

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

J199

For first teaching in 2017

J199/21 Summer 2023 series

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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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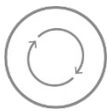
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Paper 21 series overview

J199/21 (The Homeric World) is one of three Literature and Culture components for GCSE Classical Civilisation. This component focuses on the study of the culture of the Mycenaean Age and selected books of Homer's *Odyssey*. To do well on this paper, candidates need to show knowledge and understanding of what life was like in the Mycenaean Age and the themes, characterisation and plot of the *Odyssey*.

Examiners were impressed by the overall standard of work that they saw. The majority of candidates showed a depth of knowledge and fine critical analysis in both halves of the paper. While most confined their responses to information that was in the textbook or set books of the *Odyssey*, there were a pleasing number that showed wider knowledge of both topics, especially the parts of the *Odyssey*. Such knowledge always gains marks.

Assessment for learning



Encourage candidates to read all the *Odyssey* in their spare time, either before or after studying the set books. If this is felt to be too much, get candidates to research a small selection of books and produce summaries for the rest of the class.

Some candidates ran out of time, although the majority seemed to finish. It was felt that some had spent too long on 8-mark questions, usually as they over narrated descriptions of pieces of metalwork or episodes from the *Odyssey*. Such questions also often needed more analysis. Simply describing metal objects or what they crew did will not attain the highest marks.

A number of candidates who typed responses missed out answering questions. Examiners often felt this was accidental as they would often misnumber responses leading to possible errors.

As in previous years, candidates often did not answer the question set. Sometimes this may have been attentiveness, such as answering whether Odysseus, rather than the crew, was incompetent in Question 19. At other times it was felt that they were trying to respond to a slightly different question, such as why Medea and Cleopatra were feared in Question 33 or whether they had sympathy for the crew in Question 19.

Candidates continue at times to use the passages ineffectively, especially in the Homer section. In stimulus questions worth 4 or 6 marks, they must make a clear reference to the passage and give an opinion. Often candidates would give opinions in Question 15, such as Odysseus flattering Penelope, but would not give the evidence. It is frustrating for examiners not to be able to give marks when candidates seem to know the response, but are let down by poor exam technique.

Assessment for learning



All that is needed in stimulus questions on the literature is a quotation and an explanation on how it answers the question. Candidates seem to rarely do this, so get them to reduce responses to the absolute minimum by redrafting responses so that they don't waste words when it comes to the real examination.

Examiners were encouraged by the knowledge that the majority of candidates showed in the extended response 15-mark questions. However, candidates should be reminded that the key factor in gaining

marks is their evaluation of this knowledge (the AO2), rather than the knowledge itself (the AO1). At times, more time was spent on providing information than analysis.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tailored their response to the precise wording of the question • picked out relevant details from the printed sources and analysed them carefully in questions worth 4- or 6- marks • showed a detailed knowledge sites, objects and characters in questions worth 8- or 15-marks. • wrote concisely, without over-narrating • provided balanced ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • did not read the questions carefully enough and went regularly off-topic • merely stated AO1 facts • excessively reused printed sources from the insert in questions worth 8- or 15-marks • spent too long narrating facts and so did not spend long enough analysing them • wrote one-sided responses in questions worth 8- or 15-marks.

Section A overview

Section A comprises 45 marks worth of questions on the Mycenaean Age. These include questions that require short responses demonstrating knowledge and understanding, short analytical statements and a detailed response (8-mark) question. All of these are introduced by a stimulus source. Candidates must also write an extended response from a choice of two optional 15-mark questions.

The majority of candidates understood the different grave types and the reasons for them, although often muddled up cist and shaft graves. They should be aware to give different ideas in the stimulus questions. The second idea in this was often very similar to the first.

Questions on clothing provided some unexpected responses as to what was seen as clothing in Question 4, although those who did refer to the clothing often gained full marks.

There was some good knowledge of metal objects in Question 7, although the analysis was often quite thin. The same was true for both 15-mark questions. It was not enough to simply describe metal objects, evidence for war or defensive features of cities. Responses to both Question 8 and Question 9 seemed to be of a slightly higher standard than comparable questions in the past.

