

# **GCE AS and A Level Subject Criteria for Classics**



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# The criteria

## Introduction

AS and A level subject criteria set out the knowledge, understanding, skills and assessment objectives common to all AS and A level specifications in a given subject.

They provide the framework within which the awarding body creates the detail of the specification.

## Aims and objectives

1. AS and A level specifications in Classics should encourage students to:
  - develop an interest in, and enthusiasm for, the classical world;
  - acquire, through studying a range of appropriate sources, knowledge and understanding of selected aspects of classical civilisation;
  - develop awareness of the continuing influence of the classical world on later times and of the similarities and differences between the classical world and later times;
  - develop and apply analytical and evaluative skills at an appropriate level;
  - make an informed, personal response to the material studied.
2. All specifications in Latin and Classical Greek or specifications that contain significant elements of these subjects should in addition encourage students to:
  - develop an appropriate level of competence in the language studied and a sensitive and analytical approach to language generally.

## Subject content

3. AS and A level specifications in Classics should build on the knowledge, understanding and skills specified for GCSE in the relevant subjects but prior attainment of a GCSE qualification in a classical subject should not be a requirement.

## Knowledge, understanding and skills

4. AS and A level specifications in **Classical Civilisation** should require learners to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the classical world in at least three of the following areas (including at least two at AS level):

- architecture;
  - art;
  - archaeology;
  - history and politics;
  - literature;
  - philosophy, science and religion;
  - society and values.
5. AS and A level specifications in **Classical Civilisation** should require learners to:
- study the specified areas through appropriate classical sources (including, where appropriate, texts in translation);
  - understand classical values and concepts including those that have been of fundamental importance for the subsequent development of European civilisation;
  - understand, interpret, analyse, evaluate and use a range of evidence from appropriate classical sources, and set the material selected in its context; and
  - present relevant information in a clear, concise and logical manner using appropriate terminology.
6. AS and A level specifications in **Latin/Classical Greek** should require learners to:
- extend their knowledge of vocabulary and linguistic structures and their study of literature and literary techniques beyond that specified for GCSE through reading and studying texts in the original language;
  - demonstrate an understanding of the linguistic structures of material written by Latin/Classical Greek authors in the original language; the differences between inflected and uninflected languages and the different ways in which ideas are expressed in English or Welsh as compared with Latin/Classical Greek. (This should include translation of unprepared material from the original language.);
  - understand and appreciate Latin/Classical Greek literature in the original language and have a critical awareness of its meaning, the authors'

purposes and literary techniques, and the literary, social and historical context(s) as appropriate;

- present relevant information in a clear, concise and logical manner using appropriate terminology.

7. AS and A level specifications in **Ancient History** should require learners to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of significant events, issues, individuals, ideas and social and political movements of Greek and/or Roman history in at least three topics (including at least two studied at AS), for example:

- relations between Greek and non-Greek civilisations;
- Athenian democracy and society;
- the politics and culture of Periclean Athens;
- the Peloponnesian war and its causes;
- the politics and culture of late republican Rome;
- the Age of Augustus;
- the Julio-Claudians;
- social and political developments in the Roman empire.

8. AS and A level specifications in **Ancient History** should require learners to:

- study the specified areas through relevant and appropriate literary, documentary and material evidence (including, where appropriate, texts in translation);
- demonstrate a sensitivity to past societies, showing an awareness of how classical values compare and contrast with those of the modern western world;
- understand the nature of historical evidence and the methods used by historians in analysis and evaluation;
- understand, interpret, analyse and evaluate historical evidence and events in their classical context;
- present relevant information in a clear, concise and logical manner using appropriate terminology.

## Assessment objectives

9. All learners must meet the following assessment objectives. The assessment objectives are to be weighted in all specifications as indicated in the following table.

| Assessment objectives |  | Weighting % |          |         |
|-----------------------|--|-------------|----------|---------|
|                       |  | AS level    | A2 level | A level |
| <b>AO1</b>            | Recall and deploy relevant knowledge and understanding of literary, cultural, material or historical sources or linguistic forms in their appropriate contexts | 45–55%      | 35–45%   | 40–50%  |
| <b>AO2a</b>           | Analyse, evaluate and respond to classical sources (literary, cultural, material, historical or linguistic) as appropriate.                                    | 45–55%      | 55–65%   | 50–60%  |
| <b>AO2b</b>           | Select, organise and present relevant information and argument in a clear, logical, accurate and appropriate form  |             |          |         |

10. At A level, learners will have studied a wider range of material and should be able to answer broader and more complex questions and demonstrate a higher level of critical awareness.
11. The assessment objectives apply to the whole specification.

