



DIXONS  
SIXTH FORM  
ACADEMY

# SUMMER WORK A LEVEL CLASSICS

STUDENT NAME:

20  
24

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# About the Summer Work

This booklet contains a number of tasks that students are expected to complete to a good standard in order to be able to be enrolled in this subject.

**Deadline = the first Classical Civilisation lesson.**

You should bring written evidence that you have spent about 10 hours working on this. Although you must attempt every task to the best of your ability in the time available, some of the tasks are open ended and I encourage you to pursue what interests you most.

The work handed in should be:

- **handwritten** in black or blue ink on A4 lined paper
- written in full sentences with **no copying and pasting** from external sources
- have all compulsory tasks completed
- have your full name on each sheet
- multiple sheets should be connected together

This booklet also contains significant additional information and a range of optional tasks. I encourage you to complete all the tasks, including the optional ones, to fully prepare for Sixth Form study.

In order to complete the summer homework effectively, you will need access to the following:

- The internet
- Access to a public library
- A black or blue pen
- A quiet space to work
- Time to dedicate to your studies

# Welcome to Classical Civilisation

<https://www.dixons6a.com/uploads/files/dixons6a/Classics.pdf>

Students often choose to study Classical Civilisation because they have a genuine interest in learning about the people and societies of Greece and Rome, and in understanding how their attitudes and actions have shaped the world we live in today. In essence, the course bridges the skills found in English Literature, History and RS (with a healthy dose of art, archaeology and philosophy in the mix too). Successful Classics students come from diverse academic backgrounds and members of a class often each have different strengths and learn to develop their own skills by seeing success modelled by their teacher and classmates. Although there is a GCSE in Classical Civilisation, very few of the Classics A level students in the national cohort study the subject at GCSE first. As a result, the course taught at Dixons Sixth Form assumes no prior knowledge. The only expectation is that you are open minded and willing to read widely in your own time.

The OCR A level Specification assesses students' learning with three examination papers at the end of the course. There is no NEA or Coursework element.

## **Unit 1: The World of the Hero**

The important and ever popular literary genre of 'epic' forms the basis of the mandatory component The World of the Hero (H408/11). This component will explore both Greek and Roman epic, with the study of Homer's 'Odyssey', one of the very earliest works of literature in the world, and Virgil's 'Aeneid', a text which has had a greater impact on the thinking of western Europe than any other secular text.

## **Unit 2: Culture and the Arts**

The component group Culture and the Arts (H408/21) at Dixons 6A focuses on Greek Theatre, including study of the development, staging and impact of both tragedy and comedy. Trips to watch performances of the Greek plays are organised each year.

## **Unit 3: Beliefs and Ideas**

In this unit we deliver the Greek Religion module (H408/31). Learners are given the opportunity to explore some of the ideas and ideals important to the ancient Greeks. Learners will examine personal and public religious behaviour, the physical remains of the great temple complexes, the significance attached by the Greeks to cult ritual, including sacrifice, as well as the overlap of religion with politics, art, social customs and philosophy.

## Careers and Higher Education

### Where will your Classical Civilisation qualification take you?

The course equips you with many skills that are attractive to employers and university admissions tutors, not least because of the breadth of disciplines the A level covers. In many ways, it is the ultimate humanities subject.

Classical Civilisation is also very practical because it involves:

- **Learning about people** – how they interact, the motives and emotions that can tear people apart into rival factions or help them to work together for a common cause (useful knowledge for team-building at work!)
- **Learning about countries, societies and cultures** – so many of the attitudes and institutions we hold dear in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain were born in ancient Greece and Rome. You cannot properly appreciate the strengths of your own society (or identify its flaws) until you have studied how different a human culture can be from our own.
- **Learning to locate and sift facts** – to identify truth and recognise myth, propaganda and downright lies (useful in every aspect of life!)
- **Presenting what you've learned in a way that makes sense to others** – and having the confidence to defend your findings.

All these skills are valuable in a whole range of jobs. Often, Classics, being a relatively niche subject with an elitist reputation because it is not often taught in state schools and colleges, is left off lists of 'recommended' or 'desired' subjects for most degree courses. Don't be deceived. There are few subjects with so broad an application in later life and, crucially, university admissions tutors and employers know this full well. Careers regularly pursued by students of A level Classics include:

- accountancy and finance
- local and national government
- law
- medicine
- museums, theatres and art centres
- police
- publishers
- school teachers
- university lecturers and researchers

There are various rankings of university Classics courses but Leeds and Manchester regularly feature highly alongside less local universities such as Nottingham, UCL, Durham, St Andrews and Warwick. Dixons Sixth Form have had success in recent years in supporting students to make successful Oxbridge applications, both for Classics and other subjects.

Recent evidence suggests that there is a skills gap within the **local labour market** and their workforce. This means that there is a gap between the skills an employee has and the skills he or she actually needs to perform a job well. The skills that are most often required by the local labour market include a range of 'soft skills'. These skills can be developed by studying A-Level Classical Civilisation, and include: Communication, Project management, Team work, Organisation, Attention to detail, Planning, Research skills, Creativity and Problem solving.

You may be aware that Bradford has been awarded Capital of Culture 2025. This means that the City can expect an increase in investment, bringing new jobs and opportunities. Furthermore, the study of Classics can help develop skills that will be useful in the industries that we are seeing emerge within Bradford; including Education, Heritage and Tourism.

