



A Level Classical Civilisation

An Introductory Guide

*'The mind is not a vessel to be filled but a
fire to be kindled.'*

Plutarch (Greek Philosopher)



Is this facial expression?

Stern

Chaotic

Angry

Serious

Strong

Calm

What is he doing with his hand?

Is he old or young?

Why might this be significant?

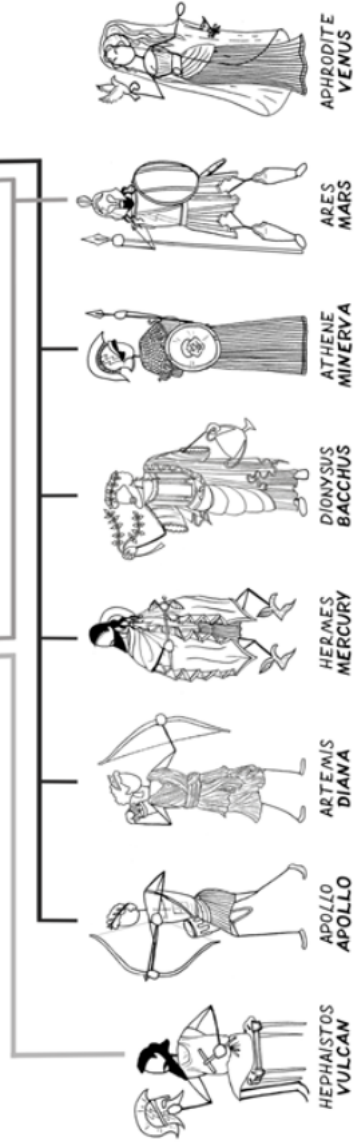
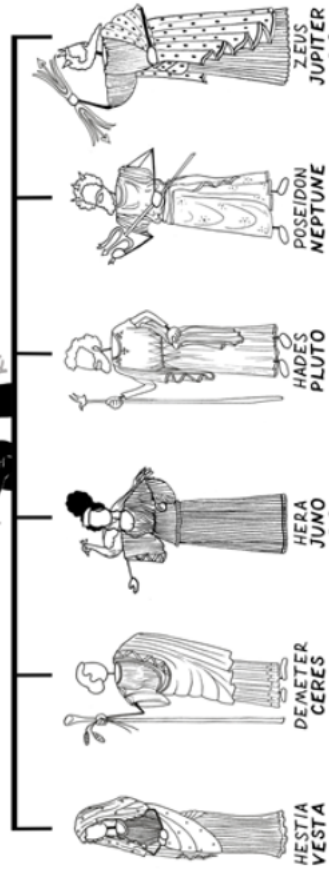
In the corner there is a depiction of a God. Why might this be important?



What is he wearing? What might this suggest?

What does this leader want to suggest about himself?

THE OLYMPIANS



What is Classical Civilisation?

Classical Civilisation is the study of Ancient Greek and Roman Civilisation between the 8th Century BC and the 6th Century AD. This wonderful subject explores the Ancient Worlds and the beginnings of society and culture; we study the beliefs, ideas, cultures, art, literature, and history of wars and power struggles during a time when the Greco-Roman world influenced and inspired much of Europe, North Africa, and Asia and how the legacy of this period still thrives in Modern Day society.

Classics is the ultimate Humanities subject as it encompasses a huge variety of disciplines which, on their own, are exciting and interesting, but also connect well to a range of other subjects. Throughout the course, you will study some of the oldest surviving works of literature such as Homer's *The Odyssey* and Euripides' *Medea* and explore how these represent and reveal ideas about society and people's relationships with each other and the Gods and Goddesses. We also explore the idea of the 'Hero', religion, the role of men and women, relationships between mortals and immortals, demi-gods, monsters, sorcery, power, and the role of fate. We also look at the Art and architecture of the period and how the legacy of design principles are reflected in British History.

You will be aware of many of the concepts and stories from Classics already as many stories and films use them as a basis for modern adaptations. This is the chance to learn from the source material and to have that deep, academic understanding of the texts. There is no expectation of prior knowledge in order to access the course. All the texts are translated and accessible and you will be supported throughout the course.

Why study Classical Civilisation?

It is perhaps the most diverse of all the A Levels that you could choose given the number of subjects and skills it offers. Not only will you get to study the first great literary works, but also explore them in terms of their historical contexts learning about the beginnings of democracy, but also the monuments, vases, and buildings they inspired and still exist today.

It is also one of the most highly respected A Levels with the Russell Group of Universities labelling it an 'informed choice' for aspirational candidates. It provides an excellent complement to History, English Literature, Religious Studies or a respite from Sciences and Maths. However, most importantly, it is a unique and engaging subject that will open up whole new areas of study that you will never have covered before.

We hope to be able to offer you the opportunity to visit places associated with the study of Classics such as Rome, The British Museum, The

Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, as well as working with local universities' Classics Departments to help further your understanding.



What will you study?

OCR is the Exam Board for Classical Civilisation and throughout the course you will study Greek and Roman Literature, and their Ancient Histories. You will read and study translated versions of the texts examining a range of themes and concepts including battles for power and extraordinary individuals. We've structured the course to be able to offer Classics as an AS, in which case you would cover the Year 12 modules.

