

Cambridge International AS & A Level

CLASSICAL STUDIES**9274/43**

Paper 4 Greek Literature

October/November 2025

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 50

Published

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the question paper and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

Cambridge International will not enter into discussions about these mark schemes.

Cambridge International is publishing the mark schemes for the October/November 2025 series for most Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge International A and AS Level components, and some Cambridge O Level components.

This document consists of **12** printed pages.

Generic Marking Principles

These general marking principles must be applied by all examiners when marking candidate answers. They should be applied alongside the specific content of the mark scheme or generic level descriptions for a question. Each question paper and mark scheme will also comply with these marking principles.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 1:

Marks must be awarded in line with:

- the specific content of the mark scheme or the generic level descriptors for the question
- the specific skills defined in the mark scheme or in the generic level descriptors for the question
- the standard of response required by a candidate as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 2:

Marks awarded are always **whole marks** (not half marks, or other fractions).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 3:

Marks must be awarded **positively**:

- marks are awarded for correct/valid answers, as defined in the mark scheme. However, credit is given for valid answers which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme, referring to your Team Leader as appropriate
- marks are awarded when candidates clearly demonstrate what they know and can do
- marks are not deducted for errors
- marks are not deducted for omissions
- answers should only be judged on the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar when these features are specifically assessed by the question as indicated by the mark scheme. The meaning, however, should be unambiguous.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 4:

Rules must be applied consistently, e.g. in situations where candidates have not followed instructions or in the application of generic level descriptors.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 5:

Marks should be awarded using the full range of marks defined in the mark scheme for the question (however; the use of the full mark range may be limited according to the quality of the candidate responses seen).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 6:

Marks awarded are based solely on the requirements as defined in the mark scheme. Marks should not be awarded with grade thresholds or grade descriptors in mind.

Annotations guidance for centres

Examiners use a system of annotations as a shorthand for communicating their marking decisions to one another. Examiners are trained during the standardisation process on how and when to use annotations. The purpose of annotations is to inform the standardisation and monitoring processes and guide the supervising examiners when they are checking the work of examiners within their team. The meaning of annotations and how they are used is specific to each component and is understood by all examiners who mark the component.

We publish annotations in our mark schemes to help centres understand the annotations they may see on copies of scripts. Note that there may not be a direct correlation between the number of annotations on a script and the mark awarded. Similarly, the use of an annotation may not be an indication of the quality of the response.

The annotations listed below were available to examiners marking this component in this series.

Annotations

| Annotation | Meaning |
|---|---|
|  | worthy of credit |
|  | unclear |
|  | omission |
|  | to draw attention to something [and the extendable vertical line] |
|  | irrelevant point |
|  | blank page – this annotation is used on all blank pages within an answer booklet and on each page of an additional object where there is no candidate response. |
|  | Use to show that you have seen an answer which is incorrect. Use to show that you have seen a plan. |
|  | knowledge |
|  | analysis/evaluation |
|  | level one |
|  | level two |
|  | level three |
|  | level four |
|  | level five |

General guidance for marking extended response and essay questions

Candidates must address the question set and reach an overall judgement, but no set answer is expected. The questions can be approached in various ways and what matters is not the conclusions reached but the quality and breadth of the argument offered by an answer.

Examiners are encouraged to constantly refresh their awareness of the question and be aware of any requirements set by the question to use sources or make reference to specific examples.

Indicative content in the question-specific mark schemes will neither be exhaustive nor prescriptive. Appropriate, supported responses which address the question should be rewarded.

Relevant accurate knowledge from outside the prescribed Sources for Study e.g. literary or historical sources not set in the Sources for Study should be rewarded as appropriate.

Guidance on using levels-based mark schemes

Marking of work should be positive, rewarding achievement where possible, but clearly differentiating across the whole range of marks, where appropriate.

The examiner should look at the work and then make a judgement about which level statement is the best fit. In practice, work does not always match one level statement precisely so a judgement may need to be made between two or more level statements.

Once a best-fit level statement has been identified, use the following guidance to decide on a specific mark:

- If the candidate's work **convincingly** meets the level statement, award the highest mark.
- If the candidate's work **adequately** meets the level statement, award the most appropriate mark in the middle of the range (where middle marks are available).
- If the candidate's work **just** meets the level statement, award the lowest mark.

