

Cambridge International AS & A Level

CLASSICAL STUDIES**9274/31**

Paper 3 Classical History

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 **13** 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
	repetition
	narrative without addressing the question
	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	- 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	- 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	- 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	- 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	- 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	- 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	- 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	- 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	- 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	- 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	- 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	- 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	- 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	- 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	- 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	- 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	- 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	- 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	- 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	- 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	Using this passage as a starting point, discuss Sparta's attitude to war and foreign policy before and during the Persian Wars (499–479 BCE). Use the 20 mark source-based marking criteria. Candidates must make use of the passage but should also use other sources AO1 – Knowledge and Understanding – 8 marks Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO1. Answers might include some of the following points. In the passage: • Sparta's unwillingness to be involved in alliances or campaigns beyond the Peloponnese • Sparta's attitude towards Athens Other sources which might be discussed: • Herodotus <i>The Histories</i>: 5.49–51 (Cleomenes' refusal to be involved in the Ionian Revolt) • 6. 107 (religious observance delaying sending troops to aid Athens at Marathon) • 7.133 (treatment of Darius' messengers) • 7. 206–7 (Leonidas and 300 sent as advance party to Thermopylae) • 8. 49–50, 74 (Sparta's desire to defend the Peloponnese and unwillingness to fight at sea) • 9. 6–8 (delays in replying to Athens), 10 (force of 5000 hoplites under Pausanias despatched) • Xenophon <i>Constitution of the Spartans</i> 14 (Sparta's xenophobia in the past) AO2 – Analysis and Evaluation – 12 marks Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO2. Candidates may assess how Sparta's system discouraged contact with the outside world, their control of the Peloponnese and unwillingness to expand their influence beyond it. Their unwillingness to send out forces to help the Ionians in their revolt or Athens in the face of the Persian Invasion is evidence of their policy. However, it can also be argued that Sparta's hoplites were essential in the final defeat of the Persians at the Battle of Plataea in 479. Focus will mainly be on Herodotus' Histories of the Persian Wars and candidates should consider the reliability of him as a source.	20

Question	Answer	Marks
2	To what extent were the Athenians able to control their leaders? Use the 30 mark essay marking criteria AO1 – Knowledge and understanding – 12 marks Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO1 Candidates should discuss the various ways in which the power of Athenian leaders was limited: - controls on the <i>boule</i> and archons (appointed by lot for one year office) and <i>strategoi</i> (elected for one year) - use of ostracism - the decision-making powers of the <i>ecclesia</i> Sources which might be included: - Aristotle <i>The Athenian Constitution</i> 22, 28 - Aristophanes <i>Knights</i> 147–395 - The Old Oligarch 3, 4 - Plutarch <i>Pericles</i> 12–14, <i>Nicias</i> 11, <i>Alcibiades</i> 10, 16, 19, 20 - Thucydides 3.36–50, 4.27–29, 6.24 AO2 – Analysis and Evaluation – 18 marks Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO2. As well as the above, candidates may discuss how the <i>ecclesia</i> was used to prosecute <i>strategoi</i> e.g. Pericles in 432 and generals in 407. Candidates should focus on occasions when the <i>ecclesia</i> voted against the wishes of its leader (e.g. the Mytilene Debate, the Pylos affair and the appointment of Nicias as one of the <i>strategoi</i> for the Sicilian Expedition despite his opposition to the campaign). Also credit the relevant use of satire in Aristophanes' comedies as a means of control. Candidates should also tackle 'To what extent....' by discussing examples of where a respected and popular leader would control the Assembly e.g. Pericles, Cleon, Alcibiades.	30

