

Cambridge International AS & A Level

CLASSICAL STUDIES**9274/42**

Paper 4 Greek Literature

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 **12** 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
	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	To what extent is the depiction of Agamemnon in this passage typical of his wider portrayal in the play? Use the 20 mark source-based marking criteria. Candidates must make use of the passage but should also provide other information from their study of <i>Agamemnon</i>. AO1 – Knowledge and understanding – 8 marks. Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO1. In the passage: • Agamemnon seems humble – thinks praise should come from others • Does not want to be treated like a woman or a foreigner • Is respectful to the gods ‘only the gods deserve the poms of honour’ • Knows right from wrong. Elsewhere: • The chorus recall that he brutally sacrifices his daughter to appease Artemis • He returns from Troy with Cassandra • The chorus are very loyal to him • The chorus talk of the cost of the war on the city • He is persuaded by Clytemnestra to walk on the tapestries in the end. AO2 – Analysis and evaluation – 12 marks. Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO2. Discussion and conclusions will depend on the examples chosen. Candidates should make detailed references to specific passages in the play to support their points. The depiction of Agamemnon in the passage is part of his only appearance in the play. He seems humble and god fearing, which is in keeping with the way that he is depicted by the chorus. The fact that he is persuaded by Clytemnestra to walk on the tapestries goes against his resolve in this passage. Much of the characterisation of Agamemnon in the play is from the chorus’ discussions of him. The strongest answers to this question will be the ones that make accurate use of those choral odes. Credit any valid argument that is well supported with details from the play.	20

Question	Answer	Marks
2	‘The cause of all disaster in Greek tragedy is that family members hate each other.’ How far do you agree with this statement? In your answer, you should discuss <u>at least two</u> plays Use the 30 mark essay marking criteria. AO1 – Knowledge and understanding – 12 marks. Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO1. Candidates could consider: <i>Agamemnon</i> • The sacrifice of Iphigenia <i>Antigone</i> • Antigone buries her brother • Creon, her uncle, treats her harshly <i>Medea</i> • Her betrayal by Jason • Her murder of her children <i>Electra</i> • Her relationship with her mother • The murder of her father • Her relationship with her brother AO2 – Analysis and evaluation – 18 marks. Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO2. There are a wide variety of ways that candidates could approach this question and credit should be given for any valid line of argument. In general all Greek tragedies focus on family groups so the statement must be true to some extent. In <i>Agamemnon</i>, Clytemnestra's desire for revenge is driven by the fact that Agamemnon sacrificed their daughter in order to obtain the winds to sail to Troy. Agamemnon does not hate his daughter but his actions certainly lead to his wife's hatred. Candidates could discuss whether they think that this is more to blame than Agamemnon's hubris. In <i>Antigone</i>, the plot is driven by Antigone's desire for her brother to have a proper burial. This then is not an act of hate but one of love – both of her brother and of the gods. Candidates could also consider her relationship with Ismene. Creon, although harsh towards Antigone, does not hate her but rather is trying to do the right thing for the city. Medea's hatred for Jason is a motivation. She does not hate her children but does not love them more than her hatred of Jason. In <i>Electra</i>, Electra hates her mother for the murder of her father and for what her life has become. Expect candidates to explore the idea of hatred within families, more nuanced answers may also explore other causes.	30

Question	Answer	Marks
2	Accept any valid line of argument that is well supported with examples from the text.	

Question	Answer	Marks
3	Do the opinions of the chorus and minor characters affect how positively tragic heroes are viewed? In your answer you should refer to <u>at least two</u> plays. Use the 30 mark essay marking criteria. AO1 – Knowledge and understanding – 12 marks. Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO1. Candidates could choose to discuss: • Agamemnon – as viewed by the chorus • Medea – as viewed by the Nurse and chorus • Antigone – as viewed by Ismene • Electra – as viewed by her husband • Clytemnestra AO2 – Analysis and evaluation – 18 marks. Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO2. Discussion and conclusions will depend on the examples chosen. Candidates should make reference to at least two plays but the response does not need to focus equally on all plays discussed to gain marks. This question is asking candidates to look at the role played by the chorus and minor characters in the play and how far their judgment affects how the tragic heroes are viewed. They could consider how characters would be viewed if we only had their own actions and speeches to judge them on compared with how they appear through the eyes of those who are on their side. Credit should be given for any reasonable line of argument that is well backed up with examples.	30

