

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

J199

For first teaching in 2017

J199/22 Summer 2023 series

Contents

Introduction3

Paper 22 series overview4

Section A overview5

 Question 1 (a)5

 Question 1 (b)5

 Question 2 (a)6

 Question 2 (b)6

 Question 3 (a)7

 Question 3 (b)7

 Question 3 (c)7

 Question 3 (d)7

 Question 48

 Question 58

 Question 68

 Question 79

 Question 8 (a)9

 Question 8 (b)9

 Question 911

 Question 1011

Section B overview12

 Question 1112

 Question 12 (a)12

 Question 12 (b)13

 Question 1313

 Question 1414

 Question 1514

 Question 1615

 Question 1716

 Question 1816

 Question 1917

 Question 2017

Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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Paper 22 series overview

The demand of the paper was similar to previous years. There was a greater focus on literary sources in the Culture section of the paper than in previous years as the essay questions gave candidates an opportunity to use some of the literary sources they would have studied.

Over the years the standard of responses to the essay questions has greatly improved in terms of the candidates using appropriate ancient sources to support responses to the essay questions. This has been partly helped by candidates being directed to specific ancient sources in the essay questions in the Literature section of the examination in particular.

A number of candidates do not seem to be aware that the knowledge and skills they had been using as they moved through the examination were building them towards using these in the essay questions. There still seems to be a sizeable number of candidates who put a great deal of effort into providing descriptive narratives for the essay question, demonstrating good general knowledge. However, these candidates were not given higher marks as they did not use ancient sources in their responses.

In the 8-mark questions, it is also important for candidates to bring in an appropriate extra source to support their response and not just rely on the set source(s). The wording of the 8-mark questions makes it clear that the provided source(s) is a starting point.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • answered the actual questions • knew the ancient sources and how to use them effectively • in the essay and 8-mark questions developed their response from appropriate ancient sources • in the 8-mark questions brought in at least one extra ancient source • knew how to incorporate multiple ancient sources in the essay questions • could compare and contrast ancient sources and value these in relation to the essay question • in the essay, had a clear introduction and conclusion that were related to the question as set. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • did not know how to use ancient sources to respond to the question • in the essay and 8-mark questions did not refer to any ancient source • in the essay presented a descriptive narrative or just included random sources without using these to respond to the question.

Section A overview

As mentioned in the Paper 22 series overview, given the nature of the essay questions, there was a greater opportunity for candidates to use literary sources in the Culture section of the examination than in previous years.

Question 1 (a)

Study Source A

1 (a) Identify **two** items of school equipment in **Source A**.

1

2

[2]

Candidates responded well to the question by identifying the different types/aspects of writing equipment.

Question 1 (b)

(b) Give **two** benefits of **Item 1** to a Roman school pupil.

1

.....

2

.....

[2]

There was some confusion over the object, but candidates who could correctly identify it answered the question well with some thoughtful responses.

Question 2 (a)

Study Sources B and C

2 (a) At what age was a Roman pupil likely to begin their studies with a grammaticus like Orbilius?

..... [1]

This question was generally well answered as a range was accepted rather than a single age. The majority of candidates who did not gain the mark suggested an earlier age suggesting confusion with a *litterator*.

Question 2 (b)

(b) What do **Sources B** and **C** suggest about the status of teachers in ancient Rome?
Make **two** points.

1

.....

.....

.....

2

.....

.....

.....

[4]

There was quite a bit of confusion with the term 'status' in the question. A broader interpretation of the word 'status' was taken, as in pay, respect and wealth. The majority of candidates misunderstood Source C thinking it showed how wealthy and religious teachers were.

Question 3 (a)

3 (a) Give **two** subjects taught by a grammaticus.

1

2

[2]

Candidates who knew the answer addressed the question well. There were a wide range of responses, representing the teachings within the *ludus litterarius*, or guesses, such as English and Maths.

Question 3 (b)

(b) Why was **one** of these subjects important for a Roman to learn?

.....

..... [1]

There were mixed responses to this question. A number of candidates were not able to explain the importance of the subject.

Question 3 (c)

(c) Why might a paterfamilias **not** send his son to the school of a grammaticus?

.....

..... [1]

Candidates responded well to this question.

Question 3 (d)

(d) What teacher taught a Roman boy after the grammaticus?

.....