Question	Answer	Marks
3	To what extent do the sources provide a negative view of Sparta and its system? Use the 30 mark essay marking criteria AO1 – Knowledge and understanding – 12 marks Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO1 Candidates will need to define what is meant by ‘Sparta and its system’ and may take different approaches. It is expected that candidates will include for discussion Sparta’s social system and foreign policy as well as its reputation for obedience and courage in war. A variety of sources can be discussed which give both a positive and negative picture of Sparta: • Aristophanes, <i>Acharnians</i> 510–45, <i>Lysistrata</i> 78–84, 1254–59 • Diodorus, <i>Library of History</i> 11.50, 11.63 • Herodotus <i>The Histories</i> 5. 49–51, 7.104, 7.228, 8.3, 9.6–8 • Plutarch, <i>Sayings of the Spartans</i>, <i>Agis</i> 5 • Thucydides, <i>History of the Peloponnesian War</i> 1.6, 1.10, 1.68–71, 1.102–3, 5.68, 5.72 • Xenophon, <i>Constitution of the Spartans</i> 5, 7, 14 • Xenophon, <i>Hellenica</i> 2.2.19–20 AO2 – Analysis and evaluation – 18 marks. Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO2. The vast majority of our sources are non-Athenian but some, like Xenophon, admire the Spartan constitution. Others, like Aristophanes, the comic playwright, may have a tendency to exaggerate. The potential unreliability of sources always needs to be recognised by candidates. However, candidates might discuss whether Sparta always lived up to its reputation for bravery: Leonidas’ bravery at the battle of Thermopylae could be held up against their desire to retreat to the Isthmus before the battle of Salamis. Sparta’s reluctance to engage in foreign expeditions or come to the aid of the Athenians at Marathon can be seen in the Persian Wars and their suspicion of outsiders could affect their whole foreign policy, notably after the helot revolt of 464. Candidates might also discuss Sparta’s mixed political constitution and whether it hindered or aided decision-making. Credit also some discussion of individuals provided that it is framed within the Spartan system e.g. Pausanias’ failings or Brasidas’ successes. Candidates may conclude that Sparta did not always live up to its reputation but equally can argue that the overall picture of Sparta is a positive one though ultimately their narrow-vision and lack of manpower did not allow their system to succeed long term.	30

Question	Answer	Marks
4	Using this passage as a starting point, discuss the range of issues faced by the governor of a province. Use the 20 mark source-based marking criteria. Candidates must make use of the passage but should also use other sources AO1 – Knowledge and Understanding – 8 marks Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO1. Answers might include some of the following points: From this passage: • Trajan's priority is the security of the province • the employment of slaves in public duties • the importance of a hands-on approach from the governor Elsewhere: • the emperor's relationship with the governor • the importance of administering financial affairs • peace and security as a priority • the role of slaves • concern about political disturbance • expenditure on new building projects • the imperial cult and attitude to foreign cults Sources which might be discussed: • Pliny <i>Letters</i> 10.18, 10.19–20, 10.29–30, 10.31–2, 10.33–4, 10.52, 10.65, 10.70–71, 10.75, 10.90–91, 10.96–7, 10.100 • Tacitus <i>Agricola</i> 9, 16–21 AO2 – Analysis and Evaluation – 12 marks Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO2. Candidates will wish to discuss Trajan's responses to Pliny. The responses are varied, some giving direct orders, others handing the responsibility over to the governor, Pliny, to act as he sees fit. Trajan's concern for the provincials is evident but his priorities lie with Rome and the letters make clear that employment and expenses generally need to be met from within the province itself. A range of other issues should also be discussed which might include the priority of maintaining peace and security, financial administration, reducing the chances of resistance and revolt, methods of Romanisation, promoting the Imperial Cult and integrating Roman and foreign religions.	20