Question	Answer	Marks
4	Using this passage as a starting point, discuss how typical this is of the depiction of Athene in the <i>Odyssey</i>. Use the 20 mark source-based marking criteria. Candidates must make use of the passage but should also provide other information from their study of the <i>Odyssey</i>. AO1 – Knowledge and understanding – 8 marks. Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO1. In the passage: • Athene can pass through closed doors • She takes the form of someone known to Nausicaa • She is appearing in a dream • She is sending Nausicaa to help Odysseus Elsewhere: • She often helps Odysseus directly – e.g. battle with the suitors • She intervenes with Zeus on Odysseus' behalf • She often takes the form of other people e.g. a young girl, Mentor • She also appears in a dream to Penelope in Book 4 • She helps Telemachus embark on his journey to find his father • She disguises or conceals Odysseus to help keep him safe AO2 – Analysis and evaluation – 12 marks. Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO2. Discussion and conclusions will depend on the examples chosen. Candidates should make detailed references to back up their points. Candidates should explore a range of examples where Athene appears and use this to examine how typical this passage is. In some ways it is a standard depiction of Athene as she is appearing to help Odysseus. In others it is less typical – she is using the medium of a dream, she is not helping directly or inspiring ideas in Odysseus but arranging for someone else to be present to help him. She is being clever by introducing the idea of marriage as a motivation for Nausicaa to both be in the right place to meet Odysseus and prepared to help a stranger. Credit should be given for any sensible line of argument that is well backed up with examples.	20

Question	Answer	Marks
5	‘Trojans are presented more sympathetically than Greeks in the <i>Iliad</i>.’ How far do you agree with this statement? In your answer, you should discuss at least <u>two</u> Greek and <u>two</u> Trojan characters from the <i>Iliad</i>. Use the 30 mark essay marking criteria. AO1 – Knowledge and understanding – 12 marks. Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO1. There are many examples that candidates could choose to discuss: Trojans: • Hector • Andromache • Paris • Priam • Hecabe • Sarpedon Greeks: • Achilles • Patroclus • Diomedes • Agamemnon • Menelaus • Ajax • Odysseus • Nestor AO2 – Analysis and evaluation – 18 marks. Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO2. Discussion and conclusions will depend on the examples chosen. The Trojans are often seen in the context of their families which means that they may often seem more sympathetic. Priam as a father who begs for his son’s body is a more vulnerable and sympathetic character than the Greek old men who are advisors. Similarly, we see Hector with his wife and child. Contrastingly the Greeks are more often depicted on the battlefield. Achilles, however, is seen with his mother and after the loss of a close friend. Stronger answers may also explore what makes characters sympathetic in the first place. Credit any valid argument that is well-supported with examples from the text.	30

Question	Answer	Marks
6	‘Homer’s epics are still relevant because their themes are timeless.’ How far do you agree with this statement? In your answer, you should discuss <u>both</u> the <i>Iliad</i> <u>and</u> the <i>Odyssey</i>. Use the 30 mark essay marking criteria. AO1 – Knowledge and understanding – 12 marks. Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO1. Candidates could choose to discuss any of the themes of the epics. Including but not limited to: • Pride • War and warfare • Anger and reconciliation • Justice and revenge • Overcoming obstacles • Love and loss • The supernatural and fantasy • Disguise and recognition. This list is not prescriptive and any valid examples should be credited. AO2 – Analysis and evaluation – 18 marks. Marks should be awarded using the marking criteria for AO2. Discussion and conclusions will depend on the examples chosen. Some themes will have more relevance to the modern world than others and much will depend on what candidates identify from the epics. Expect candidates to identify themes and support them with detailed reference to the text. Expect stronger answers to have considered which themes are most relevant to modern life rather than simply listing all the themes. There are many ways that candidates could approach this question and credit should be given for any arguments that are supported with a good level of detail from the text.	30