

Progression – Classical Civilisation

A Preparatory Unit of Work

Getting ready for A level

There is NO expectation that new students have studied Classical Civilisation at GCSE or have any knowledge of Latin. All texts are studied in English translation.

Contents:

Introduction to the Study of Ancient Civilisations

Compulsory tasks:

1. Chronology and making links between topics
2. Attitudes and beliefs then and now
3. Exploring the past
4. Mythology

Optional tasks:

- A The Julio-Claudian Dynasty of Roman Emperors
- B The Metamorphoses by Ovid
- C Persephone and Hades

1. Chronology and making links between topics

During your A Level studies you will be exploring new time periods, topics and themes in both breadth and depth. Understanding the chronology of and links between your units will be central to your ability to both analyse sources in their context and engage critically and meaningfully with them.

Step 1: Go to www.ocr.org.uk and find the specification for H408 Classical Civilisation. Read the unit descriptors for Components 11 (Odyssey) and 22 (Imperial Image).

Step 2: Create two separate timelines on A3 paper, one for Greece and one for Rome, which span the entire time period you will be studying for each of your three units.

Step 3: In a separate colour, add the prescribed literary sources and their authors to your timeline. Identify the earliest and the latest source (this requires some research). You could insert pictures of the authors to add a bit of colour.

Step 4: Do the same with the prescribed visual sources. Don't worry if you miss out a few, there are quite a lot of them. Perhaps you could focus on buildings.

Step 5: Work out the timespan between the literary sources you have added. Which authors, and poets were alive at the same time?

Step 6: Consider each of the sources and identify the type and genre, eg. poem, temple, letter, speech.

2. Attitudes and beliefs then and now

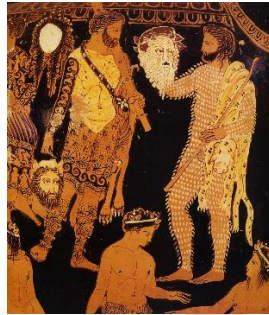
A majority of the essays you write throughout Year 12 and Year 13 will address the attitudes and beliefs in Ancient Greek and Roman society. One thing that will help us understanding the Ancients will be the study of symbolism and iconography. It will also make you understand that judgements need to be made in context rather than simply applying modern views.

Step 1: Consider each of the images below:

A



B



C



D



Step 2: Create a mind map, with the image in the middle, divided into two sections – modern interpretations and other possible interpretations.

Step 3: On the left hand-side, write down about five statements you can make about the image, eg. , who or what is depicted, what is happening here, why might this be happening, how does the image make you feel, is it a happy or a sad image.

Step 4: Now consider each of your statement and try to come up with an alternative interpretation: what could this image also be showing? Write this on the right-hand side of the image.

Step 5: At the bottom of the page, write down what information we would need in order to make a definite statement about this image. This is what we call context.

Step 6: Do you think it is possible to access that information today? How/why not?

Step 7: Think about the consequences of your findings during this exercise. Formulate some “lessons” you have learned from this exercise.

3. Exploring the past

Classical Civilisation is the study of ancient worlds and past societies. We are not just historians but sociologists, psychologists, time travellers. That means we will look at all sources left by the ancient Greeks, Egyptians and Romans.

What do you think we can learn from the following types of sources?

1. Statues – eg. appearance, clothing and fashion, ...
2. Temples
3. Myths
4. Coins
5. Poems
6. Letters – individual friendships and relationships, events
7. Paintings
8. Pots and vases
9. Biographies
10. Jewellery

Watch the “Meet the Romans” documentaries with Mary Beard on youtube for some help and inspiration.

4. Mythology

Most Classicists first learn about the ancient world through Myths, ancient tales of Gods, monsters, nymphs and legendary heroes. Mythology and the Gods will play a large role in A level Classics. How many do you know?

	Greek	Roman
King of the Gods	Z	
His wife	H	J
Goddess of wisdom		
God of light, prophecy/healing	A	
God of the sea/earthquakes		
God of wine and theatre	D	B
Goddess of sex and beauty		
Goddess of hunting/chastity	A	
Goddess of the hearth	H	V
God of the underworld		P
God of war		
God of weapons and craft	H	V
Goddess of harvest/grain	D	C
Messenger God	H	

Some business such as “Hermes” are named after the Olympian Gods. Can you make the connection between the type of business and the name they have chosen?

Read or watch the story of Apollo and Daphne.

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=apollo+and+daphne&docid=608044322237384093&mid=B24595BAB723FA7C9AFEB24595BAB723FA7C9AFE&view=detail&FORM=VIRE>

How does this story help us understand the nature of the Greek Gods?

Write down five characteristics the Gods display here. Compare these with our perception of how a God should behave in order to be described as “divine”.

You can see that the Ancients had a fairly different image of their Gods compared to modern religions. How do you think this would have influenced people’s everyday lives?