..... [1]

Candidates gave some good responses but quite a number did suggest a *litterator* or *litteratus*.

Question 4

Study Source D

4 In which room in a Roman house was a dinner party commonly held?

..... [1]

The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.

Question 5

5 Describe how **one** feature of the room shown in **Source D** improved the dining experience.

.....
.....
.....
..... [2]

There were candidates who did not fully read the question closely enough and missed the point about a feature of the room. The best responses answered in relation to known features of the *triclinium*, but some appropriate responses developed from the source were accepted. Quite a number of responses confused the summer triclinium, and some candidates highlighted the positioning of the room in the overall house.

Question 6

6 How is the host ensuring his guests are enjoying the dinner party?
Make **two** points.

1

.....

2

..... [2]

Candidates responded well to this question. Responses that were based on what could be considered valid interpretations of the provided source in the context of an examination were accepted.

Question 7

7 Why was it important for a paterfamilias to hold a successful dinner party?
Make **two** points.

1

.....

2

.....

[2]

Candidates responded well to this question.

Question 8 (a) Study Sources E and F

8 (a) Why was the insula in **Source E** named after the goddess Diana?

..... [1]

A lot of benefit of the doubt was given in relation to describing the 'image' of Diana. The majority of responses were seen as acceptable in terms of flat image, even mosaic, but not statue or shrine.

Question 8 (b)

(b) Would living in an insula be a positive experience for everyone in ancient Rome? Justify your response.

Use **Sources E and F** and your own knowledge in your answer.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [8]

The question allowed candidates to engage with the different sources provided and bring in other sources. Quite a number struggled with the reconstruction and followed what they knew from the literary sources regardless of the visual cue and clear contrast. The weakest responses focused on negatives such as fires, bad sanitation and risk of collapse. Candidates who did not bring in an extra source limited their mark to the lower levels, and the strongest responses referenced a further literary source(s) such as Juvenal and Aulus Gellius.

Exemplar 1

Living in an insula would be a positive experience for everyone as it can be very big. In source E you can see the layers of the insula of Diana and how big the rooms were. As well, insulas were often cheaper than a domus due to it being a shared living space, so it was often ~~more~~ better to live in an insula instead.

However, insulas could very often be ~~dangerous~~ ^{dangerous}. In source F, it says 'two have fallen down and the rest have cracks' as this is referring to the walls, it is understood by the reader that many of the walls were breaking which gave the chance of the insula falling.

Shown in Juvenal's satire 3, insulas are seen being held up by wooden planks. This is very unreliable and dangerous to the people living inside. The insulas were very often dirty and disgusting as many people were on the poorer side and so would not visit the baths as often.

However, ~~been~~ in source E. Many insulas had shops on the lower level along the street. This gave the people living in the insula easy access to food and other things they might need.

[8]

Turn over

Exemplar 1 is a response that gained a mark from the bottom of Level 3. It makes a reasonable attempt to address the question and uses both Source E and Source F as well as one additional source.

Question 9

9 'A terrible and thoroughly unpleasant experience which offered a life without hope.'

Is this a fair description of Roman slavery? Justify your response.

[15]

Question 9 was more popular than Question 10. It gave candidates a good opportunity to bring in plenty of different sources. It was great that some students were able to bring in some material culture such as slave collars and the tomb of Naevoleia Tyche. Responses included lots of mention of freed individuals from literature but seldom was there an understanding of this in relation to slavery and the question. The impression given was that they were still slaves.

There were some narrative essays but generally this was a successful question. Those candidates that had a clear essay structure (introduction, paragraphs, and conclusion) and developed their response to the actual question from the ancient sources gained the higher levels.

Question 10

10 Were shows in the Colosseum more important to the people or the emperor? Justify your response.

[15]

Question 10 was less popular than Question 9 and it was harder for candidates to utilise the prescribed sources to answer the question. Candidates were not able to link shows to the actual Colosseum and few responses addressed the emperor/people elements of the question. The majority of responses were descriptive narratives, giving accounts of gladiators and not addressing the question. Lots of statements about Pompeii and Augustus for a Flavian amphitheatre in Rome.

Candidates put great effort into their responses but seldom were responses ancient sources based. In the weakest responses, candidates retreated to the statement 'based upon my own knowledge'.

Those candidates that had a clear essay structure (introduction, paragraphs, and conclusion) and developed their response to the actual question from the ancient sources gained the higher levels.