### Links to key information:

The full OCR specification can be found here:

<https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/315133-specification-accredited-a-level-classical-civilisation-h408.pdf>

A guide to Classics related careers from the Classical Association:

<https://classicalassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Outreach-Video-No-Subtitles-Small-for-TCA.mp4>

and one example of many university websites:

<https://classics.unc.edu/undergraduate-2/why-study-classics/>

A link to the Labour Market Report 2021:

<https://futuregoals.shorthandstories.com/lmireport/>

# Summer Work Tasks

Section A: What do we mean by 'Classical Civilisation'?

Section B: Who were the ancient Greeks?

Section C: Who were the ancient Romans?

Section D: What was an ancient hero?

Section E: Who were Homer and Virgil?

## Section A: What do we mean by Classical Civilisation?

Make a start on the Open University course: Introducing the Classical World

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/classical-studies/introducing-the-classical-world/content-section-1>

The course is for University students, so don't worry if you struggle to access everything that is covered. However, it's a great way to get you starting to answer our first question.

Make sure that you complete at least part 1 of the mini course. Complete the whole thing if you like!



Red figure vase: Odysseus and the Sirens



## Section B: Who were the ancient Greeks?

**The Parthenon, Athens, built in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC**

1. Watch this clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6bDrYTXQLu8>  
Make notes on the politics, military prowess, geography, culture, philosophy, language and anything else of note
2. Read the information here and further add to your notes:  
<https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-history/ancient-greece>
3. Watch this introduction to the Greek gods:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ri-AoKE42rw>  
As you watch, record the most important aspects of the relationships between the Greek gods by sketch noting. (There's an introductory video to show you how to do it here:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ltcHag3agE>)
4. Write a succinct paragraph which answers our initial question:  
Who were the ancient Greeks?  
Try to use as many subject specific key words as you can and show what you've learned from the previous three tasks.



### Section C: Who were the ancient Romans?

Create a storyboard summarising six key turning points in the history of ancient Rome. You can use the resources below as a starting point for your research. The purpose of this task is to get you thinking about who ancient Romans were, how this changed over time, what they valued and how they were ruled. It's up to you which six events you choose.

#### Research starting points:

<https://www.britannica.com/place/ancient-Rome>

<https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-rome/ancient-rome>

<https://www.ancient.eu/Rome/>



**Augustus Caesar: The Prima Porta Statue**

### Section D: What was an ancient hero?

The first topic we will study will be Homer's *Odyssey*. You will learn more about Homer in the next task. In Homer's story, the hero is called Odysseus. From studying Odysseus, we can learn a lot about what the Greeks believed in and held dear.

1. Watch this introduction: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rXTecz3PN18>
2. Draw an image of an ancient Greek hero and label it with the key characteristics you learn about.
3. Read about other ancient Greek heroes here: <https://www.teachervision.com/heroes-role-models/top-10-heroes-greek-mythology>
4. Choose your favourite and do some further research. Write a paragraph to explain how your chosen hero compares/contrasts with Odysseus.



Virgil's *Aeneid*: 'Dutiful Aeneas' carries his dad and leads his son to safety as Troy burns

## Section E: Who were Homer and Virgil?

Homer was a Greek poet usually referred to as a bard. It is entirely plausible that he was illiterate. He composed two epic poems, the 'Odyssey' and the 'Iliad' but otherwise we know very little about him except for what can be inferred from his actual poems.

Virgil was a Roman who wrote the 'Aeneid' in the decade after a Roman general called Augustus seized power for himself, killed the democratically orientated Roman Republic and established himself as the first Roman emperor.

**Create a grid to compare Homer and Virgil.** Make sure that you include when they were creating their works, their styles, what is known and not known about the, where they were from, their reputations and anything else that you think could be relevant.

Here are some starting points for creating your comparison grid:

Homer

<https://www.biography.com/writer/homer>

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Virgil/Influence-and-reputation>

<https://www.oeaw.ac.at/kal/sh/> (Don't worry! We study Classics in English translation.)

Virgil

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kj4Zr7c5OU>

Start with Wikipedia...



**The Forum Romanum (Town centre of ancient Rome)**



# Reading list

## Essential reading

Homer's 'Odyssey': Chapter 1 (We will also study Chapters 5-13, 16-19, 21-23)

- Free online translation <http://www.poetryintranslation.com>
- Alternatively, purchase a paper copy of the translation prescribed by the exam board: *Homer, 'Odyssey' translated by E. V. Rieu, revised translation by D. C. H. Rieu (Penguin)* <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Odyssey-Penguin-Classics-Homer/dp/0140449116>
- Alternatively / as well as, try an audiobook version eg Homer's 'Odyssey' read by George Blagden on Audible.com

## Suggested reading

- Omnibus Magazine <https://archive.org/details/omnibusmagazine>
- Classics for All <https://classicsforall.org.uk/reading-room/bellaria>
- Virgil, 'Aeneid' translated by D. West (Penguin) (Chapters 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)

## Suggested Watching

To extend your learning further, consider watching the following amazing films and series. Remember though, the classical world was NOT PG and many of the following suggestions make for somewhat racy viewing!

- **Troy (2004)** – On Netflix. Story of The Trojan War.
- **Troy: Fall of a City** – On Netflix.
- **HBO series Rome** – Second hand boxsets online for as little as £3.99.
- **300** – An unnecessarily bloody cartoonish version of the Battle of Thermopylae.
- Mary Beard Documentaries - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eEhOk102ksk&list=PLugdQwSXQ0wA9VPrVJdbeQA9H-6p-Vxii&index=5&t=0s>
- **I Claudius** – 1970s BBC series, some clips available on youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T40mDHDKqWM&list=PLjT3Z589ba7Pdcy5fDKpWMMp1JmbfwaZl>