Question 1 (a)

Study **Source A**

1 (a) What type of grave is shown in **Source A**?

..... [1]

This question was more challenging than anticipated. The majority of candidates thought it was a shaft grave, despite the lack of any shaft and the uncertainty was shown by a large number who replaced their initial correct response to put down a wrong one. However, there were many candidates who did response to it correctly.

Question 1 (b)

(b) Describe how the Mycenaeans buried their dead in this type of grave.

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

This question was generally responded to well. The majority of candidates referred to stones, either under the body or at the sides of the graves. Candidates also regularly wrote of the body being in a curled position. However, there were candidates who gave very general responses that could refer to most graves, such as a hole was dug or that the grave was filled in after the body was put in. Some candidates wrote of the digging of a deep hole, perhaps thinking of a shaft grave.

Question 2

2 Why were there different types of burials and graves in the Mycenaean Age? Make **two** points.

1

.....

.....

2

.....

.....

[4]

This question was generally responded to well, although the points were often not sufficiently detailed to gain full marks. Many candidates wrote of the status of the deceased, but did not follow it up with a grave type. This led to statements such as the poor were buried in a simple grave. Many candidates did mention a tholos tomb being for the rich, but with the question being about different types of graves, they needed to mention the graves of poor people.

Many candidates then mentioned the wealth of the deceased, but this was too similar to status to gain further marks. Better responses reflected on the prosperity of different parts of the Mycenaean Age, differentiation by gender or the need to save space. A common incorrect response was the belief that poor people would be buried in a shaft grave.

Question 3 (a)

Study **Source B**

3 (a) What type of storage jar is shown in **Source B**?

..... [1]

Pithos was the most popular response seen, but every type of Mycenaean pot attracted some support.

Question 3 (b)

(b) Select **two** features of this vessel, and suggest the problems these features might have caused.

1

2

[4]

The majority of candidates gave good responses to this question. These commonly featured the size or weight of the vessel and the handles. However, candidates often stated the same problem this caused for both and did not gain the full mark. Those who analysed it more and wrote that small handles made it tricky to pick up fared better and the best responses picked two different points, such as the size and the wide opening.
Many candidates mentioned the fire hazard from it containing oil, or that it was made of clay, but these were not seen as features. Other candidates stated that the narrow bottom would make it unstable, but examiners felt the vast weight would mean it couldn't be knocked over easily.

Question 3 (c) (i)

(c) (i) How was this type of vessel stored?

..... [1]

Examiners were prepared to give the mark if candidates stated that it was stored underground and so the majority of candidates got this correct. More precise responses stated that it was partially buried.

Question 3 (c) (ii)

(ii) Why was it stored this way?

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

The majority of candidates got this question correct, but some candidates stated it was for space reasons. Examiners felt it would not really take up much less space if partially buried.

Question 4 (a)


Study **Source C**

4 (a) Describe **two** aspects of the clothing in **Source C** that are typically Mycenaean.

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

The majority of candidates scored at least 1 mark on this but many did not gain full marks due to the misconception as to what constituted clothing. Many referred to the colour or did correctly explain the garment, although some were not precise in their naming of the garment, referring to it as a dress. A few candidates referred to the thinness of the garments or the pattern.

Misconception

 The majority of candidates referred to the jewellery that the woman was wearing. Examiners felt candidates had misunderstood the focus of the question.

Question 4 (b)

(b) Suggest **one** thing this tells us about the Mycenaeans.

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

The majority of candidates got this question correct. Candidates wrote of ideas such as trade, fashion or skills.

Question 5

5 **Apart from the clothing**, in what ways is this a typical representation of a Mycenaean woman?

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

The majority of candidates only gave one idea, despite the question asking them for 'ways'. This often developed into a detailed discussion of skin colour with the reasons for this, which was unnecessary. Candidates who had not referred to jewellery and hair in the previous question usually mentioned it here, showing the importance of reading the question carefully.

