



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission

Leaving Certificate Examination 2026 Classical Studies

Higher Level

Monday 22 June Afternoon 2:00 - 4:30

400 marks

Examination Number

----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------

Date of Birth

		/			/		
----------------------	----------------------	---	----------------------	----------------------	---	----------------------	----------------------

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

Centre Stamp

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 Section A (pages 14-15), after each question in Section B (Question 11, page 22; Questions 12-16, page 28), and 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 – 3 and 5 – 7 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 16 in Section A and pages 23 and 29 in Section B.

Answer all **ten** of the following questions. Each question carries twenty marks.
Refer to the images on **Paper X** as indicated for Questions 1 – 3 and 5 – 7.

Question 1 (20 marks)

Image A shows the Temple of Vesta in ancient Rome.

(a) Outline the significance of the Temple of Vesta to ancient Roman society.

(b) Discuss the role, duties and expectations of the Vestal Virgins.

Question 2**(20 marks)**

Image B shows the front and back of an architectural feature from a Greek temple.

(a) State the name of the architectural feature in Image B **and** the temple it comes from.

Feature:	Temple:
----------	---------

(b) Give a detailed description of Image B. Include key terms in your answer.

(c) How did this architectural feature contribute to the design of its temple?

Question 3**(20 marks)**

Image C shows a mosaic of a famous Roman myth.

(a) Name the **two** boys shown in Image C.

--

(b) Write the Roman name of each god/ goddess next to their description in the table below.

Description	Roman Name
The god who fathered the boys in Image C.	
Aeneas' greatest divine enemy; she hates the Trojans.	
Aeneas' mother.	
The Sybil of Cumae is this god's priestess.	

(c) What values do you think are reflected in Roman mythology? Support your answer with reference to **any** Roman myths you have studied.

Question 4**(20 marks)**

Read the passage below from Book 11 of the *Odyssey*.

‘Don’t say a word,’ he answered, ‘in death's favour; I would rather be a paid servant in a poor man's house and be above ground than king of kings among the dead. But give me news about my son; is he gone to the wars and will he be a great soldier, or not? Tell me also if you have heard anything about my father Peleus – does he still rule among the Myrmidons, or do they show him no respect throughout Hellas and Phthia now that he is old and his limbs fail him? Could I but stand by his side, in the light of day, with the same strength that I had when I killed the bravest of our foes upon the plain of Troy – could I but be as I then was and go even for a short time to my father's house, any one who tried to do him violence or supersede him would soon have me to deal with.’

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

Speaker:	Addressee:
----------	------------

(b) Identify **one** theme in this passage and discuss its importance to the *Odyssey*.

Question 5**(20 marks)**

Image D and Image E are scenes from modern performances of Greek Tragedy.

Image D is a scene from Euripides' *Medea*. Image E is a scene from Sophocles' *Philoctetes*.

(a) Based on your study of *Medea* **or** *Philoctetes*, explain the significance of **one** of these scenes.

(b) Discuss the use of masks in the performance of Tragedy in ancient Athens.

Question 6**(20 marks)**

Image F is a map showing locations of ancient Greek theatres near the Aegean Sea.

(a) What does this map tell us about the significance of theatres in the ancient Greek world?

(b) Name **one** ancient Greek theatre that you have studied.

--

(c) Explain in detail how ancient Greek theatres were designed, including how sites were chosen.

Question 7

(20 marks)

Image G shows Mark Antony and Julius Caesar in a scene from the TV series *Rome*.
Image H shows Hephaestion and Alexander the Great in a scene from the film *Alexander*.

Briefly discuss the influence that any **two** of the following had on the life of Alexander **or** Caesar.

- Hephaestion; Olympias; Cleitus the Black.
- Mark Antony; Brutus; Cleopatra.

1.
2.

Question 8**(20 marks)**

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

Tick (✓) the box of your chosen extract.

Extract A: Alexander the Great by Plutarch ☐

For when they brought him news that his father had taken some famous city, or had won some great battle, he was not glad to hear it, but would say to his friends: 'Sirs, my father will have all, I shall have nothing left to conquer with you, of any worth.' For he delighting neither in pleasure nor riches, but only in courage and honour, thought that the greater conquests and realms his father should leave him, the less he should have to do for himself. And therefore, seeing that his father's dominions and empire increased daily more and more, perceiving all occasion taken from him to do anything great, he desired no riches nor pleasure, but wars and battles, and aspired to opportunities where he might win honour.

Extract B: Julius Caesar by Plutarch ☐

Caesar's friends advised him to return to Rome, but he went to Rhodes, and entered himself in the school of Apollonius, Molon's son, a famous rhetorician, one who had the reputation of a worthy man, and had Cicero for one of his scholars. Caesar is said to have been admirably fitted by nature to make a great statesman and orator, and to have taken such pains to improve his genius this way, that without dispute he might challenge the second place. More he did not aim at, choosing to be first amongst men of arms and power, and, therefore, never rose to that height of eloquence to which nature would have carried him, his attention being diverted to those expeditions and designs, which at length gained him the empire.