Section B overview

On the whole, it seems candidates appeared more confident in their responses for this part of the examination. The essays were certainly stronger in this section of the examination, which has been a feature of this section for several years.

Question 11

Study Source G

11 Why does the writer suggest it was better to live on the ground floor of an insula rather than the third floor in lines 197–202?

.....
..... [1]

While the majority of candidates responded correctly to the question, some candidates misunderstood the question.

Question 12 (a)

12 (a) Pick out **two** phrases which highlight Cordus' extreme poverty.

Use details from lines 203–211 in your answer.

1
.....
2
..... [2]

Almost all candidates answered this question correctly.

Question 12 (b)

(b) How does **one** of these points show that Cordus is very poor?

.....

.....

..... [1]

Almost all candidates answered this question correctly.

Question 13

13 How does Juvenal contrast the fates of the poor man Cordus and the rich man Assaracus after their homes have burnt down in lines 203–222? Discuss **three** points.

1

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.....

.....

.....

2

.....

.....

.....

.....

3

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.....

.....

[6]

The majority of candidates missed the wording '**after** their homes had burnt down'. Some candidates found it difficult to get three points, but many did very well. Often candidates felt this was a literary analysis question focusing on the style of language used by Juvenal, which was a feature of a previous question in the 2022 exam paper. Some candidates made three points rather than comparing and contrasting within the individual point.

Question 14

Study Source H

14 'After this play acting ... the cook was honoured.'

Give **one** detail about the play acting which has just occurred.

.....
..... [1]

A large number of candidates did not score a mark for this question as their answers were too vague.

Question 15

15 Give **three** ways in which Trimalchio shows his lack of intelligence in this passage.

1
.....
2
.....
3
..... [3]

Many students focused on quoting and not explaining but this was acceptable. Candidates who referred to the smell of glass did not gain marks.

Question 16

Study Source I

16 Discuss **two** reasons why Pliny dislikes chariot racing using details from lines 1–6 of the passage.

1

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

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.....

.....

[4]

A number of candidates answered outside the prescribed lines and this led to criticism of supporters rather than the races themselves.

Exemplar 2
passage.

1 'nothing, in short, you would wish to see twice'
it is very repetative and nothing ever changes

.....

.....

.....

2 'gown men so ~~fast~~ chiddishly long to watch again
and again galloping horses' makes gown men
act like children

.....

.....

Exemplar 2 shows an ideal approach to this type of question: selecting a quote from the selected lines and then briefly explaining how it shows that Pliny dislikes chariot racing. This response scored full marks.

Question 17

17 Referring to lines 7–17, is Pliny more critical of the actual races or the fans of chariot racing? Make **two** points.

1
.....
.....
.....

2
.....
.....
.....

[4]

The majority of responses did not have a comparative focus, as asked for in the question.

Question 18

18 Did both wealthy and poor Romans enjoy the same leisure activities in the literature that you have read?

Use **Source I** as a starting point and your own knowledge in your answer.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
..... [8]

The majority of candidates focused on chariot racing. Few candidates brought in an appropriate extra source(s), and of those that did, many brought in non-literary material such as the Colosseum or the Circus Maximus. Candidates struggled with separating and establishing rich from poor.

Question 19

- 19** 'Trimalchio is a thoroughly unpleasant character, but he is not the most dislikeable person that we meet in the story of his dinner party.'

Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer.

[15]

This was the least popular essay question in this section of the paper, but it was a good question that forced candidates to deal with the source. The strongest responses compared and contrasted one or more characters (Fortunata, individual slaves, and guests), but the majority of responses just focused on Trimalchio. Those candidates that had a clear essay structure (introduction, paragraphs, and conclusion) and developed their response to the actual question from the ancient sources gained the higher levels.

Question 20

- 20** 'All Romans, rich and poor alike, preferred to live in the city rather than the country.'

Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer from the stories that you have read.

[15]

The majority of candidates gave good responses to this question and were able to incorporate a number of sources into and develop their response. However, many candidates did not deal well with the rich/poor aspect of the question, as required. Candidates mostly wrote about where the authors would have preferred to stay. Those candidates that had a clear essay structure (introduction, paragraphs, and conclusion) and developed their response to the actual question from the ancient sources gained the higher levels. Some candidates strayed from the literature sources and talked in more general terms about the advantages of living in the city/countryside.

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