Question 6

6 Describe the clothes that a Mycenaean man would have worn.

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

This question produced a huge variety of responses. At the top end, the majority of candidates correctly named garments and the materials they were made from. However, many responses referred to clothing that men would wear today, such as shorts, trousers or tee-shirts. Many candidates again struggled with the ideas of clothes, referring to shields and breastplates.

Question 7 (a)

Study **Source D**

7 (a) From where did the Mycenaeans obtain their gold?

..... [1]

Candidates demonstrated impressive knowledge of the areas where gold was found, with Egypt being regularly mentioned.

Question 7 (b)

(b) 'Masters of metalworking.'

How far do you agree with this description of the way the Mycenaeans created metal objects?

You should refer to individual metal objects.

[8]

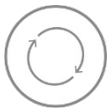
This question provided some excellent responses, focusing on areas like the small-scale details, the thinness of the metal on objects and the limited tools available. However, many responses did little more than naming and describing the appearance of metal objects.

Techniques were often mentioned, although sometimes wrongly ascribed to individual objects, such as the Lion Hunt Dagger having repoussé. Many responses simply named the particular technique on an object, while more detailed responses would analyse how these techniques were difficult to master. However, few candidates demonstrated this.

Some candidates chose not to use the printed source at all, while others spent half their response on it, although this often became repetitive. Many wrote of the poor condition of the blade showing a lack of skill, but this was not felt to be a valid point.

The majority of candidates chose to write about other areas, such as pottery or frescoes, for part of their response; presumably they had not read the question properly.

Assessment for learning



Candidates could make a checklist/grid of all the prescribed sources and the metalworking techniques that are shown and find one non-prescribed example of a piece that shows each of the techniques.

Exemplar 1

The ~~silver~~ cup of Nestor is another example of Mycenaean metalwork. It demonstrates excellent techniques such as hammering from the inside along with great delicacy as the cup is very thin. This shows great attention to detail as the image is very beautiful and also great skill to ~~make~~ use something so thin and delicate, showing that Mycenaeans were 'masters of metalwork'.

The signet ring is another brilliant example of metalwork. The skill of the craftsman to make such a clear image on such ~~a~~ a small object is inspiring and admirable. The clarity and realism is also very impressive as even after 3000+ years the image is still easily recognisable. The fact that it is so durable and fire proofs Mycenaeans were truly 'masters of metalworking'.

Exemplar 1 is an extract from a response that achieved 6 marks out of 8. This section demonstrates a very good knowledge of the cup of Nestor (a rarely chosen item). The technique is correctly described and the idea of delicacy as the cup is very thin elevated it from typical descriptions of objects that would simply talk of detail on an object.

Analysis of the signet ring is quite good with discussion of the small scale, but the candidate needs to describe which ring he/she is referring to. The AO1 is not as good as it could be (indeed there could be more description of the cup of Nestor too). The rest of the response had better AO1 with discussion of the Lion Hunt Dagger, and it described all the techniques well, but it did not have the level of detail overall to attain a top level mark.

Question 8

- 8 'A society where everything was focused on war.'
To what extent do you agree with this description of the Mycenaean Age?

[15]

Examiners were encouraged by the generally pleasing standard of responses to this question. Most responses accurately described the geographical setting and defensive features of the sites. The most common omission was surprisingly the Lion Gate. The strongest responses gave details on Tiryns and sometimes even Troy to back up ideas. Less detailed responses tended to narrate the existence of such features, but did little with the information, and a few even stated that the Cyclopes did build city walls.

It was encouraging to see candidates look for evidence of warfare beyond the designs of the cities. There were plenty of candidates who wrote about the Warrior Vase and even gave precise evidence from Linear B tablet. Many also wrote of evidence from the Lion Hunt Dagger. This was useful as evidence of armour and weapons, but many incorrectly stated that it showed warfare.

There was good discussion of other areas of life that showed what their interests were. Some candidates spent too long repeating ideas used in the previous question, but others wrote informatively of frescoes and trade. However, some candidates spent too long on other areas after just writing a paragraph on warfare.

