, 23–24, 34 *Aristides* 7.4–5, 23 *Cimon* 11–13, 16 *Lysander* 2–11, 14.4–5, 17 *Nicias* 3, 9, 11 *Pericles* 4–6, 12–14, 16, 23.1–2, 28.1–3, 30–32, 36–37 *Sayings of the Spartans*, *Agis* 2–6; *Gorgo* 6; *Argileonis* 1

Thucydides	*History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.1, 6.5, 10, 18–19, 21, 23, 35, 40–41, 44, 55–56, 60–61, 66–71, 74–119, 121–122, 128–135, 139–144 2.8, 9.2, 11, 13, 25, 34–46, 63, 65, 85, 91–94 3.17, 36–50, 79 4.3, 8–23, 26–41, 50, 80–81, 88.1, 108, 117–119 5.10–19, 23, 25–26, 34, 43–46, 49–50, 56–7, 63–74, 76–79 6.8, 15, 24, 31, 82–104 7.1–18, 21–28, 31–87 8.2–3, 5–6, 9, 17–18, 29, 37, 45, 52, 58, 87
Xenophon	*Constitution of the Spartans* *Hellenica* 1.4.1–7, 10–20, 5.1–3, 6.6–11 2.1.6–14, 20–32, 2.2.13, 19–20, 2.3.9–10, 13 5.3.9

Teachers are free to use any complete translation of the literary sources. Where a passage is printed on a question paper it will be from the Penguin Classics edition or from the relevant volume of LACTOR, either LACTOR 1, LACTOR 2, LACTOR 12 or LACTOR 21.

Visual and material sources

ML52 Chalcis Decree (LACTOR 1, 78)

ML27 The Serpent Column (LACTOR 21, B5)

ML68 Cleonymus Decree (LACTOR 1, 136)

ML69 Thoudippus Decree (LACTOR 1, 138)

ML74 Nike of Paionios inscription (LACTOR 21, B14a)

Candidates will be expected to understand the nature of the visual and material sources, and the problems in their use as evidence.

Topic B – Emperors and Subjects: Claudius, Nero, Domitian and Trajan

This topic focuses on the development of the principate during the first and early second centuries CE in the broad historical context of unfolding events and issues. This topic involves the study of the emperors and the actions which impacted on the lives of the citizens of Rome and the wider Empire. The focus is the relationship between ruler and subjects and the response of citizens and non-citizens to the rule of the four specified emperors.

This topic will develop candidates' historical analysis skills, requiring them to offer critical evaluation of the relationships between emperors and their subjects, including the interplay between political, social, religious and economic factors.

Candidates will study a selection of historical, biographical and other sources on the four specified emperors, both in Rome and in the provinces with particular reference to:

- the power and position of the emperor
- the emperors' relationships with the people of Rome
- the social structure of Roman society
- the emperors' relationships with the people in the provinces.

Content

Candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

The power and position of the emperor

- The development of Imperial rule and the increasing power of the emperor
- The role and limits of Imperial power: *maius imperium*, *tribunicia postestas*, *Censor*, judicial and magisterial roles; *auctoritas* and *potestas*; *lex de imperio* (Vespasian)
- The emperor and Imperial family: relationships between members of the family; wives, children and other family members
- Succession: methods and means of securing a chosen successor
- The role and importance of Imperial women: Messalina, Agrippina, Octavia, Poppaea, Domitia Longina, Julia Flavia
- The role and importance of Imperial freedmen: Pallas, Narcissus (Claudius), Helius (Nero), Epaphroditus (Nero – Domitian), Maximus, Stephanus (Domitian)
- The importance of the Praetorian Guard: role and relationship with emperors.