20 mark source-based marking criteria

| Level | AO1 Knowledge and understanding | Marks | AO2 Analysis and evaluation | Marks |
|---------|---|-------|---|-------|
| Level 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very good range of factual knowledge • Relevant knowledge is very detailed • Well-supported with evidence and examples where required • A very good understanding/awareness of context, as appropriate. | 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough analysis of evidence/issues • Thoughtful evaluation that answers the question • Very thoughtful engagement with sources/task • Very well structured response with coherent and reasoned argument. | 11–12 |
| Level 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good range of factual knowledge • Relevant knowledge is detailed • Mostly supported with evidence and examples where required • A good understanding/awareness of context, as appropriate. | 6–7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good analysis of evidence/issues • Good evaluation that answers the question • Thoughtful engagement with sources/task • Well-structured response with reasoned argument. | 8–10 |
| Level 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An adequate range of factual knowledge • Relevant knowledge is basic • Supported with some evidence and examples where required • Some understanding/awareness of context, as appropriate. | 4–5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate analysis of evidence/issues • Adequate evaluation that answers the question • Some engagement with sources/task • A structured response with some reasoned argument. | 5–7 |
| Level 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited range of factual knowledge • Partially relevant knowledge is basic • Partially supported with evidence and examples where required • Limited understanding/awareness of context, as appropriate. | 2–3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited analysis of evidence/issues • Limited evaluation that partially answers the question • Limited engagement with sources/task • Poorly structured response with little reasoned argument. | 3–4 |
| Level 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very limited range of factual knowledge • Knowledge may not be relevant • Minimal or no supporting evidence or examples • Minimal or no understanding/awareness of context, as appropriate. | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superficial analysis of evidence/issues • Little or no evaluation that answers the question • Little or no engagement with sources/task • An unstructured response with little or no reasoned argument. | 1–2 |
| Level 0 | No creditable response. | 0 | No creditable response. | 0 |

30 mark essay marking criteria

| Level | AO1 Knowledge and understanding | Marks | AO2 Analysis and evaluation | Marks |
|---------|---|-------|---|-------|
| Level 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very good range of factual knowledge • Relevant knowledge is very detailed • Well-supported with evidence and examples where required • A very good understanding/awareness of context, as appropriate. | 11–12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough analysis of evidence/issues • Thoughtful evaluation that answers the question • Very thoughtful engagement with sources/task • Very well structured response with coherent and reasoned argument. | 15–18 |
| Level 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good range of factual knowledge • Relevant knowledge is detailed • Mostly supported with evidence and examples where required • A good understanding/awareness of context, as appropriate. | 8–10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good analysis of evidence/issues • Good evaluation that answers the question • Thoughtful engagement with sources/task • Well-structured response with reasoned argument. | 11–14 |
| Level 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An adequate range of factual knowledge • Relevant knowledge is basic • Supported with some evidence and examples where required • Some understanding/awareness of context, as appropriate. | 5–7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate analysis of evidence/issues • Adequate evaluation that answers the question • Some engagement with sources/task • A structured response with some reasoned argument. | 7–10 |
| Level 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited range of factual knowledge • Partially relevant knowledge is basic • Partially supported with evidence and examples where required • Limited understanding/awareness of context, as appropriate. | 3–4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited analysis of evidence/issues • Limited evaluation that partially answers the question • Limited engagement with sources/task • Poorly structured response with little reasoned argument. | 4–6 |
| Level 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very limited range of factual knowledge • Knowledge may not be relevant • Minimal or no supporting evidence or examples • Minimal or no understanding/awareness of context, as appropriate. | 1–2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superficial analysis of evidence/issues • Little or no evaluation that answers the question • Little or no engagement with sources/task • An unstructured response with little or no reasoned argument. | 1–3 |
| Level 0 | No creditable response. | 0 | No creditable response. | 0 |