Question 9

- 9 'From the evidence of the cities and the structures within them, it is clear that the Mycenaeans were excellent architects and builders.'
To what extent do you agree with this assessment?

[15]

This question also provided a number of really good responses. Candidates generally knew the sites well and were able to describe the different parts. This mostly featured the site of Mycenae, and occasionally Tiryns, although Troy was rarely mentioned. Some candidates seemed to name structures and could have provided a little more description. The Lion Gate, walls, cistern and sally ports regularly featured, although tholos tombs were seen less regularly in responses.

Candidates generally didn't spend as long analysing the problems that would have been faced or the skills shown in building; while virtually all candidates referred to the height of the walls, few considered how the Mycenaeans were able to build so high or transport the stones.

There were a number of errors commonly seen. These included wrong sizes of walls, the belief that the Cyclopes did build the walls and the fact that Mycenae only had one gate.

Section B overview

Section B comprises 45 marks worth of questions on the prescribed books of Homer's *Odyssey*. These include questions that require short responses demonstrating knowledge and understanding, short analytical statements and a detailed response 8-mark question. All of these are introduced by a stimulus source. Candidates must also write an extended response from a choice of two optional 15-mark questions.

Candidates struggled to state what Odysseus had just done on leaving the hall, but were more secure on the questions that asked about the stringing of the bow. The stimulus passages provided a mixed response. Candidates generally scored much better on Question 13 about Eurymachus' speech than they did on Question 15 about Odysseus' speech. Many seemed to ignore the wording on the latter and give ideas and evidence from outside the passage.

There were some good responses to Question 19 on the crew, although, many candidates could have provided more examples of what the crew did. Both 15-mark questions were done well, with Question 21 far more popular than Question 20. Candidates who did well, provided a range of ideas and were well backed up with evidence.

Question 10 (a)

Study **Source E**

10 (a) State **two** things that Odysseus had just done after he had left the hall.

1

.....


2

.....

[2]

The majority of candidates struggled to recall the order of events. Many felt he had just revealed himself to his son, told him to lock the women in their rooms, remove weapons from the hall or locked the store-room door. However, there were many candidates who did score full marks.

Assessment for learning



Candidates often struggle to put the events of the *Odyssey* in the right order. To aid this, create a group activity to help put things in the right order. Tell them the first event in Book 19 (the removal of the weapons). Go round the class (more than once if it is a small group) and each candidate has to give an event that follows the previous one. Can they put the events in the right order and state at least 20 things that happened in the book?

Question 10 (b)

(b) Suggest **one** reason why he did either of these things.

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

Candidates who answered the previous question correctly tended to respond well to this question.

Question 11

11 Who was the first Suitor to try to string the bow?

..... [1]

While many candidates knew this, there was widespread support for both Antinous and Eurymachus.

Question 12

12 Why do you think Penelope asked the Suitors to string the bow as part of her challenge? Make **two** points.

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

The majority of candidates scored at least 1 mark and many got full marks. Where only 1 mark was given, it was usually because the ideas were too similar such as she was playing for time and didn't think they would do it. A few felt she acted to humiliate the suitors, but examiners did not feel this explained her behaviour properly.

Question 13

13 What impressions do you gain of Eurymachus in this passage? Make **two** points.

1

.....

.....

2

.....

.....

[4]

Candidates responded well to this question. There were good ideas that discussed his arrogance, shame, anger, weakness or respect for Odysseus. All of these were felt to be valid interpretations. The warming of the bow was seen by some as a clever tactic, but by others as virtual cheating. Candidates tended to lose marks by not making a clear reference to the passage or stating what Eurymachus felt, but not going on to analyse it.

Question 14

Study **Source F**

14 'Wise Penelope, who had listened, rounded on the maid with a rebuke' (Rieu line 1) / 'Wise Penelope heard his words, and turned on the handmaid' (Kline line 1).

Name the slave-girl that Penelope criticises.