The relationship between emperors and the inhabitants of the city of Rome

- The impact of emperors on the lives of the inhabitants of the city of Rome including administration of the city and the provision of benefits:
  - food, games and festivals, amenities, safety and security (night watch and urban cohorts), employment
- Elites/upper class: senators, equestrians including their roles in government in Rome and the Empire and their relations with emperors
- Ordinary citizens: *panem et circenses* – maintaining good relations with the citizen body
- Attitudes towards the emperors among the various groups of inhabitants in the city of Rome: support for and opposition to the emperors including:
  - Scribonianus (Claudius)
  - Seneca, Burrus, Piso, Thrasea Paetus (Nero)
  - Agricola Saturninus, Nerva, Flavius Sabinus, Flavius Clemens (Domitian)
  - Tacitus, Suetonius, Pliny (Trajan)
- The rebuilding of the city, private and public buildings including:
  - Claudius: aqueducts, Ostia
  - Nero: rebuilding after fire of 64 CE with new regulations, baths
  - Domitian: Colosseum extension, palace, temples, fora, Odeum, rebuilding after fire of 80 CE
  - Trajan's forum and column.

Men and women in Rome:

- Outline of social order and ranks: patricians and plebeians; senators, equestrians and plebs
- Patronage and social obligations: patrons and clients
- Citizens and non-citizens: the impact of the multicultural nature of Rome's population
- Slaves, freedmen and freedwomen:
  - public and private employment of slaves
  - lives and treatment
  - Claudius' laws on slaves.

Men:

- elites/upper class (senators, equestrians): public and private lives
- ordinary citizens; advantages and disadvantages of living in Rome – fires, housing, overcrowding, entertainments, amenities
- cultural diversity of the inhabitants of Rome.

Women:

- upper class: Calpurnia, Hispulla, Arria, Fannia, Vestal Virgins
- ordinary women: Eppia, Caesonia.

The relationship between emperors and the provincials

- Governing the Empire with reference to Britain, Gaul and Judaea:
  - governors and procurators
  - the army; control and security.
- Inclusion of provincial elites in governing the Empire:
  - client kings, e.g. Cogidubnus, Herod
  - provincial senators
  - granting citizenship to provincials
  - adoption of the Roman lifestyle, villas, baths, towns.
- The Imperial cult:
  - the worship of emperors and the Imperial families in the Empire
  - attitudes of emperors and subjects towards worship
  - Claudius' rejection of worship in Alexandria and Rome
  - Domitian 'master and God'
  - worship of Trajan
  - temples to Rome and deified emperors in Rome and provinces.
- Imperial attitudes to non-Roman cults:
  - Isis and Serapis under the Flavians
  - Judaism and Christianity under Claudius and Nero.

Sources for study:
Literary Sources

Suetonius	*The Twelve Caesars* *Claudius* 10, 12–13, 17–22, 25, 26–29, 34, 43–45 *Nero* 8–12, 16, 18, 30–32, 33–5, 37, 38, 47–49 *Domitian* 1–5, 7–8, 10–11, 13–14, 17, 23
Tacitus	*Annals* 11.1–3, 26–29, 33, 37–38 12.1–3, 9, 25–26, 41–2, 53–4, 63–69 13.1–5, 12–18, 25, 31–32, 45–46 14.1–3, 12–16, 20–1, 38–39, 42–45, 51–2, 57, 60–64, 65 15.32–33, 37, 38–45, 48–51, 71–72, 74 16.5–6, 18–19, 33
Tacitus	*Agricola* 2–3, 5–9, 15–21, 29, 39–45

continued

Sources for study continued**:**

Pliny	*Letters* Book 1: 1.6, 1.9, 1.13, 1.14, 1.15, 1.18, 1.21, 1.23 Book 2: 2.6, 2.8, 2.20 Book 3: 3.1, 3.5, 3.14, 3.16, 3.21 Book 4: 4.8, 4.11, 4.13, 4.19, 4.21 Book 5: 5.16, 5.19 Book 6: 6.4, 6.7, 6.24, 6.34 Book 7: 7.4, 7.5, 7.19, 7.24 Book 8: 8.10, 8.16, 8.21, 8.24 Book 9: 9.6, 9.17 Book 10: 10.3a, 10.5, 10.18, 10.19–20, 10.29–30, 10.31–32, 10.33–34, 10.52, 10.65, 10.70–71, 10.75, 10.90–91, 10.96–97, 10.100
Dio Cassius	*Roman History* 61.5–9 62.16–18 63.11–12, 22–23 67 Domitian 1, 3, 4.3–5, 13–14 68 Trajan 3–7, 10, 15–16, 23, 32
Juvenal	*Satire* 3 1–20, 58–96, 126–163, 190–231, 232–267, 268–304 *Satire* 6 60–81, 82–113, 114–135
Petronius	*Satyricon* 31–38
Martial	*Epigrams* 9.1, 10.72, 12.57