- (a)** What does this extract from Plutarch reveal about the character of Alexander **or** Caesar? Support your answer with analysis of the text.

(b) Name **another** ancient author from your study of Alexander **or** Caesar.

--

(c) How does this ancient author compare with Plutarch as a source on Alexander **or** Caesar? Support your answer with examples from your chosen author **and** Plutarch. You may refer to the above extracts.

Question 9**(20 marks)**

Read the text below which is from the tomb of Diodorus the gladiator.

Here I lie victorious, Diodorus the wretched. After breaking my opponent Demetrius, I did not kill him immediately. But murderous Fate and the cunning treachery of the referee killed me, and leaving the light I have gone to Hades... A good friend buried me here because of his piety.

- (a)** Examine what we can learn from this epitaph about the importance of Roman funerary practices and how Romans commemorated the dead.

- (b)** Do you think that inscriptions are important sources for understanding society in ancient Rome? Give reasons for your answer.

Question 10**(20 marks)**

Read the following extract from Plato's *Crito* and answer the questions that follow.

Now, before we go farther, let us examine, upon the principles you have agreed to, whether my departure from here, without the permission of the Athenians, is just or unjust. If it be found just, we must do our utmost to bring it about... If this be an unjust thing, we need not reason much upon the point, since it is better to abide here and die than to undergo something more terrible than death.

- (a)** Based on your understanding of Socrates' beliefs, explain the line in this extract:
'it is better to abide here and die than to undergo something more terrible than death.'

- (b)** Outline **two** of Crito's counter-arguments.

Additional Answer Space for Section A:

[illegible]

Optional Answer Space for drawings, diagrams, etc.

Question 11

(120 marks)

Answer the questions which follow.

‘How surprising that men blame the gods, and say their troubles come from us, though they, through their own recklessness, find suffering beyond what is fated.’

- Zeus, the *Odyssey*

- (a)** Discuss how certain characters in the *Odyssey* 'suffer because of their own recklessness'.

(40 marks)

[illegible]

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

(80 marks)

(i) Evaluate the role of Athena in the *Odyssey* **and/or** Juno in the *Aeneid*.

OR

(ii) Evaluate the role of divine intervention in the *Odyssey* **and/or** the *Aeneid*.

OR

(iii) Evaluate the role of suffering in Virgil's *Aeneid*.

Optional Planning Space:

Answer for Question 11 (b), part

Additional Answer Space for Question 11:

Optional Answer Space for drawings, diagrams, etc:

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

(80 marks)

Question 12

Discuss how the phrase *carpe diem* (pluck the day) is characteristic of Horace's views on living well. Support your answer with analysis of **at least two** poems from Horace's *Odes and Epodes*.

OR

Question 13

Assess the role of the Chorus in Greek Tragedy as both a dramatic device and a reflection of ancient Greek society. Support your answer with examples from Euripides' *Medea* **or** Sophocles' *Philoctetes*.

OR

Question 14

Compare Alexander's treatment of the Persians with Caesar's treatment of the Gauls. Support your answer with analysis of examples from your studied texts.

OR

Question 15

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

- (a)** Describe the layout and design of the Parthenon **or** the Pantheon using architectural terms.
- (b)** Explain the significance that the temple described in part **(a)** had for its society.

OR

Question 16

The people that once bestowed commands, consulships, legions and all else, now meddle no more and long eagerly for just two things – bread and circuses.

Juvenal, *Satire 10*

Discuss the political and social importance of spectacle to Roman society, based on your study of the Colosseum **and** the Circus Maximus.

Optional Planning Space:

Additional Answer Space for Questions 12-16:

Optional Answer Space for drawings, diagrams, etc:

[illegible]

Acknowledgements:

Texts

Page 6: Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by E.V. Rieu. Penguin Classics. 2003.

Page 10: Plutarch. *The Parallel Lives*. Edited by Timothy Duff. Penguin Classics. 2012.

Page 12: Carter, Michael J. "Blown Call? Diodorus and the Treacherous *Summa Rudis*." *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, vol. 177, 2011, pp. 63–69.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/41291151>

Page 13: Plato, *The Last Days of Socrates: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo*. Translated by Hugh Tredennick & Harold Tarrant. Penguin Books. 2003.

Page 17: Homer's *Odyssey*: Translated by A.S. Kline, 2004. [adapted]
https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/Odyssey1.php#anchor_Toc90267059

Page 24: Carcopino, Jerome. *Daily Life in Ancient Rome: The People and the City at the Height of the Empire*: New Haven, Yale University Press, 1940.

Do not write on this page.

Do not write on this page

Copyright notice

This examination paper may contain text or images for which the State Examinations Commission is not the copyright owner, and which may have been adapted, for the purpose of assessment, without the authors' prior consent. This examination paper has been prepared in accordance with section 53(5) of the Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000. Any subsequent use for a purpose other than the intended purpose is not authorised. The Commission does not accept liability for any infringement of third-party rights arising from unauthorised distribution or use of this examination paper.

Leaving Certificate – Higher Level

Classical Studies

Monday 22 June

Afternoon 2:00 - 4:30