



GCE AS LEVEL

Ancient History

H007

OCR Report to Centres June 2018

About this Examiner Report to Centres

This report on the 2018 Summer assessments aims to highlight:

- areas where students were more successful
- main areas where students may need additional support and some reflection
- points of advice for future examinations

It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

The report also includes links and brief information on:

- A reminder of our **post-results services** including **reviews of results**
- Link to **grade boundaries**
- **Further support that you can expect from OCR**, such as our Active Results service and CPD programme

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Grade boundaries

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It allows you to:

- Review reports on the **performance of individual candidates**, cohorts of students and whole centres
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CONTENTS

Advanced Subsidiary GCE

Ancient History

(H007)

OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

Content	Page
H007/01 Relations between Greek states and between Greek and non-Greek states, 492–404 BC	4
H007/02 The Julio-Claudian Emperors, 31 BC–AD 61.	6

H007/01 Relations between Greek states and between Greek and non-Greek states, 492–404 BC

1. General Comments:

Overall, the examination seems to have gone well for candidates, with the majority having a good sense of the timing required to ensure that they arrived at the essay section with plenty of time. That said, there was a minority for whom timing was clearly an issue.

There were two distinct issues, which emerged from the cohort. In the first place, too many candidates did not have a clear understanding of the structure of the period, and recognise the move from conflict between Greeks and Persians to conflict within the Greek world. It would greatly help if candidates had a clear sense of this overview, underpinned by a strong knowledge of key dates in the period. The second issue was the use of sources in the second question and the essay question. In the latter in particular, the marking prioritises the sources (AO3 is first named in the marking grids, and therefore has considerable influence over the band in which an answer is placed). There are a considerable number of candidates who demonstrated a clear understanding of issues in the period, and demonstrated excellent knowledge of 'basic facts', but they did not show from where those facts came or any sense of the evaluation of those facts.

2. Comments on Individual Questions:

Question No. 1

In theory this question should have been very straightforward, but many candidates did not cover the whole decade, choosing instead to deal either with Darius in detail (and often too much so, as much of this related to the 490s) or Xerxes, with a lengthy description of the battles in 480 BC. The issue here, as elsewhere, is relevance to the question. The best answers were able to capture a sense of the change in emphasis as the mission was handed from father to son, and then to consider the effect of Salamis on Xerxes' plans. There were also too many answers which ignored this issue in the question, and chose instead to write about the actions of the Greeks and their battle-strategies.

Question No. 2

This question was not that well-handled. Many candidates appeared not to recognise the passage, and had confused it with other sections of Thucydides. Alternatively, they thought the Corinthians were speaking and this led to further misunderstandings in interpretation. Many also did not use the passage effectively, and paid it only a few moments of attention, before moving on to an answer, which detailed everything from the foundation of the Delian League through to the opening years of the Archidamian War. Some candidates also seemed to be confused about who the enemies in such a war were, some writing at length about preparations for war against Persia, and little realising the nature of the conflict mentioned in this passage.

Question No. 3

This was the more popular of the two essays. As noted above, there were considerable issues with sources in these essays. This essay in particular led to great historical confusion as well, as a significant number of candidates seemed not to realise that the Hellenic League of 480 BC was not the same as the Delian League. There were a number of essays, which seemed to indicate that Sparta and Corinth were somehow members of the Delian League, and did not recognise the difference between the Delian League and the Peloponnesian League. There could have been considerably better use of epigraphic evidence, as this was barely mentioned by many candidates. Some had a clear notion of the change from League to Empire, and wrote well about this, citing some of the appropriate revolts, but only a minority were able to offer appropriate source material to support such arguments. Many candidates also did not take the answer any further than the 440s or early 430s – some discussion of the revolts and their resolution described by Thucydides would have been excellent.

Question No. 4

This essay proved less popular than option 3, but many of the issues, which arose in the marking, were similar. There was disturbing sense that many candidates had not mastered the chronology, and were confusing elements from the Sicilian Expedition with issues prior to the expedition. Many candidates took this as an opportunity to write about ‘why Athens lost the war’ in general, rather than focusing on the issue of the Sicilian Expedition. A number were quick to blame poor leadership, but then did not evaluate Thucydides in support of their arguments. Many seemed not to be familiar with Thucydides’ comments on the expedition, which would have formed an excellent basis for discussion. There was very little knowledge of what happened in the war after the Sicilian Expedition – just a sense that the expedition was a disaster, and that things ended there. There were even some candidates who seemed confused as what the expedition was, and who had emerged victorious.

H007/02 The Julio-Claudian Emperors, 31 BC–AD 61.