Teachers are free to use any complete translation of the literary sources. Where a passage is printed on a question paper it will be from the Penguin Classics edition or from LACTOR 15 (Dio: The Julio-Claudians), LACTOR 19 (Tiberius to Nero) and LACTOR 20 (The Flavians).

Paper 4 – Greek Literature

Paper 4 Greek Literature allows students to explore Greek culture, society and thought through the medium of tragedy or epic.

These topics develop students' literary analysis and appreciation skills. They have a choice from two of the most influential genres for the modern world, Greek tragedy and the epic poetry of Homer. Both genres focus on the mythological past and provide evidence for how the Greeks understood their past and represented their culture, values and ideas of moral behaviour.

Candidates choose **one** topic.

Either

Topic A – Greek Tragedy

or

Topic B – Homeric Epic

The assessment will require candidates to respond to a passage from the set literary sources and answer a broader more thematic essay question. See section 4 Details of the assessment for more detail.

Topic A – Greek Tragedy

This topic focuses on Greek tragedy and how the understanding of tragedy developed in Athens in the fifth century BCE. Candidates will be expected to have an outline knowledge of the socio-political context of the plays, their place within the framework of the state-sponsored festivals and the issues and morals that they reflect.

Detailed historical knowledge of Athens in the fifth century BCE will **not** be required.

This topic will develop candidates' literary analysis and appreciation skills, requiring them to offer critical analysis and personal response to the plays including the literary achievements of the playwrights. This will include the religious, cultural and social values portrayed in the plays and the historical and political context of when they were written and performed.

Candidates study four plays in their entirety:

- Aeschylus – *Agamemnon*
- Sophocles – *Oedipus Rex*
- Euripides – *Medea* and *Bacchae.*

Content

Candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

The nature of tragedy

- The development of tragedy during the fifth century BCE in Athens
- The structure of the plays
- The number of actors and the way they were used by the different playwrights
- The use and role of the Chorus
- The conventions for performance and staging:
  - the use of masks, costumes and props
  - use of the stage building
  - use of the orchestra
  - machinery (*mechane* and *ekkyklema*) and other effects
  - the social context of the plays
- The use of language and imagery, including dramatic irony
- *deus ex machina*
- Aristotle's definition of tragedy including:
  - *catharsis* (purging of emotion)
  - *harmatia* (tragic mistake)
  - *peripeteia* (reversal of fortune)
  - *hubris* (excessive pride).

The experience of watching tragedy

- The context in which tragedy was watched by an ancient audience:
  - religious context
  - festivals
  - competition
- Social, moral, religious and political messages of the plays
- Possible interpretations of themes and messages by ancient and modern audiences
- Possible audience reactions to language and imagery.

Common features of tragedy

- Features of tragedy:
  - the nature of the tragic hero
  - the nature of the Chorus
  - the role of the gods
  - characterisation and motivation of characters, including minor characters
  - the role of women in tragedy
  - messenger speeches
  - authors' treatment of traditional myths.

- Themes, including but not limited to:
  - gods, omens, oracles and prophecies
  - justice and revenge
  - kingship and the state
  - love and hate
  - loyalty and betrayal
  - the importance of family and children
  - death and burial
  - stories of the heroes and the ideas of honour and reputation
  - the role of fate.

Sources for study:

Aeschylus *Agamemnon*
Sophocles *Oedipus Rex*
Euripides *Medea* and *Bacchae.*

Each of the plays should be read in its entirety.

Teachers are free to use any complete translation of the plays. Where a passage is printed on a question paper it will be from the following translations/editions:

Aeschylus, *The Oresteia*, trans. Fagles, R F, 1979, Penguin
Sophocles, *Three Theban Plays*, trans. Fagles, R F, 1984, Penguin
Euripides, *Medea and Other Plays,* trans. Vellacott, P, 2000, Penguin
Euripides, *The Bacchae and Other Plays*, trans. Davie, J, 2006, Penguin

Extracts printed on the question papers will continue to be taken from these editions even if they go out of print, as centres may use any complete translation.