Question	Answer	Marks
5	How successful were emperors in improving the living conditions for ordinary citizens in Rome? In your answer, you should discuss <u>at least two</u> of Claudius, Nero, Domitian and Trajan. Use the 30 mark essay marking criteria AO1 – Knowledge and understanding – 12 marks Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO1 Candidates should define the term ‘living conditions’ and consider a variety of issues faced by the people of Rome • food and water supplies • poor building infrastructure • law and order • disaster relief Sources for discussion might include: • food and water supply: Suetonius <i>Claudius</i> 18–20 (Claudius’ reaction to fire/drought; riot); <i>Domitian</i> 7. • Tacitus <i>Annals</i> 15.42 (Nero’s reforms after the great Fire) • reaction to fire: Tacitus <i>Annals</i> 15.41, Dio Cassius 62.16–18 • building/restoration: Suetonius <i>Claudius</i> 18–21, <i>Nero</i> 10–11, <i>Domitian</i> 5 • Dio Cassius <i>Trajan</i> 68.7 • dangers in Rome: Juvenal <i>Satires</i> 3.190–304 passim: dangers of fire and night perils on the streets of Rome AO2 – Analysis and Evaluation – 18 marks Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO2. Candidates might discuss the different reactions of different emperors to similar crises e.g. shortage of corn, damage by fire. In all sources Nero does not receive a good press even when he introduces beneficial reforms. Claudius’ enthusiasm for building and restoration of damaged buildings should be noted and include discussion about how ordinary people might benefit. Sources on Domitian and Trajan are more limited but both used considerable wealth on public works and entertainments to keep the people happy. Juvenal <i>Satire</i> 3 can be used as evidence that despite the efforts of the emperors many perils remained in Rome in the late 1st century AD especially for the poor. The limitations, bias and unreliability of sources should be considered.	30

Question	Answer	Marks
6	To what extent was there opposition to the emperors' rule in Rome? In your answer, you should discuss <u>at least two</u> of Claudius, Nero, Domitian and Trajan. Use the 30 mark essay marking criteria AO1 – Knowledge and understanding – 12 marks Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO1 Candidates should consider a variety of challenges to the emperors' rule in Rome from e.g. family and close friends, the Senate, plots or mutinies. Candidates should also consider instances where emperors' decisions/actions went unchallenged. Opposition might also come from other groups in Rome including the plebs. Social, economic, political crises e.g. after fire of 64 Specific conspiracies and plots e.g. Piso in 65 Challenges from the imperial family e.g. Messalina, Agrippina Credit also candidates who outline ways in which emperors tried to avoid opposition via e.g. gifts, entertainments, building programmes. Revolts challenging the emperor's rule itself from the provinces can also be credited. Sources might include: Opposition: • Suetonius <i>Claudius</i> 10 (opposition and support upon accession); 13 (attempts by knights, freedmen and slaves to assassinate Claudius) • Tacitus <i>Annals</i> 12. 66–69; 13.12–14 (Agrippina and Nero); 14.1–3 (murder of Agrippina), 14.12 (Thrasea's reaction); 14.51 (Burrus); 14.61 (riots over Octavia's treatment) 15. 48–51 (Piso's conspiracy), 15.71 (mass executions) • Dio Cassius 63.22–3 (Vindex revolt) – credit though not in Rome itself • 67.13 (Celsus conspiracy v Domitian) Good relations: • Tacitus <i>Annals</i> 14.14 (Nero popularity); 15. 42–3 (Nero's reaction to fire), 44 (suspicions) • Dio Cassius <i>Trajan</i> 68.7 (Trajan loved by all in Rome, senators and plebs) AO2 – Analysis and Evaluation – 18 marks Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO2. Expect discussion of various types of opposition from within Rome itself: from family, the imperial court, senators, the military and plebeians. Credit can be given to brief mention of opposition to the emperors' rule originating in the provinces such as Scribonianus' revolt against Claudius but revolts against Roman imperialism in e.g. Britain, Judaea are not relevant to this question.	30

Question	Answer	Marks
6	Analysis might include: the senatorial bias of some sources e.g. Tacitus, Pliny; the genre of sources such as Suetonius whose biographies focus on the personality of the emperor; the limitations of sources which focus on the emperor himself rather than the opposition.	