



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission

Leaving Certificate Examination 2025 Classical Studies

Higher Level

Monday 23 June Afternoon 2:00 - 4:30

400 marks

Examination Number

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Date of Birth

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For example, 3rd February
2005 is entered as 03 02 05

Centre Stamp

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Instructions

Write your examination number and date of birth in the boxes on the front cover.

Write your answers in blue or black pen.

You may use pencil, including colouring pencils, **only** in drawings or diagrams.

Write all your answers in the spaces provided in this booklet. There is additional answer space at the end of the booklet. Label any such extra work clearly with the question number and part.

This examination booklet will be scanned and your work will be presented to an examiner on screen. Anything that you write outside of the answer areas may not be seen by the examiner.

There are **two** sections in this paper.

Section A	Stimulus Questions	200 marks
	• Answer all questions presented.	

Images for Questions 1, 2, 5, 7, 9 and 10 in Section A are on **Paper X** which accompanies this examination paper.

Section B	Extended Answers	200 marks
	• Answer Question 11.	(120 marks)
	• Answer one from Questions 12-16.	(80 marks)

Where appropriate you may include drawings, diagrams, etc., in the blank answer space on page 14 in Section A and pages 22 and 27 in Section B.

Section A	Stimulus Questions	200 marks
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Answer all **ten** of the following questions. Each question carries twenty marks.
Refer to the images on **Paper X** as indicated for Questions 1, 2, 5, 7, 9 and 10.

Question 1
(20 marks)

Image A is a sculpture of Laocoön and his sons from Virgil’s *Aeneid*.

(a) Put a tick in the appropriate box to indicate whether each statement is True **or** False.

	True	False
(i) Laocoön believed that the Trojan horse was a bad omen.	☐	☐
(ii) Laocoön was a priest of Apollo.	☐	☐
(iii) Jupiter sent snakes to punish Laocoön.	☐	☐

(b) Do you feel sympathy for Laocoön? Support your answer with evidence from Virgil’s *Aeneid* **and** Image A.

(c) Give an account of an example of divine intervention in Homer’s *Odyssey*.

Question 2**(20 marks)**

Image B shows a visual representation of the structure of Books 10-12 in Homer's *Odyssey*.

- (a) Give the name of the storytelling technique which is visually represented in Image B.

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- (b) Below are other storytelling techniques used in epic poetry. Complete the table below by writing the number beside each technique in the box next to its definition.

1. epithet 2. simile 3. ecphrasis 4. in medias res

Definition	Number
The comparison of one thing with another thing of a different kind	
When the story starts in the middle of the narrative	
A characterising word or phrase	
A detailed description of a work of visual art	

- (c) Explain how **one** of the above techniques contributes to the storytelling in Homer's *Odyssey* or Virgil's *Aeneid*. Support your answer with **at least one** example from the text.

Question 3

(20 marks)

Read the passage below, which is taken from Book 1 of Virgil's *Aeneid*.

Since this trouble gnaws at my heart, I'll speak and unroll the secret scroll of destiny – this son of yours will wage a mighty war in Italy, destroy proud peoples, and establish laws and city walls for his warriors.... But the boy Ascanius, surnamed Iulus – he was Iulus while the Ilian kingdom was a reality – will rule complete for thirty great circles of the turning months, and transfer his throne from its site at Lavinium, mighty in power, and will build the walls of Alba Longa... From this glorious source a Trojan Caesar will be born, who will bound the empire with Ocean...

(a) Who is the speaker of this passage **and** who is being addressed?

Speaker:	Addressee:
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(b) Why is Augustan propaganda important for understanding Virgil's *Aeneid*?

(c) Give **one** other example of where Virgil uses propaganda in the *Aeneid*. Explain the significance of this propaganda to Augustan policy.

Question 4**(20 marks)**

Extract A is a from Euripides' *Medea* and Extract B is from Sophocles' *Philoctetes*.

Tick the box next to the extract from the play which you have chosen: Extract A **or** Extract B.

Extract A: Euripides' *Medea* ☐

Do you think that I would ever have fawned so much on this man,
Except to gain my purposes, carry out my schemes?
Not one touch, not one word: yet he – oh, what a fool!
By banishing me at once he could have thwarted me
Utterly; instead he allows me to remain one day.