.....

..... [1]

Most candidates knew this, but there was lots of support for Eurynome. Examiners were impressed candidates knew her name, even though this was a wrong response. Many created a named such as Melanthia. It was vital in this response that candidates were able to differentiate the names of the slaves.

Question 15

15 Why is 'resourceful' (Rieu line 11) or 'subtle' (Kline line 8) an appropriate description of Odysseus in this source? Make **three** points.

- 1
- 2
- 3

[6]

Candidates would be well advised to remember the golden rule in doing examinations, namely, to answer the question set. They very regularly would discuss how Odysseus was subtle in other parts of the Odyssey, including parts from his earlier travels. There was plenty of discussion as to the lies he told about his ancestry or his meeting with the beggar, but as the question clearly stated to use the source, marks could not be given.

Other candidates often gave a vague synopsis of the passage, writing about how he was keeping secrets from Penelope and not revealing his identity. There were many responses seen that did not contain any references to the passage and were vague.

The candidates who did answer the question well often referred to his flattery (although even among these there was often no example given), his avoidance of answering the question and the creation of self-pity.

Exemplar 2

- 1 Because he ~~is about to come up with~~ ^{has not} lied to deceive ~~get~~ Penelope. ~~It is on the spot and is therefore clever and resourceful. This can be seen "~~
 Therefore Odysseus is still noble and trustworthy to his wife, after not having
 lied. This is resourceful because it keeps him moral.
- 2 Because he has avoided telling Penelope the truth. This can be seen from
 "do not inquire about my ~~past~~ ancestry". This is a subtle way of avoiding
 her questions, and therefore resourceful.
- 3 Also he is resourceful because he is distracting. He says "his good
 leadership". This praises himself but also distracts Penelope. Perhaps putting
 himself in a better light to Penelope.

Exemplar 2 has been chosen to highlight the good and the bad in responses to this question. The opening point was typical of many responses in not providing any reference to the passage and not really considering how Odysseus was subtle or resourceful in this particular speech.

However, the second point has a clear AO1 reference to the passage and the analysis about him avoiding the question gains the AO2 mark. The final idea has a brief but sufficient quotation and the idea of self-praise. The idea about distracting Penelope seemed a little far-fetched, but this did not detract from the response. Therefore the response scored 4 marks for the final two points.

Question 16

16 Why is the identity of Odysseus **not** openly revealed at this point in poem? Make **two** points.

1

.....

2

.....

[2]

The majority of candidates considered this question from the point of Odysseus' deciding to reveal his identity. Ideas such as his need to gain the help of the slaves or the risk of him being killed by the suitors were given full marks. Fewer candidates chose the other approach in considering why Homer chose to delay his revelation, but there were some excellent responses that discussed the creation of tension and dramatic irony.

Question 17

Study **Source G**

17 Apart from the fact that his men were killed by Polyphemus, why might it be fair to call Odysseus 'fool-hardy' (Rieu line 5) or 'reckless' (Kline line 5) for entering Polyphemus' cave? Make **two** points.

1

.....

2

.....

[2]

This was another question where many candidates did not read the question carefully. A large number of candidates ignored the final words of the question about entering the cave and wrote about his decision to eat Polyphemus' food or to shout out his name. Better responses realised that Odysseus was presumptuous in expecting *xenia* and over-ruled his crew in entering. A few recalled that he had a bad feeling and should have been more wary of someone who lived in such isolation. Many candidates simply seemed to define what reckless was in their response, stating that he lacked caution or didn't think about the consequences and some discussed how he was reckless in other episodes.

Question 18

18 What did Eurylochus do immediately **after** this passage?

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

This question caused a few problems for candidates. There were candidates who stated that he stayed by the ships and that he went with Odysseus and other candidates simply stated that he returned to the ships, presumably referring to the start of the passage. A few candidates muddled him with Elpenor.

Question 19

19 'Disloyal and incompetent.'
How far do you agree with this assessment of Odysseus' crew?
Use **Source G** as a starting point and your own knowledge in your answer.