1. General Comments:

There were some very pleasing responses to this new style paper. Candidates were largely aware of the need to support their answers (except in Q1) with ancient source material which was often specific and evaluative well.

To repeat guidance from the previous specification: evaluation of the sources must be specific to the point being made. There were too many generic references to the reliability of the sources such as 'Tacitus hated emperors' and 'Suetonius was a gossip'. These sweeping statements receive very limited credit. It would be far better to analyse and discuss reliability of the evidence specifically with regard to the issue and point being discussed.

Candidates seemed more secure with the Augustan content than the later period.

The vast majority of candidates coped well with the time constraints with very few examples seen of candidates demonstrably running out of time.

2. Comments on Individual Questions:

Question No. 1

This question was attempted well by the vast majority of candidates who could recall specific problems for Claudius in AD 41. The main focus was on the problems with the accession in terms of its recognition by the Senate and the haphazard nature of the whole appointment by the Praetorians. Candidates showed understanding of the problems of succeeding an emperor in Gaius who had been so unpopular that he had been assassinated.

Other immediate problems for Claudius were the poor state of the treasury and the problem with depleted food supply.

Some candidates confused Claudius with Gaius, which was regrettable. No credit could be given for issues such as Claudius' relationship with his wives and freedmen as well as problems with the succession regarding Britannicus and Nero. These issues are clearly outside the scope of the question.

There is no need in this question to quote, refer or analyse to ancient sources.

Question No. 2

The two passages seemed to be recognisable to the majority of candidates. The passages were mined to a good extent with quotations selected, often being appropriate to the question. There was clear understanding from the majority of candidates about the benefits of Augustus' victory at Actium, namely in defeating Antony and Cleopatra, concluding civil war, bringing peace to the Roman world, securing a lucrative food source in Egypt and through the overall expansion of the Empire.

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The better answers looked at longer term benefits from Augustus' victory at Actium such as peace and stability as well as the restoration of the constitution. There were too many examples, however, of assertion or unsupported judgements. Answers which scored highly dealt with benefits over a longer term period, supported with specific evidence from Dio, Suetonius, Tacitus and the Res Gestae. It was pleasing to see material evidence used including relevant coins from the early Augustan period.

Too many responses decided only to focus on the printed passages despite the clear instructions on the question paper and this was deemed to be by the examiners a partial answer. Candidates should pay attention to specific wording of questions and this one clearly said 'on the basis of these passages and other sources you have studied ...'

On the whole, this question was dealt with well and seemed accessible to the vast majority of candidates.

Question No. 3

This question was the less popular of the two essays and overall the answers seemed not to deal very well with the idea of the Imperial Cult. Very few answers actually understood that the cult referred to the deification and/or worship of the Emperors and their family members. Candidates seemed to be aware of Gaius' behaviour as Emperor and the apparent reticence from the other four Julio-Claudian Emperors in permitting worship of themselves, either in the city of Rome or in the provinces. Some candidates seemed aware of the different attitudes towards the worship of living rulers in the East and the West of the Empire and gave good supporting evidence in showing that Augustus encouraged the worship of his numen and genius with supporting evidence in the form of inscriptions.

Too often answers were just based on assertion of generic judgement with very few candidates dealing with the issue of "consistency". Answers, which did not understand the term Imperial Cult, gave a discussion of the Emperors' attitude towards foreign cults or their promotion of themselves as Chief Priests. Very little credit was given to answers, which focussed on other religions. There were an alarming number of answers, which took the Imperial Cult to mean the general popularity and following of the Emperors by the people as if it were some sort of "celebrity popstar cult". It was a shame that a topic area, which is so clearly defined on the new specification, seemed obscure to so many candidates.

Question No. 4

This question was by far the more popular and the term 'ordinary people' was well understood. There were varying degrees of success in terms of analysing 'how successful' with the vast majority of answers relying on assertion and probability in analysing the Emperors' relationship with the ordinary people and thus support from. The main evidence used to show support was from the Emperor being generous to the people in terms of donatives, food supply, provision of amenities, and other aspects of their administration such as games, religious festivals and ending civil war.

Suetonius was the most quoted author with varying degrees of success, but only the most successful answers went beyond Suetonius. There was very little assessment of the importance of the ordinary people to the Emperor and almost no analysis of how can we know of their views anyway.

OCR Report to Centres – June 2018

The answers focussed mainly on Augustus and the Res Gestae was used with good recall and analysis. Limited credit was given to answers, which focussed on provincials or the Upper Classes. Overall, the candidates who attempted this question managed to deal with the issues well and supplied some specific evidence from the ancient source material with good analysis and occasionally good evaluation.

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