Topic B – Homeric Epic

The epic poems of Homer were considered by the Greeks to be a foundation of Greek culture, being the earliest surviving Greek literature. This topic provides students with the opportunity to study both of the epic poems of Homer.

Candidates will be expected to have an understanding of the historical and mythological background of the poems. Detailed historical knowledge will **not** be expected.

Candidates should be aware of the oral nature of composition and transmission of the poems which were later written down in their current form. As such, the poems reflect not just the time in which they were composed but also contain traces of earlier societies and culture.

This topic will develop candidates' literary analysis and appreciation skills, requiring them to offer critical analysis and personal response to the literary achievements of Homer and the religious, cultural and social values portrayed in the poems.

Candidates study a selection of Books from the epic poems of Homer:

Iliad: Books 1, 3, 6, 9, 16, 18, 21, 22, 24
Odyssey: Books 5, 6, 9, 10, 12, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23

Passages for comment will only be set from this selection of books. Candidates are expected to read the rest of the books of the poems as part of their wider reading.

Content

Candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

Literary techniques

- The structure and plot of the poems and how this relates to the mythological background to the stories
- The language of the epics including narrative and descriptive techniques and their effects:
  - Homeric epithets
  - formulaic phrases
  - repeated passages
  - stories within stories
  - similes.

Candidates should be aware of the impact of oral composition and transmission on the literary techniques found in the poems.

Themes and the depiction of the Homeric world

- Themes including:
  - pride
  - war and warfare
  - anger and reconciliation
  - justice and revenge
  - obstacles and monsters
  - the supernatural and fantasy
  - disguise and recognition.

The nature of the Homeric hero

- The portrayal and role of heroic characters in the two poems
- The qualities of a hero in Homer
- Differences in the depictions of different heroes
- The motivations of different heroes
  - the importance of *kleos* (reputation and fame)
  - the importance of *timé* (honour)
  - the desire for *nostos* (homecoming).

Characterisation and society

- The characterisation of other characters and their role in the Homeric world including:
  - the portrayal and role of women including Penelope, Andromache, Helen
  - the portrayal and role of slaves and servants, including Eumaeus, Eurycleia, Melanthius
  - the portrayal and role of older characters, including Priam, Nestor, Laertes
- The importance of family, including the father-son relationship
- Kings and leaders
- The importance of *xenia* (hospitality).

Gods and religion

- The characterisation of the gods and goddesses of the epics, including:
  - their relationships with mortals
  - their relationships with each other
  - their involvement in the mortal world
- The importance of omens and prophecies
- The role and importance of fate and destiny.

Sources for study:

Teachers are free to use any complete translation of the poems. Where a passage is printed on a question paper it will be from the following translations/editions:

Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. Rieu, E V, and Jones, P, 2003, Penguin

Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Rieu, E V, 1991, Penguin

Extracts printed on the question papers will continue to be taken from these editions even if they go out of print, as centres may use any complete translation.

Faculty feedback: 'Understanding how and why our climate is changing and providing the knowledge and skills to explore the challenges plays a key role in every student's education.'

Feedback from: Dr Amy Munro-Faure, Head of Education and Student Engagement of Cambridge Zero

4 Details of the assessment

Paper 1 – Greek Civilisation

Written paper, 1 hour 30 minutes, 50 marks

50% of AS Level, 25% of A Level

Candidates answer questions on **one** topic within the question paper.

The topics are:

Section A: Alexander the Great
Section B: Aristophanes
Section C: Themes in Greek Vase Painting

Candidates answer **two** questions on their chosen topic:

- **one** compulsory structured question based on a source worth 25 marks in total
- **one** out of a choice of two essay questions worth 25 marks each.

All questions assess both AO1 Knowledge and understanding and AO2 Analysis and evaluation.