| Question | Answer | Marks |
|----------|---|-------|
| 1 | <p>To what extent is the depiction of Orestes in this passage typical of his portrayal elsewhere in the play?</p> <p>Use the 20 mark source-based marking criteria.</p> <p>Candidates must make use of the passage but should also provide other information from their study of <i>Agamemnon</i>.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and understanding – 8 marks. Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO1.</p> <p>In the passage, Orestes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is testing Electra’s loyalty • Is trying to work out how to carry out revenge • Wants/needs his sister’s help <p>Elsewhere, Orestes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Returns from exile to seek Electra and get revenge • Makes offerings at his father’s grave • Murders Clytemnestra • Seems remorseful <p>AO2 – Analysis and evaluation – 12 marks. Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO2.</p> <p>Discussion and conclusions will depend on the examples chosen. Candidates should make detailed reference to the play to support their points. In this passage Orestes has not yet revealed himself to Electra but the passage shows that he is looking for her support with the murder of their mother in revenge for their father’s murder. This is consistent with his portrayal elsewhere. The passage also hints that he is the more reluctant sibling – a theme picked up on later in the play, with the chorus commenting that Electra forced her brother’s actions. Although it is also shown that he does wish to take vengeance. Though at the end of the play he is filled with remorse for his actions.</p> <p>Credit any valid argument that is well supported with details from the play.</p> | 20 |

| Question | Answer | Marks |
|----------|---|-------|
| 2 | <p>'The cause of all disaster in Greek tragedy is betrayal.' How far do you agree with this statement? In your answer, you should discuss <u>at least two</u> plays</p> <p>Use the 30 mark essay marking criteria.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and understanding – 12 marks. Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO1.</p> <p>Candidates could consider:</p> <p><i>Agamemnon</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sacrifice of Iphigenia – Agamemnon betrays the trust of his wife and daughter • The bringing back of Cassandra • Clytemnestra's affair with Aegisthus <p><i>Antigone</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The betrayal of the dead <p><i>Medea</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Her betrayal by Jason • Her betrayal of her children <p><i>Electra</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Her mother's betrayal by murdering her father and not allowing her a proper marriage. <p>AO2 – Analysis and evaluation – 18 marks. Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO2.</p> <p>There are a wide variety of ways that candidates could approach this question and credit should be given for any valid line of argument. In general all Greek tragedies feature some betrayal. Candidates should discuss the betrayal that is featured in the plays. Candidates could also explore other motives for characters' actions, but this should not be the primary focus of their answer.</p> <p>Accept any valid line of argument that is well supported with examples from the text.</p> | 30 |

| Question | Answer | Marks |
|----------|---|-------|
| 3 | <p>‘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 <u>at least two</u> plays.</p> <p>Use the 30 mark essay marking criteria.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and understanding – 12 marks. Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO1.</p> <p>Candidates could choose to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clytemnestra in <i>Agamemnon</i> • Agamemnon • Medea • Jason • Antigone • Creon • Electra and Orestes • Clytemnestra <p>AO2 – Analysis and evaluation – 18 marks. Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO2.</p> <p>Discussion and conclusions will depend on the examples chosen. Candidates should make reference to at least two plays but the response does not need to focus equally on all plays discussed to gain marks.</p> <p>Candidates should look at the motivations behind characters’ actions. In some cases these are more clear cut than others, for example Antigone buries Polyneices because she believes it is the right thing to do. Similarly Creon’s behaviour towards Antigone is (at least partly) motivated by his desire to do the right thing for Thebes. Conversely it is harder to argue that the actions of either Jason or Medea are ‘morally right’. The actions of those involved in the plays that focus on the house of Atreus offer more scope for nuanced discussion.</p> <p>Some candidates could also explore how what a character may perceive as ‘morally right’ may not be in line with the morals of the audience watching the play.</p> <p>Credit should be given for any reasonable line of argument that is well backed up with examples.</p> | 30 |

