

# Classical Civilisation



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Information for  
**students and parents**

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# CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

This course is becoming increasingly popular both at school and university level and offers a variety of topics from the Ancient Greek and Roman world. You will be expected to study each topic in detail with special reference to selected texts and, since the material is all in English, you can explore the topics in depth and will have the opportunity to relate various works of literature to their social and cultural contexts. You will be encouraged to appreciate literary technique, to collect relevant evidence and to develop and present arguments based on your findings. The course is not only literary but also involves the appreciation of social values and an understanding of both the historical and archaeological background. By the end of the course you will be able to appreciate distinctive Ancient Greek and Roman ways of thought and feeling. The course also involves the aesthetic appreciation of works of art. As well as studying art and literature in school there will be opportunities to attend performances of Greek plays and to visit museums in which material remains from the Ancient World are on display.

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

There are no formal entry requirements for A-level Classical Civilisation.

## LINKS WITH OTHER SUBJECTS

Classical Civilisation will be of particular relevance to those of you studying English, History, Art or Drama. The ideas formulated in the Greco-Roman world have been fundamental to the development of medieval and modern Europe while the art and literature of that society have been dominant influences upon European writers and artists for many centuries.

## HIGHER EDUCATION AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Classical Civilisation is fully recognised by University Admissions Officers. You can study it in its own right at university or in combination with other subjects including a Classical language. Some people are put off from studying Classics because it doesn't seem to lead to any obvious form of employment at the end of it. They couldn't be more wrong. Certainly an A-level in Classics is not vocational, in the sense of funnelling you directly into one particular form of employment, as Law or Medicine do, but Classicists are very highly prized by employers of all kinds.

Classics provides mental training in a whole range of different disciplines, and produces students of exceptional intellectual flexibility. In our world of rapid social and technological change, it is the capacity to react to new and unforeseen developments with flexibility which employers value most, and it is widely recognised that Classics and related subjects produce just the kind of graduate they are looking for, with an unparalleled capacity to adapt to new circumstances and learn new skills.

### Examples of professions which attract Classicists include:

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|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Accountancy                 | 12. Information Technology |
| 2. Law                         | 13. Academia               |
| 3. Theatre and Performing Arts | 14. Archive Work           |
| 4. Media                       | 15. Auction House Work     |
| 5. Teaching                    | 16. Archaeology            |
| 6. Arts Management             | 17. Publishing             |
| 7. Journalism                  | 18. Social Work            |
| 8. Media                       | 19. Museum Work            |
| 9. Management Consultancy      | 20. Politics               |
| 10. Librarianship              | 21. Civil Service          |
| 11. Military                   |                            |

## COURSE CONTENT

### Exam board: OCR

The A-level course is made up of 3 components:

1. Component 1: The world of the Hero. Homer's Iliad and Virgil's Aeneid. (40% of total A-level)
2. Component 2: Culture and the Arts. Greek Art. Encompassing the study of material and visual culture. (30% of total A-level).
3. Component 3: Beliefs and Ideas: Love and Relationships. (30% of total A-level).

## Year 1:

### The World of the Hero

The works of Homer were considered by the Greeks to be the foundation of Greek culture, standing at the beginning of the Western literary canon. Study of Homer's Iliad provides students with the opportunity to appreciate the lasting legacy of the Homeric world and to explore its attitudes and values. Not only do we analyse the text from a literary point of view, but we also approach the epic from historical, archeological and sociological contexts. We study the text's oral tradition, and its transmission; the structure of the epic genre; narrative techniques; the language of Greek epic, including its formulae and similes. In this module we also focus on the concept, values and behaviour of a hero including the ideas of timē (honour) and kleos (reputation).

### Greek Art

A period of great change occurred Greece in 4th-6th centuries BC, and this is reflected in the art which was produced. In this component learners will gain a thorough knowledge of the selected aspects of Greek art, but they will also gain some understanding of, and insight into, the context in which it was created, particularly the areas of religion, society, values and history/politics. Learners will have the opportunity to explore and engage with a range of the visual arts produced by

the Greeks in 6th–4th centuries BC, including freestanding sculpture, architectural sculpture and vase-painting.

## Year 2:

### Virgil's Aeneid

The principle focus of this module is on Rome in the first century BC, and the epic literature produced by Rome's finest poet and the Greek works which influenced him. We study the composition of both Homer's Iliad and Virgil's Aeneid; their plot, narrative techniques including the eloquent and moving speeches; the poets' use of descriptive techniques including similes and imagery; characterisation. We also study in detail the classical concepts of heroism, honour and reputation, family, women, the role of the gods, the power of fate, the portrayal of war, moral values and the role of Aeneas in Rome's imperial destiny. The social and cultural environment is important for the study of a work of his magnitude, and so we also cover the topics of Virgil's relationship to the emperor Augustus, and the political strife in Rome which led to the creation of the empire and Augustus' ascension.

### Love and Relationships

Ideas about love and relationships are key aspects of the literature, thoughts, and ethics of any society. This component offers the opportunity for learners to recognise and relate to the passions, frustrations and delights of love in the ancient world. This unit will generate interesting and important discussions about love, desire, sex, sexuality and the institution of marriage.

Ancient ideas about men, women and marriage enable learners to discuss the reality of love and relationships in everyday life, whilst study of Seneca and Plato provides a more conceptual approach. Throughout this material learners will be able to draw comparisons and make judgements about ideal and reality, and the nature of 'right' and 'wrong' ways to love or be loved.

The study of poetry forms the second half of the unit. Sappho is one of very few female voices from the ancient world; the context of her life is fascinating, and her verse is powerful and evocative. Ovid offers a lighter presentation of relationships and concentrates on the fun and flirtation of budding romances.

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