All questions require candidates to display their knowledge and understanding. Judgements and conclusions should be justified and backed up with supporting evidence from study of the topic.

Externally assessed.

Paper 2 – Roman Civilisation

Written paper, 1 hour 30 minutes, 50 marks

50% of AS Level, 25% of A Level

Candidates answer questions on **one** topic within the question paper.

The topics are:

Section A: Augustus
Section B: Virgil's *Aeneid*
Section C: Architecture of the Roman City

Candidates answer **two** questions on their chosen topic:

- **one** compulsory structured question based on a source worth 25 marks in total
- **one** out of a choice of two essay questions worth 25 marks each.

All questions assess both AO1 Knowledge and understanding and AO2 Analysis and evaluation.

All questions require candidates to display their knowledge and understanding. Judgements and conclusions should be justified and backed up with supporting evidence from study of the topic.

Externally assessed.

Paper 3 – Classical History

Written paper, 1 hour 30 minutes, 50 marks

25% of A Level

Candidates answer questions on **one** topic within the question paper.

The topics are:

Section A: Athens and Sparta

Section B: Emperors and Subjects: Claudius, Nero, Domitian and Trajan

Candidates answer **two** questions on their chosen topic:

- **one** compulsory question based on a source worth 20 marks
- **one** out of a choice of two essay questions worth 30 marks each.

All questions assess both AO1 Knowledge and understanding and AO2 Analysis and evaluation.

All questions require candidates to display their knowledge and understanding. Judgements and conclusions should be justified and backed up with supporting evidence from study of the topic.

Externally assessed.

Paper 4 – Greek Literature

Written paper, 1 hour 30 minutes, 50 marks

25% of A Level

Candidates answer questions on **one** topic within the question paper.

The topics are:

Section A: Greek Tragedy

Section B: Homeric Epic

Candidates answer **two** questions on their chosen topic:

- **one** compulsory question based on a source worth 20 marks
- **one** out of a choice of two essay questions worth 30 marks each.

All questions assess both AO1 Knowledge and understanding and AO2 Analysis and evaluation.

All questions require candidates to display their knowledge and understanding. Judgements and conclusions should be justified and backed up with supporting evidence from study of the topic.

Externally assessed.

Command words

Command words and their meanings help candidates know what is expected from them in the exams. The table below includes command words used in the assessment for this syllabus. The use of the command word will relate to the subject context.

Command word	What it means
Analyse	examine in detail to show meaning, identify elements and the relationship between them
Assess	make an informed judgement
Compare	identify/comment on similarities and/or differences
Consider	review and respond to given information
Contrast	identify/comment on differences
Define	give precise meaning
Describe	state the points of a topic / give characteristics and main features
Develop	take forward to a more advanced stage or build upon given information
Discuss	write about issue(s) or topic(s) in depth in a structured way
Evaluate	judge or calculate the quality, importance, amount, or value of something
Examine	investigate closely, in detail
Explain	set out purposes or reasons / make the relationships between things clear / say why and/or how and support with relevant evidence
Give	produce an answer from a given source or recall/memory
Identify	name/select/recognise
Justify	support a case with evidence/argument
Outline	set out the main points
State	express in clear terms
Suggest	apply knowledge and understanding to situations where there are a range of valid responses in order to make proposals / put forward considerations
Summarise	select and present the main points, without detail

Phrases such as ‘To what extent ...?’ and ‘How far do you agree that ...?’ may also be seen in the assessment for this syllabus.

5 What else you need to know

This section is an overview of other information you need to know about this syllabus. It will help to share the administrative information with your exams officer so they know when you will need their support. Find more information about our administrative processes at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide**

Before you start

Previous study

We do not expect learners starting this course to have previously studied Classical history, Classical literature or Classical languages.

Guided learning hours

We design Cambridge International AS & A Level syllabuses to require about 180 guided learning hours for each Cambridge International AS Level and about 360 guided learning hours for a Cambridge International A Level. The number of hours a learner needs to achieve the qualification may vary according to each school and the learners' previous experience of the subject.

Availability and timetables

All Cambridge schools are allocated to one of six administrative zones. Each zone has a specific timetable. Find your administrative zone at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/adminzone**

You can view the timetable for your administrative zone at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables**

You can enter candidates in the November exam series.

