



# A-level Classical Studies

Board and specification: OCR Classics

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## Subject specific entry requirements:

- GCSE grade 5 or above in English.

## What skills are required of students?

Students will be expected to undertake personal research into a wide range of topics; to work independently and to have their perspectives challenged throughout the course; to read around the topics studied to broaden and deepen their understanding of the course.

## Course details

In A-level Classical Civilisation you will get to study a broad range of subjects from the Ancient Greek world. There is a mixture of literature, art and history. You will gain a breadth of study that you will not find in any other A-level subject developing a lifelong love of the ancient world.

## Component 1: Ancient Epic: Homer's *Odyssey*. Virgil's *Aeneid*.

In this compulsory component you will study Homer's *Odyssey*, as well as Virgil's *Aeneid*. You will develop an increasingly sophisticated level of knowledge and understanding of the epics themselves, the way in which they were composed, and the religious, cultural and social values and beliefs of its society. The poems of Homer were considered by the Greeks themselves to be a foundation of Greek culture, standing as they do at the beginning of the Western literary canon. This component provides you with the opportunity to appreciate the lasting legacy of the Homeric world and to explore its attitudes and values. This component also provides you with the opportunity to appreciate Virgil's *Aeneid*, a cornerstone and landmark in Western literature. Drawing inspiration from Homer, as well as from his own cultural and political context, Virgil explored what it was to be a hero in the Roman world and created a work which has proven enduringly popular.

## **Component 2: Culture and the Arts**

The drama produced in the ancient Greek theatre forms some of the most powerful literature of the ancient world, and has had a profound and wide-reaching influence on modern culture. To fully understand this cultural phenomenon requires study of not only the plays but the context in which their form and production developed. To develop this understanding this component involves the study of the physical theatre space used by the Greeks to stage their dramas, and also depictions of this staging in the visual/material record. This study of the production of Greek drama is coupled with an in-depth study of three plays, all of which have proven to be enduring favourites. The themes and concepts explored by these plays are of significant relevance and interest as much to the modern audience as they were to that of the original performance.

You will study: Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*; Euripides' *The Bacchae*; and Aristophanes' *The Frogs*.

## **Component 3: Politics of the end of the Roman Republic**

The Late Roman Republic was a period of upheaval and conflicting views on how the Roman state should function. These conflicts eventually led to the downfall of the Republican *res publica* (state) and the rise of the Roman Emperors. In this component you will study the political thought of the period from Sulla's retirement in 79 BC to the death of Cicero in 43 BC, through examining Marcus Porcius Cato ('Cato the Younger'), Gaius Julius Caesar, and Marcus Tullius Cicero. The exploration of the very different ideas of three contemporary political figures brings this tumultuous period to life and moves beyond simply studying ideals and abstracts, and into discussion of the practical difficulties familiar to states throughout history. By examining their distinctive attitudes, political beliefs, conduct, and impact, you will explore the ways in which the later Republican *res publica* (state) developed, changed, and ultimately fell. The final two topics are devoted to an in-depth study of two of Cicero's major works: his early speech against Verres, and a selection of his letters. You will study these works in stylistic terms as well in order to see Cicero's ideas in action.

### **What kinds of work will you do in class and at home?**

- Lessons will be a mixture of tutorials and seminars.
- Students will be expected to visit sites and museums in the UK in order to see the impact that the ancient world has had on our culture
- Students will engage in discussions and debates as they critically analyse the topics studied.
- As they progress, students will have to become more reliant on their own reading and development of their ideas in order to generate their own interpretations.

### **What other A/AS-levels does your subject connect well with?**

English, History, Languages, Religion, Politics, Philosophy and Ethics, and Psychology.

### **What types of university course will be helped by this A-level?**

History, ancient history, law, PPE, English, archaeology, classical studies, politics, philosophy, theology.