Extract B: Sophocles' *Philoctetes* ☐

"I know, my boy, it isn't part of your nature
To tell untruths or resort to double-dealing.
But victory's a prize worth gaining. Bring yourself to do it. We'll prove our honesty later on.
Now, for a few hours, put yourself in my hands and forgo your scruples.
Then, for the rest of time, be called the most god-fearing man in the world!"

- (a)** What do you consider to be the most important phrase or sentence that foreshadows the plot development in your chosen extract? Explain your answer with analysis of the play.

- (b)** Briefly explain how your chosen extract gives insight into the character of the speaker.

Question 5**(20 marks)**

Image C and Image D show different types of Roman entertainment.

(a) In your opinion, why would a person participate in these dangerous forms of entertainment?

(b) Describe the audience experience at the Colosseum **and** the Circus Maximus.

Question 6**(20 marks)**

The extract below is about a Roman politician.

He was unsparing in his spending, and was thought to be purchasing a short-lived fame at a great price, though in reality he was buying things of the highest value at a small price. ... During his aedileship, he furnished three hundred and twenty pairs of gladiators, and by lavish provision for theatrical performances, processions, and public banquets, he washed away all memory of the ambitious efforts of his predecessors in the office. By these means he put the people in such a humour that every man was seeking out new offices and new honours to give him.

- (a)** Discuss the political importance of Roman entertainment, using evidence from this extract **and** your study of Roman spectacle.

- (b)** Do you think that modern forms of public entertainment have political importance? Give a reason for your answer.

Question 7**(20 marks)**

Image E shows the expansion of Alexander the Great's empire.
Image F shows the expansion of Roman territory by Julius Caesar.

Answer (a) **or** (b).

- (a)** Explain **three** strategies that Alexander the Great used to expand his empire. In your answer refer to political **and** military strategy.

OR

- (b)** Explain **three** strategies that Julius Caesar used to expand his power in Rome. In your answer refer to political **and** military strategy.

1.
2.
3.

Question 8**(20 marks)**

Choose Extract A **or** Extract B and answer the questions that follow.

Tick the box to indicate the extract you have chosen.

Extract A: Arrian, *Alexander the Great*

☐

Over and above this there was a legend about the wagon, that anyone who untied the knot of the yoke [the Gordian knot] would rule Asia. The knot was of cornel bark, and you could not see where it began or ended. Alexander was unable to find how to untie the knot but unwilling to leave it tied, in case this caused a disturbance among the masses; some say that he struck it with his sword, cut the knot, and said it was now untied—but Aristobulus says that he took out the pole-pin, a bolt driven right through the pole, holding the knot together, and so removed the yoke from the pole. I cannot say with confidence what Alexander actually did about this knot, but he and his companions certainly left the wagon with the impression that the oracle about the undoing of the knot had been fulfilled, and in fact that night there was thunder and lightning, a further sign from heaven; so Alexander in thanksgiving offered sacrifice next day to whatever gods had shown the signs and the way to undo the knot.

Extract B: Plutarch, *Julius Caesar*

☐

On his voyage back, Caesar was captured by pirates. To begin with, then, when the pirates demanded twenty talents for his ransom, he laughed at them for not knowing who their captive was, and of his own accord agreed to give them fifty. After he had sent various followers to various cities to procure the money and was left with one friend and two attendants among the Cilicians, most murderous of men, he held them in such disdain that whenever he lay down to sleep he would order them to stop talking... He wrote poems and sundry speeches which he read aloud to them, and those who did not admire these he would call to their faces illiterate, and often laughingly threatened to hang them all. The pirates were delighted at this, and attributed his boldness of speech to a certain simplicity and boyish mirth. But after his ransom had come from Miletus and he had paid it and was set free, he immediately manned vessels and put to sea from the harbour of Miletus against the robbers. He caught them, too, still lying at anchor off the island, and got most of them into his power.

- (a) What **two** characteristics does your chosen extract reveal about the character of Alexander **or** Caesar? Support your answer with analysis of your chosen extract.

This answer box continues onto the next page →

- (b)** Explain whether you consider ancient authors to be reliable sources on Alexander **or** Caesar. Refer to the language of your chosen extract **and** your study of other texts.

Question 9**(20 marks)**

Image G shows an ancient Greek vase painting of a young woman leaving gifts at a gravestone.

(a) Name **four** things that the ancient Greeks left as gifts on or in graves.

1.	2.
3.	4.