## Scheme of assessment

### Internal assessment

12. Assessment must be entirely through external assessment.

### Synoptic assessment

13. Synoptic assessment should be included at A2 and draw on assessment objectives 1 and 2.
14. Synoptic assessment in Classics involves the drawing together of learners' knowledge and skills to demonstrate understanding of the links between central

elements of study such as language, literature, civilisation or history in their classical contexts.

15. Examples of synoptic assessment in **Classical Civilisation** might include a study and evaluation of a Homeric epic poem or Roman town planning in their historical, religious, cultural and social contexts, or a comparative analysis of authors within or across genres.
16. Examples of synoptic assessment in **Latin** and **Classical Greek** might include linguistic analysis, analytical study and/or literary appreciation of part of a Latin/Classical Greek text, such as a section of a book of Virgil's *Aeneid* or Homer's *Iliad*, in its historical, religious, cultural and social context.
17. Examples of synoptic assessment in **Ancient History** might include an assessment of a significant historical figure, event or development from a range of perspectives (such as political, military, social, cultural, economic); for instance the role of Pericles in Athenian development, or Augustus in the development from republic to empire, or a comparative analysis of motivation in the invasion and conquest of Britain by successive Romans.

**AS performance descriptions for Classics**

|                                       | Assessment objective 1<br>(Knowledge)   | Assessment objective 2a<br>(Evaluation)   | Assessment objective 2b<br>(Communication)   |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Assessment objectives                 | Recall and deploy relevant knowledge and understanding of literary, cultural, material or historical sources or linguistic forms in their appropriate contexts.   | Analyse, evaluate and respond to classical sources (literary, cultural, material, historical or linguistic) as appropriate.   | Select, organise and present relevant information and arguments in a clear, logical, accurate and appropriate form.  |
| A/B boundary performance descriptions | Learners characteristically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) display for the most part a good range of relevant knowledge and understanding, including specific detail, where appropriate;</li> <li>b) provide evidence from the material prescribed for AS.</li> </ul> | Learners characteristically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) construct a coherent response that is for the most part focused on the AS question;</li> <li>b) offer informed comment on, and sound evaluation of, prescribed authors and other sources;</li> <li>c) show a good understanding of prescribed material in its contemporary context;</li> <li>d) display a good understanding of concepts specific to the classical world.</li> </ul> | Learners characteristically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) demonstrate a generally good command of specialist vocabulary required for AS;</li> <li>b) write clear, accurate and well-structured work.</li> </ul> |



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| <p>E/U<br/>boundary<br/>performance<br/>descriptions</p> | <p>Students characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) display some basic knowledge and understanding relevant to the question and make some appropriate reference to the material prescribed for AS.</li> </ul> | <p>Students characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) produce some relevant evaluation that demonstrates a basic understanding of the AS primary material;</li> <li>b) show some basic understanding of prescribed material in its contemporary context;</li> <li>c) display some understanding of concepts specific to the classical world.</li> </ul> | <p>Students characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) demonstrate adequate writing skills to express their ideas;</li> <li>b) recognise the classical names and terms required at this level.</li> </ul> |
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**A2 performance descriptions for Classics**

|                                       | Assessment objective 1<br>(Knowledge)  | Assessment objective 2a<br>(Evaluation)   | Assessment objective 2b<br>(Communication)   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Assessment objectives                 | Recall and deploy relevant knowledge and understanding of literary, cultural, material or historical sources or linguistic forms in their appropriate contexts.  | Analyse, evaluate and respond to classical sources (literary, cultural, material, historical or linguistic) as appropriate.   | Select, organise and present relevant information and arguments in a clear, logical, accurate and appropriate form.  |
| A/B boundary performance descriptions | Learners characteristically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) display for the most part a good range of relevant knowledge and understanding, including specific detail where appropriate;</li> <li>b) provide evidence from a variety of contexts for the material prescribed for A2.</li> </ul> | Learners characteristically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) construct a coherent response that is for the most part focused on the A2 question;</li> <li>b) offer informed comment on and sound evaluation of prescribed authors and other sources;</li> <li>c) show a good understanding of prescribed material in its contemporary context;</li> <li>d) display a good understanding of concepts specific to the classical world.</li> </ul> | Learners characteristically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) demonstrate a generally good command of specialist vocabulary required for A2;</li> <li>b) write clear, accurate and well-structured work.</li> </ul> |

|  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p>E/U<br/>boundary<br/>performance<br/>descriptions</p> | <p>Learners characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) display some basic knowledge and understanding relevant to the question and make some appropriate reference to the material prescribed for A2.</li> </ul> | <p>Learners characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b) produce some relevant evaluation that demonstrates a basic understanding of the A2 primary material;</li> <li>c) show some basic understanding of prescribed material in its contemporary context;</li> <li>d) display some understanding of concepts specific to the classical world.</li> </ul> | <p>Learners characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) demonstrate adequate writing skills to express their ideas;</li> <li>b) recognise the classical names and terms required at this level.</li> </ul> |
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