



A Level Classical Civilisation

Why study Classical Civilisation?

The influence of the classical world is all around us. We are all familiar with Greek and Roman myths and legends – Hollywood loves stories like the fall of Troy – but the influence of these two cultures on our everyday lives is wider than that.

For example, the Greeks gave us democracy and theatre; the Romans brought us roads and baths. Classical Civilisation gives you the opportunity to study the literature and culture of the ancient Greeks and Romans, reading the works of famous authors such as Homer, Virgil, Aristophanes and Sophocles, learning about their lives and religious beliefs and customs, and enabling you to assess the contribution made by these two great civilisations to our lives today.

Students studying Classical Civilisation will be expected to enhance their understanding by participating in study days, museum trips and theatre trips. These are planned jointly with Loughborough Grammar School. There are also regular trips abroad for those interested.

Entry requirements

There are no specific entry requirements for the A Level Classical Civilisation course. You do not need to have studied Classical Civilisation at GCSE, and all texts studied are in English. The course does involve a significant number of literary sources, to which an enjoyment of Greek and Roman mythology and a willingness to read and discuss literature are necessary for this course. Students will examine sources, both literary and material/visual, and be required to be critical about them. As such, we would advise that any student wishing to take this course should have achieved at least a grade 7 in English Literature and History should they have studied the latter.

What does the course involve?

In Year 12 you will commence your study of *The World of the Hero*, reading selected books of the *Odyssey*. This component provides students with the opportunity to appreciate the lasting legacy of the Homeric world and to explore its attitudes and values. The epics of Homer, with their heroes, gods and exciting narratives, have inspired generations of readers and their influence can be seen in works such as Virgil's *Aeneid*, James Joyce's *Ulysses*, films such as *Brother*, *Where Art Thou?* and even *Game of Thrones*.

You will also study the *Invention of the Barbarian* component, learning how the Greeks saw themselves as distinct from their 'barbarian' neighbours. You will look into how the image of the barbarian as being distinct from, and inferior to, the Greeks emerged and persisted, and analyse how far the Greek stereotype of the Persians was based on fact or prejudice. You will be encouraged to question assumptions and think critically about portrayals of difference and identity. You will also examine depictions of the Persians in the work of Herodotus and Aeschylus, and the idea of barbarians in Greek myth, including why the Greeks were fascinated by female barbarians in particular.

In Year 13 you will continue your study of *The World of the Hero*, moving on to reading the prescribed books of Virgil's *Aeneid*, a Roman epic which draws heavily upon the model of Homer, but with a slightly different audience and purpose in mind.

The third module is *Politics of the Late Republic*, which looks at the period in Roman history, which is characterised by 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 the students 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. These bring this tumultuous period to life moving beyond simply studying ideals and abstracts into discussion of the practical difficulties familiar to states throughout history.

Exam Board

OCR H408 Classical Civilisation