(b) Imagine that you are the young woman in Image G. Explain why you think that it is important to bring gifts to the ancient Greek person's tomb.

(c) Why do you think that women had specific roles in ancient Greek **or** Roman funeral practices? Explain your answer.

Question 10**(20 marks)**

Image H is a digital reconstruction of a building in ancient Greece.

(a) What type of building is shown in Image H?

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(b) Describe **four** different architectural elements of the building shown in Image H. You may support your answer with a labelled diagram or drawing using the space on the next page.

Name of architectural element 1:
Description:

Name of architectural element 2:
Description:

Name of architectural element 3:
Description:

Name of architectural element 4:
Description:

Answer Space for optional sketches, diagrams, etc.

Do not write on this page.

Section B – Extended Answers - begins on page 16

Question 11

(120 marks)

Read this extract from *Odes* 3.29 by Horace and answer the questions which follow.

God foresees all future time and hides
What is to come in mist and darkness.
He smiles if mortals fret too much.

Make sure you deal calmly
With what is here. Everything else
Flows by like a river, now gliding peacefully
In mid-channel down to the Tuscan sea...

A man will be happy and in control
Of his life if he can say at each day's end,
'I have lived'. Tomorrow Father Jupiter
Can fill the sky with dark cloud

Or cloudless sunlight, but he will not
Annul what is behind us, nor
Will he remake or cancel
What the flying hour has brought.

(a) Answer part (i) **and** part (ii).

(40 marks)

- (i) In this poem, how does Horace show the relationship between human decision and divine will? Support your answer with analysis of **at least two** phrases or sentences.

This answer box continues onto the next page →

(ii) Do you agree with the message of this poem? Explain your answer.

(b) Answer **one** of the following questions.

(80 marks)

- (i)** How does Plato's *Crito* explore the concept of 'living well' when faced with the inevitability of death? Support your answer with examples from the text.

OR

- (ii)** Do you think that Socrates' views on 'living well' are relevant today? Explain your answer using examples from Plato's *Crito*.

OR

- (iii)** Compare Socrates' concept of justice in Plato's *Crito* with the portrayal of justice in any other text you have studied on your course.

Optional Planning Space:

Answer for Question 11 (b), part

Answer Space for optional drawings, diagrams, etc:

Answer **one** of the five questions below.

(80 marks)

Question 12

Answer (a) **and** (b).

- (a) Explain the concept of what it means to be ‘civilised’ and ‘barbarian’ in the Greco-Roman world.
- (b) Discuss this concept in regard to **at least one** text you have studied. You may use material from **any** of the four strands on your course.

OR

Question 13

Assess the civic, political, social, and religious importance of **at least one** temple on your course.

OR

Question 14

In your opinion, does Odysseus place his own interests or his men’s interests first in Homer’s *Odyssey*? Justify your answer with evidence from the *Odyssey*.

OR

Question 15

Evaluate the strategy, tactics and outcome of **at least one** major military engagement by either Alexander the Great **or** Julius Caesar.

OR

Question 16

“Tragedy is a performance of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude. Through pity and fear Tragedy effects the proper catharsis of emotions.” (Aristotle)

Discuss this quote with reference to your study of ancient Greek Tragedy. Support your answer with analysis of the text **and/or** performance of Euripides’ *Medea* **or** Sophocles’ *Philoctetes*.

Optional Planning Space:

Answer Space for optional drawings, diagrams, etc:

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

Acknowledgements:

Texts

Page 5: Virgil. *The Aeneid*. Trans. David West. London: Penguin Books, 2003.

Page 6: Euripides. *Medea*. Trans. Philip Vellacott. London: Penguin Books, 1963.

Sophocles. *Philoctetes*. Trans. David Raeburn. London: Penguin Books, 2008.

Page 8: Plutarch. *Lives, Caesar*. Trans. Bernadotte Perrin. Loeb 1969.

Page 10: Extract A: Arrian, *Anabasis* 2.3. Trans. P. A. Brunt. Loeb 1976.

Extract B: Plutarch. *Lives, Caesar* 2-3. Trans. Bernadotte Perrin. Loeb 1969.

Page 16: Horace, *The Complete Odes and Epodes*. Trans. David West. Oxford 1997. (adapted)

Page 23: Aristotle. *Poetics*. adapted from <https://www.britannica.com/art/tragedy-literature/Theory-of-tragedy>

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