Check you are using the syllabus for the year the candidate is taking the exam.

Private candidates can enter for this syllabus. For more information, please refer to the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*.

Combining with other syllabuses

Candidates can take this syllabus alongside other Cambridge International syllabuses in a single exam series. The only exceptions are:

- syllabuses with the same title at the same level.

Group awards: Cambridge AICE Diploma

Cambridge AICE Diploma (Advanced International Certificate of Education) is a group award for Cambridge International AS & A Level. It encourages schools to offer a broad and balanced curriculum by recognising the achievements of learners who pass exams in a range of different subjects.

Learn more about Cambridge AICE Diploma at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/aice**

Making entries

Exams officers are responsible for submitting entries. We encourage them to work closely with you to make sure they enter the right number of candidates for the right combination of syllabus components. Entry option codes and instructions for submitting entries are in the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*. Your exams officer has access to this guide.

Exam administration

To keep our exams secure, we produce question papers for different areas of the world, known as administrative zones. We allocate all Cambridge schools to an administrative zone determined by their location. Each zone has a specific timetable.

Some of our syllabuses offer candidates different assessment options. An entry option code is used to identify the components the candidate will take relevant to the administrative zone and the available assessment options.

Support for exams officers

We know how important exams officers are to the successful running of exams. We provide them with the support they need to make entries on time. Your exams officer will find this support, and guidance for all other phases of the Cambridge Exams Cycle, at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide**

Retakes and carrying forward marks

Candidates can retake Cambridge International AS Level and Cambridge International A Level as many times as they want to.

Learn more about retake entries, including definitions and information on entry deadlines, at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/retakes**

Candidates can carry forward their Cambridge International AS Level marks from one series to complete their Cambridge International A Level in a following series. The rules, time limits and regulations for carry-forward entries can be found in the *Cambridge Handbook* for the relevant year of assessment and the *Carry-forward regulations supplement* at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide**

To confirm what entry options are available for this syllabus, refer to the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries* for the relevant series.

Language

This syllabus and the related assessment materials are available in English only.

Accessibility and equality

Syllabus and assessment design

At Cambridge we recognise that our candidates have highly diverse socio-economic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and may also have a variety of protected characteristics. Protected characteristics include special educational needs and disability (SEND), religion and belief, and characteristics related to gender and identity.

We follow accessible design principles to make our syllabuses and assessment materials as accessible and inclusive as possible. We review language accessibility, visual resources, question layout and the contexts used in questions. Using this approach means that we give all candidates the fairest possible opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding.

Access arrangements

Our design principles aim to make sure our assessment materials are accessible for all candidates. To further minimise barriers faced by candidates with SEND, illness or injury, we offer a range of access arrangements and modified papers. This is the principal way in which we comply with our duty to make 'reasonable adjustments', as guided by the UK Equality Act 2010.

Important:

Requested access arrangements should be based on evidence of the candidate's barrier to taking an assessment and should also reflect their normal way of working. For Cambridge to approve an access arrangement, we need to agree that it constitutes a reasonable adjustment and does not affect the security or integrity of the assessment. This is explained in section 1.3 of the *Cambridge Handbook* **www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide**

Applying for access arrangements

- Details of our standard access arrangements and modified question papers are available in section 1.3 of the *Cambridge Handbook* **www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide**
- Centres are expected to check the availability of access arrangements and modified question papers at the start of the course. Check the *Cambridge Handbook*, the assessment objectives listed in the syllabus document and, where applicable, any access arrangement restrictions listed in the syllabus document.
- Contact us at the start of the course to find out if we can approve an access arrangement that is not listed in the *Cambridge Handbook*.
- All applications should be made by the deadlines published in the *Cambridge Handbook*.

After the exam

Grading and reporting

Grades a, b, c, d or e indicate the standard a candidate achieved at Cambridge International AS Level. 'a' is the highest and 'e' is the lowest grade.

Grades A*, A, B, C, D or E indicate the standard a candidate achieved at Cambridge International A Level. A* is the highest and E is the lowest grade.

