



Cambridge International AS & A Level

CLASSICAL STUDIES

9274/43

Paper 4 Greek Literature

October/November 2025

1 hour 30 minutes



You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **two** questions in total:
Answer questions from **one** section only.
For each section, follow the instructions inside on which questions to answer.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 50.
- The number of marks for each question or part question is shown in brackets [].

This document has **4** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

Section A: Greek Tragedy

Answer **Question 1** and **either** Question 2 **or** Question 3.

1 Read the passage and answer the question.

ORESTES: Suppose Orestes comes: how will he deal with this?

ELECTRA: You ask that? You insult him. Is the time not ripe?

ORESTES: But, once he came, how could he carry out this killing?

ELECTRA: Let him be resolute, as his father's murderers were.

ORESTES: Would you be resolute to help him kill your mother? 5

ELECTRA: I would – with the same axe by which my father died.

ORESTES: I'll tell him, then, that you are steadfast?

ELECTRA: When I have shed
Her blood to requite his, then I can die content.

ORESTES [*after a pause, realizing that she is twice as resolute as he*]: 10
I wish Orestes could be by, to hear you speak.

ELECTRA: Friend, if I saw him I should not recognize him.

ORESTES: No, naturally; you were both young when you were parted.

(Euripides, *Electra*)

To what extent is the depiction of Orestes in this passage typical of his portrayal elsewhere in the play? [20]

EITHER

2 'The cause of all disaster in Greek tragedy is betrayal.'
How far do you agree with this statement? In your answer, you should discuss **at least two** plays. [30]

OR

3 'In Greek tragedy, characters always act in ways they believe are morally right although audiences might not agree.'
How far do you agree with this statement? In your answer, you should refer to **at least two** plays. [30]

Section B: Homeric Epic

Answer **Question 4** and **either** Question 5 **or** Question 6.

- 4 Read the passage and answer the question.

She found Helen in the hall at work on a great web of purple cloth for folding double, into which she was weaving some of the many trials that the Trojans and Greeks had suffered for her sake at the hands of the War-god Ares. Swift-footed Iris went up to her and said: 'My dear sister, come and see how strangely the Trojan and Greek warriors are behaving. A little while ago they were making war with all its tears against each other in the plain and looked as though they meant to fight to the death. But now the battle is off and they are sitting there in silence, leaning on their shields, with their long spears stuck in the ground beside them, while Paris and warlike Menelaus are to fight a duel with their great spears – over you. The winner is to claim you as his wife.'

5

With these words the goddess filled Helen's heart with sweet longing for her former husband, her parents and the town she had left. She immediately covered her head in a veil of white linen and, with the soft tears running down her cheeks, set out from her room, not alone, but attended by two waiting-women, Aethre daughter of Pittheus and ox-eyed Clymene.

10

(Homer, *Iliad* 3)

Using this passage as a starting point, discuss how typical this is of the depiction of Helen in the *Iliad*. [20]

EITHER

- 5 'Following the rules of *xenia* (hospitality) is more important to mortals rather than immortals in the *Odyssey*.'
How far do you agree with this statement? [30]

OR

- 6 How far do you agree that the human characters in Homer's epics are believable as real people? In your answer, you should discuss **both** the *Iliad* **and** the *Odyssey*. [30]

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