[8]

Most candidates had plenty to say about the crew. Candidates used the passage quite well, but many of them only focused on Eurylochus' disloyalty and not on the crew's support of Odysseus. Most wrote well about the bag of winds, although a common error was to write that Odysseus had told them not to open it. Some spent too long narrating this event. There was good discussion too of the Cicones episode and some also discussed areas beyond the set books, such as the cattle of the Sun-god. Typically, many candidates spent too long narrating episodes meaning there was not a range of episodes nor enough analysis on them.

There could have been more about the rest of the Circe story, especially the roles of Polites and Eurylochus in entering the palace, although some that did refer to it made an excellent point that they weren't really being incompetent in falling for the trap.

A few candidates needed to read the question more carefully as they talked about Odysseus' competence towards his crew. Other candidates seemed to want to turn the question into whether they felt sympathy for the crew.

Question 20

20 How important are Homer's story-telling techniques to our enjoyment of the *Odyssey*? [15]

This question was considerably the less popular of the two but generally produced some fine responses. The majority of candidates seemed very aware of the story-telling techniques and discussed areas such as similes, epithets, flashbacks and graphic descriptions. Similes were well handled with good analysis of what each simile was trying to suggest. At times candidates gave more examples than necessary of the points chosen, meaning that they would only make two or three different points.

Most candidates chose to consider other areas that affected their enjoyment, such as characterisation. This was usually good, although there was a tendency to just list other things that they liked. Candidates who did well on this response stated which areas contributed most to their enjoyment.

Question 21

21 'Everyone gets what they deserve for their actions in the *Odyssey*.'
How far do you agree with this statement?

[15]

There were many excellent responses seen to this question. Candidates generally discussed a wide range of characters from all the books of the *Odyssey* and there was usually good balance in responses. Candidates particularly showed good evaluation of characters who perhaps were treated harshly. This often featured discussion of the maids and the fate of the crew. It was pleasing to see differing, but valid viewpoints on whether Odysseus and the maids got what they deserved. Some candidates focused on his heroic actions, while others on the episode where his decision making was poor.

There were few responses that discussed characters who were not punished for their evil intentions and acts. Responses that did were often among those that achieved the highest marks.

Weaker responses were a little vaguer on what characters did or overused the crew, repeating what was in Question 19. Another common error was to not evaluate fully. This led to some reasonable responses, but ones where it seemed that candidates were really just listing actions and consequences at a fairly simplistic level.

Exemplar 3

The suitors abuse xenia and harass Penelope for 3 years until Odysseus arrival back at Ithaca. This is very bad and rewards an equal punishment especially since Zeus is the god of xenia and so disrespecting his customs is very bad. As a consequence, they all end up dead by Odysseus and co and this is a rightful response to their actions. They end up described as fish gasping for air which shows their slow, painful deaths which is an accurate consequence to the many years of bad behaviour. On the other hand, Phemius and Medon both get spared by Odysseus which is fair considering they were forced to sing and do other duties for the suitors. Therefore, their deaths would've been unjustified due to their lack of control over the situation. *

Similarly to Medon and Phemius, Leodes supplicates Odysseus and ~~with~~ prays for his life. This is rejected and he is killed. This is unjust in many ways because he was a supplicant and they must be listened to. Furthermore, he was a priest who is in strong relation with the gods and he was kind to the beggar (Odysseus). ~~think~~ These actions did not deserve

Exemplar 3 is part of a response that achieved 14/15. Discussion of the suitors was seen in most responses, but while most responses would talk about their abusing xenia, refusing to leave or sleeping with the maids, this has considerably more details. There is very good AO1 with the correct knowledge of how long the suitors had been there (most candidates said 10 or 20 years) and the disrespect they were showing to Zeus' customs shows really thoughtful evaluation and understanding of Greek values. Discussion of Phemius and Medon was also rarely seen in responses as was discussion of Leodes. Opinions on Leodes' fate varied, but this response argues very effectively as to why he did not deserve his fate.

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