Make some notes on the question here:

Now find other Greek myths featuring Immortals and Mortals and compare with your notes. Do they confirm your initial thoughts?

5. Optional tasks:

A

Below is a list of Roman emperors and members of the Julio-Claudian dynasty. You will have discovered that one of the 1st year topics is Augustus, the first Roman emperor, but we will encounter some of the others throughout the course.

Julius Caesar (he was never emperor!)	Claudius
Julia the Elder	Messalina
Agrippina the Younger	Caligula
Augustus (Octavian)	Germanicus
Nero	Livia
Tiberius	Domitius

1. Draw a family tree showing the relations and connections between the men and women above. You can add other names if you wish – it's a huge family.
2. Choose one of the emperors and find out more about their life and rule. Some of the information you will come across is quite shocking!

Some relevant sources:

Suetonius, *"The Lives of the Twelve Caesars"*

Tacitus, *"Annals"*

BBC documentary *"I, Caesar"*

Catherine Edwards *"Mothers, Murderesses, Mistresses"* (doc)

Mary Beard, *"SPQR"*

Galinsky, *"The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus"*

Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *"Augustan Rome"*

Mary Beard, *"Caligula"* (doc)

B

All topics will include the study of poetry. Read the extract from Ovid's "Metamorphoses":

When Venus, the golden mother of Aeneas, saw [...] that a grim death was being readied for Caesar, her high-priest, and an armed conspiracy was under way, she grew pale and said to every god in turn: 'See the nest of tricks being prepared against me, and with what treachery that life is being attacked, all that is left to me of Trojan Iulus. Will I be the only one always to be troubled by well-founded anxiety: now Diomedes' Calydonian spear wounds me: now the ill-defended walls of Troy confound me, seeing my son Aeneas driven to endless wandering, storm-tossed, entering the silent house of shadows [...]? Prevent them, I beg you, thwart this attempt, and do not allow Vesta's flames to be quenched by the blood of her priest!'

Venus in her anxiety voiced her fears throughout the heavens, but in vain, troubling the gods who gave no uncertain omens of imminent disaster. They say weapons, clashing among black clouds, and terrifying trumpets and horns, foretelling crime, were heard from the sky: and that the face of the sun, darkened, gave out a lurid light, over the troubled earth. Often, firebrands were seen, burning in the midst of the stars: often drops of blood rained from the clouds: Lucifer, the morning star, was dulled, with rust-black spots on his disc, and the moon's chariot was spattered with blood.

The Stygian owl sounded its sad omens in a thousand places: in a thousand places ivory statues wept: and incantations, and warning words, were said to have been heard in the sacred groves. No sacrifice was favourable, and the livers were found with cleft lobes, among the entrails, warning of great and impending civil conflict. In the forum, and around men's houses, and the temples of the gods, dogs howled at night, and they say the silent dead walked, and earthquakes shook the city. Still the gods' warnings could not prevent the conspiracy, or fate's fulfilment.

[...] Venus struck her breast with both hands and tried to hide Caesar in a cloud. [...]

Then Jupiter, the father, spoke: 'Alone, do you think you will move the immovable fates, daughter? [...] This descendant of yours you suffer over, Cytherean, has fulfilled his time, and the years he owes to earth are done. You, and Augustus, his 'son', will ensure that he ascends to heaven as a god, and is worshipped in the temples. Augustus, as heir to his name, will carry the burden placed upon him alone, and will have us with him, in battle, as the most courageous avenger of his father's murder. [...] Wherever earth contains habitable land, it will be his: and even the sea will serve him!

When the world is at peace, he will [...] direct morality by his own example, and, looking to the future ages and coming generations, he will order a son, Tiberius, born of his virtuous wife, to take his name, and his responsibilities. He will not attain his heavenly home, and the stars, his kindred, until he is old, and his years equal his merits. Meanwhile take up Caesar's spirit from his murdered corpse, and change it into a star, so that the deified Julius may always look down from his high temple on our Capitol and forum.

He had barely finished, when gentle Venus stood in the midst of the Senate, seen by no one, and took up the newly freed spirit of her Caesar from his body, and preventing it from vanishing into the air, carried it towards the glorious stars. As she carried it, she felt it glow and take fire, and loosed it from her breast: it climbed higher than the moon, and drawing behind it a fiery tail, shone as a star.

1. What is happening in this poem? Write down a short summary of no more than five sentences.
2. Why is Venus so upset about Julius Caesar's fate?
3. Who do you think does this poem praise first and foremost, Julius Casear or Augustus? Explain.
4. Who might have read or heard this poem? Who would not have had the chance?
5. What might motivate a poet to write a poem like this?

Extension: Find other stories from the Metamorphoses. Some might be known to you already, as Ovid included well-known myths in his epic poem. What theme do they all have in common? (tip: find out the meaning of the word "metamorphosis").

C

Read the story of Persephone and Hades. The Ancients are likely to have taken the content of this myth more seriously than we do today – for us it's only a fantasy story. Can you explain why this is?