'Ungraded' means that the candidate's performance did not meet the standard required for the lowest grade (E or e). 'Ungraded' is reported on the statement of results but not on the certificate. In specific circumstances your candidates may see one of the following letters on their statement of results:

- Q (PENDING)
- X (NO RESULT).

These letters do not appear on the certificate.

If a candidate takes a Cambridge International A Level and fails to achieve grade E or higher, a Cambridge International AS Level grade will be awarded if both of the following apply:

- the components taken for the Cambridge International A Level by the candidate in that series included all the components making up a Cambridge International AS Level
- the candidate's performance on the AS Level components was sufficient to merit the award of a Cambridge International AS Level grade.

On the statement of results, Cambridge International AS & A Levels are shown as General Certificates of Education Advanced Subsidiary Level and Advanced Level, GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level (GCE AS Level) and GCE Advanced Level (GCE A Level).

On the certificates, Cambridge International AS & A Levels are shown as General Certificate of Education.

School feedback: 'Cambridge International A Levels are the 'gold standard' qualification. They are based on rigorous, academic syllabuses that are accessible to students from a wide range of abilities yet have the capacity to stretch our most able.'

Feedback from: Director of Studies, Auckland Grammar School, New Zealand

How students, teachers and higher education can use the grades

Cambridge International A Level

Assessment at Cambridge International A Level has two purposes:

1 to measure learning and achievement

The assessment confirms achievement and performance in relation to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the syllabus.

2 to show likely future success

The outcomes help predict which students are well prepared for a particular course or career and/or which students are more likely to be successful.

The outcomes help students choose the most suitable course or career

Cambridge International AS Level

Assessment at Cambridge International AS Level has two purposes:

1 to measure learning and achievement

The assessment confirms achievement and performance in relation to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the syllabus.

2 to show likely future success

The outcomes help predict which students are well prepared for a particular course or career and/or which students are more likely to be successful.

The outcomes help students choose the most suitable course or career

The outcomes help decide whether students part way through a Cambridge International A Level course are making enough progress to continue

The outcomes guide teaching and learning in the next stages of the Cambridge International A Level course.

Changes to this syllabus for 2028, 2029 and 2030

The syllabus has been updated. This is version 2, published October 2026.

You must read the whole syllabus before planning your teaching programme. We review our syllabuses regularly to make sure they continue to meet the needs of our schools. In updating this syllabus, we have made it easier for teachers and students to understand, keeping the familiar features that teachers and schools value.

Changes to version 2 of the syllabus, published October 2026.

Other changes	• A weblink on page 47 has been updated.

Changes to version 1 of the syllabus, published September 2025.

Changes to syllabus content	Set texts / sources have been updated for the following topics: • Alexander, Paper 1 • Aristophanes, Paper 1 • Augustus, Paper 2 • Virgil's *Aeneid*, Paper 2 • Architecture of the Roman City, Paper 2 • Greek Tragedy, Paper 4 • Homeric Epic, Paper 4

Significant changes to the syllabus are indicated by black vertical lines either side of the text.

Any textbooks endorsed to support the syllabus for examination from 2022 are still suitable for use with this syllabus.

You should take account of the changes described above when using these textbooks.

Syllabuses and specimen materials represent the final authority on the content and structure of all of our assessments.

With a Customer Services team available 24 hours a day, 6 days a week, and dedicated regional teams supporting schools in 160 countries, we understand your local context and are here to guide you so you can provide your learners with everything they need to prepare for Cambridge International AS & A Level.

School feedback: ‘While studying Cambridge IGCSE and Cambridge International A Levels, students broaden their horizons through a global perspective and develop a lasting passion for learning.’

Feedback from: Zhai Xiaoning, Deputy Principal, The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China

We are committed to making our documents accessible in accordance with the WCAG 2.1 Standard. We are always looking to improve the accessibility of our documents. If you find any problems or you think we are not meeting accessibility requirements, contact us at **info@cambridgeinternational.org** with the subject heading: Digital accessibility. If you need this document in a different format, contact us and supply your name, email address and requirements and we will respond within 15 working days.

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