

CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

What is Classical Civilisation? Classical Civilisation is the study of the ideas, literature and visual/material culture of Ancient Greece and Rome.



What will I learn?

You will gain understanding of a wide range of the extraordinarily influential ideas, literature and visual/material culture of the Ancient World as well as an appreciation of the social and historical context. You will gain skills of comparison across texts and ideas, and of evaluating academics' ideas about the topics.

The course is assessed by three exams:

Component One: The World of the Hero: (H408/11). We study *Homer's 'Odyssey'* and *Virgil's 'Aeneid'*, two epic poems that have had an extensive impact on later Western literature and ideas. Homer's poem was considered the cornerstone of a good education from when first written down in the 8th Century BCE. Virgil, in 1st Century CE Rome, drew inspiration from Homer in his own influential portrayal of what it means to be a hero.

(Exam: 2 hours 20 mins, worth 40 per cent of qualification).

Component Two: Culture and the Arts: we study *Greek Art* (H408/24). You will gain knowledge of a period (6th-4th Century BCE) of dramatic change in art, reflecting changes in religion, society, values and politics. You'll study free-standing and architectural sculpture and vase-painting.

(Exam: 1 hour 45 mins, 30 per cent of qualification).

Component Three: Beliefs and Ideas: we study *Love & Relationships* (H408/32). This includes the poetry of the 7th Century BCE poet Sappho and the 1st Century CE poet Ovid, as well as the philosophy of the Greek philosopher Plato and the Roman stoic philosopher Seneca. We analyse, compare and evaluate ideas about love and relationships expressed in these sources, both in the context of their own time and their relevance to our own time.

(Exam: 1 hour 45 mins, worth 30 per cent of qualification).

Assessment in Classical Civilisation

* Knowledge, understanding, interpretation (AO1)

* critical analysis, interpretation and evaluation, using evidence and producing reasoned arguments (AO2)

The exams contain a mixture of questions:

- short factual questions (between 1 and 3 marks)
- 10-mark 'source' questions where you comment on a given section of poetry (e.g. By Ovid, Sappho or Homer) or a Greek art source
- 10-mark 'ideas' questions (on Plato or Seneca's ideas)
- 20-mark essays
- 30-mark essays in which you are required to engage with academic views

Entry Requirements

To be accepted on the Classical Civilisation course, you need:

- Good English skills (minimum 6 at GCSE): analytical approach, clear writing
- a willingness to engage with and understand challenging literary text and philosophical concepts.
- an interest in discovering the Ancient World and how it remains so relevant to us today.

Exam board: OCR H408 (A-Level)

Link to course specification [here](#)

Link to example exam papers [here](#)



Complementary Subjects

- English: interpreting literature, analysis, writing coherent, evidenced argument
- History: contextual understanding
- Drama: ideas and themes expressed through literature
- Government & Politics: contextual understanding
- Sociology: how ideas and issues in society influence literature and philosophy
- Psychology: human motivation & themes
- Geography: breadth of culture and human issues
- Art: forms of expression, contextual understanding, visual elements

Enrichment in Classical Civilisation

- Museum visits including to British Museum
- Talks by Classics specialists e.g. Edith Hall
- Theatre trips

Find out more in the meantime:

- Read the *Odyssey* (trs. Rieu) and *Aeneid* (trs. West). Editions specified by OCR.
- Listen to your choice of Natalie Haynes' 'Stand up for the Classics' BBC podcasts
- Listen to your choice of BBC Radio 4 'In Our Time' podcasts on a wide range of aspects of Ancient Greece and Rome
- Read modern novels inspired by the myths and legends of Ancient world e.g. *The Silence of the Girls* by Pat Barker, *The Song of Achilles* and *Circe* by Madeline Miller, *Home Fire* by Kamila Shamsie

Here's what our students think!

I love Classical Civilisation because it's fascinating to see how much is derived from the Ancient World in terms of literature, language and ideas. This A-Level is a never-ending voyage of discovery: there's never a dull moment as the subject is filled with captivating people and their cultural context!

It's an exciting feeling that poems such as the *Odyssey* or Sappho's songs, written over a thousand years ago, still feel relevant today—and you realise how prevalent classical ideas and references still are in our own society.

Careers related to Classical Civilisation

The knowledge and skills gained from A-Level Classical Civilisation can equip you for a wide range of careers in the future. Some examples:

Law (solicitor, barrister)

Publishing (e.g. editor)

Advertising and Marketing/Publicity

NGOs

Government/Politics e.g. The Civil Service or Foreign Office

Curator/Museum /Art gallery

Television/Radio/Online

Teacher

Researcher



I love Classics because it feels like a detective investigation where you piece together ancient evidence such as poems, sculptures, myths and vases until you've created a wider picture of ancient society.