| Question | Answer | Marks |
|----------|--|-------|
| 4 | <p>Using this passage as a starting point, discuss how typical this is of the depiction of Helen in the <i>Iliad</i>.</p> <p>Use the 20 mark source-based marking criteria.</p> <p>Candidates must make use of the passage but should also provide other information from their study of the <i>Odyssey</i>.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and understanding – 8 marks. Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO1.</p> <p>In the passage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helen is weaving like a dutiful woman • The subject matter of the cloth shows she is aware of the suffering she's caused • She is told by Iris that she is being fought over • She is upset about the loss of her husband, home and parents • She is modestly attended by waiting women <p>Elsewhere:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She is treated with respect by Priam but calls herself hateful and wishes she had died before she came to Troy • There is pathos in the way she is depicted looking out for her brothers from the wall • She argues with Aphrodite when she tries to get her to go to the bedroom with Paris • Tells Paris that she hoped he had fallen to Menelaus in battle • She shows her contempt of Paris when talking to Hector in Book 6 • She laments Hector's death <p>AO2 – Analysis and evaluation – 12 marks. Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO2.</p> <p>Discussion and conclusions will depend on the examples chosen. Candidates should make detailed references to back up their points.</p> <p>In general Helen is portrayed in a similar way to the passage elsewhere in the <i>Iliad</i>. She is often referred to as an object to be traded – the cause of the war. She is shown to be unhappy with Paris as a husband and speaks critically of herself. She is treated with respect by Hector and Priam. In the eyes of these men, Helen is not a woman to be hated, the fault of the war lies with the gods not her. This ties in with her depiction as a modest woman pursuing domestic tasks. The aftermath of the battle with Aphrodite clearly shows her lack of free will. She is her own harshest critic within the poem. She lacks agency but does not lack a voice – her unhappiness about her situation is made clear in each of her appearances in the poem.</p> <p>Credit should be given for any sensible line of argument that is well backed up with examples.</p> | 20 |

| Question | Answer | Marks |
|----------|---|-------|
| 5 | <p>‘Following the rules of <i>xenia</i> (hospitality) is more important to mortals rather than immortals in the <i>Odyssey</i>.’ How far do you agree with this statement?</p> <p>Use the 30 mark essay marking criteria.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and understanding – 12 marks. Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO1.</p> <p>Candidates could choose to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nestor • Menelaus and Helen • Nausicaa • Alcinous and Arete • Eumaeus • The suitors • Calypso • The Cyclops • Circe • Aeolus <p>AO2 – Analysis and evaluation – 18 marks. Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO2.</p> <p>Discussion and conclusions will depend on the examples chosen. Expect candidates to have some explanation of the function and obligations of <i>xenia</i>. Candidates should discuss a range of examples from the poem. Candidates should show some contrast between the <i>xenia</i> shown by mortals and that shown by immortals. The strongest answers will be those that look analytically at the benefits of following <i>xenia</i> and the consequences for those that choose not to follow it. For example, in the incident with the Cyclops neither Odysseus or Polyphemus adhere to the rules of <i>xenia</i> yet the men end up dead whereas the Cyclops is merely blinded. Similarly, it could be argued that the <i>xenia</i> shown by both Circe and Calypso to Odysseus is ‘bad’, by turning his men into pigs and not allowing him to leave respectively, both goddesses are not following the true example of <i>xenia</i>, yet neither is punished for their transgression. However, the behaviour of the mortal suitors is shown as so transgressive that their slaughter by Odysseus is portrayed as a reasonable punishment.</p> <p>Candidates should compare and contrast their examples rather than merely listing examples.</p> <p>Credit any valid argument that is well-supported with examples from the text.</p> | 30 |

| Question | Answer | Marks |
|----------|---|-------|
| 6 | <p>How far do you agree that the human characters in Homer’s epics are believable as real people? In your answer, you should discuss <u>both</u> the <i>Iliad</i> <u>and</u> the <i>Odyssey</i>.</p> <p>Use the 30 mark essay marking criteria.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and understanding – 12 marks. Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO1.</p> <p>Candidates could choose to discuss any of the characters within the epics, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Odysseus • Penelope • Telemachus • Eumaeus • Achilles • Agamemnon • Hector • Priam • Andromache • Helen <p>This list is not prescriptive and any valid examples should be credited.</p> <p>AO2 – Analysis and evaluation – 18 marks. Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO2.</p> <p>Discussion and conclusions will depend on the examples chosen. Candidates should explore a range of characters from both epics. Some candidates may be able to analyse the differences between the way that characters are developed in the different poems. The heroic ideal of the characters in the <i>Iliad</i> perhaps seeming less relatable. However, in both poems characters demonstrate a full range of emotions, for example: love, anger, loss. Characters such as Priam, Andromache and Hector demonstrate all of these. Candidates could explore how characters tend to have both strengths and weaknesses. Some characters, such as Telemachus mature and change through the poem.</p> <p>There are many ways that candidates could approach this question and credit should be given for any arguments that are supported with a good level of detail from the text.</p> | 30 |