Year 12

The World of the Hero – Homer's *The Odyssey* (Greek)

Homer's *The Odyssey* is one of the oldest extant works of literature still read today. It is the epic depiction of great Odysseus' 10 year voyage home to Ithaca after the Trojan War. We learn about the Gods, Goddesses, monsters, beasts, and tribulations that he and his men encounter on their way. It is the ultimate tale of moral endurance, strength, and tenacity! It also presents the concept of the Hero and male power, but also the place of females in a patriarchal society.

Culture and the Arts – Imperial Image

We will study the Imperial Image of Augustus Caesar and how he, through careful management of public opinion, was able to incrementally convince a society to accept him as the sole ruler of Rome thus establishing the first phase of the Roman Empire. It is the study of power and politics, and war and peace.

Year 13

The World of the Hero – Virgil's *The Aeneid* (Roman)

We return to the concept of Heroes through studying Virgil's *The Aeneid* a cornerstone and landmark in Western literature. Drawing inspiration from Homer, as well as from his own cultural and political context, it has proven enduringly popular as it celebrated and romanticised traditional Roman beliefs and culture. Virgil explored what it was to be a hero in the Roman world through the main character, Aeneas. Like *The Odyssey*, *The Aeneid* is

another hero's journey home from the Trojan War, and his encounters with fate, divine intervention, and peril.

Beliefs and Ideas – Greek Religion

Finally, we explore Greek Religion within the Classical era. Here we explore and recognise the beliefs, culture, worship and religion the Ancient World. We examine ancient ideas about mortals, the Divine, philosophers and how this has influenced our modern society today.

We explore the visual and literary depictions of the Gods and Goddesses who make up the Ancient Greek Religion and we analyse the way in which the belief system permeated Ancient Greek society. Through the study of Greek Religion, we explore the politics of Ancient Greek societies, the social and gender dynamics, religious rituals and the way the arts have been influenced through to today! This component enables us to explore how our Western World has changed from a world with many Gods and a multitude of Divine beings via the rise of Christianity to a world where much of the largest religious groupings share a single God. We look at mystery cults, oracles, philosophical interpretations and analyse some of the most prominent places of worship such as Athena on the Acropolis, Zeus at Olympia and Apollo at Delphi. It is a study that invites intellectual curiosity and a desire to know more about the world we live in and the people that inhabit it!

Where can Classical Civilisation take you?

An A Level in Classical Civilisation is extremely useful. You will not only acquire specific Classical knowledge of the Ancient World, but also important transferrable skills such as analysing sources, learning from scholarly concepts and critics, developing independent critical and evaluative approaches. You will learn how to formulate and support an argument, and develop a valuable understanding of cultures that differ from your own. Furthermore, the links between Classical Civilisation and our Modern Day era cannot be emphasised enough: our politics, our history, architecture, art, literature, medical knowledge, Sciences, language, and attitudes have all been influenced by the Ancient World. It permeates everything: look at Prince Henry's motto, for instance.

A Level Classical Civilisation is a much-favoured subject for further study in the fields of Classics, Drama, History of Art, English Literature, History, Philosophy, Politics, Architecture, Medicine, and Law. This can lead to a hugely diverse range of employment opportunities connected with these subjects as well as Marketing, Legal roles, Medical roles, local Government and many others.

- Skills you will gain:
 - Knowledge and Understanding of the Classical World
 - Formulate coherent arguments
 - Interpretation
 - Evaluation
 - Critical Analysis
 - Make substantiated judgements
 - Intellectual Curiosity and Intrigue
 - Discussion and presentation
- Subjects that will support and be supported by your study of Classics:
 - English Literature
 - Politics
 - History
 - Law
 - Religious Studies
 - Drama



Pre-course Reading List- What can I do to get ahead?

These are not compulsory texts to read in the lead up to your study of Classical Civilisation, but rather opportunities to gain a preliminary understanding of these Ancient Worlds, and the varying interpretations of these ancient worlds prior to studying Classics.

- *Mythos* by Stephen Fry
- *Heroes* by Stephen Fry
- *Troy* by Stephen Fry
- *Circe* by Madeline Miller
- *The Song of Achilles* by Madeline Miller
- *The Silence of the Girls* by Pat Barker
- *The Women of Troy* by Pat Barker
- *A Thousand Ships* by Natalie Haynes
- *Stone Blind* by Natalie Haynes
- *The Penelopiad* by Margaret Atwood
- *Ariadne* by Jennifer Saint
- *Elektra* by Jennifer Saint
- *Athena's Child* by Hannah Lynn
- *Ithaka* by Adele Geras
- *Troy* by Adele Geras

Podcasts

BBC Sounds – You're Dead to Me

BBC Sounds – Natalie Haynes Stands Up for the Classics

Episodes to listen to – Penelope, Medusa, Helen of Troy, Sappho, Aggripina, Plato, Ovid, Virgil.

Clips to watch

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Z9FQxcCAZO>

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4mbk59rbjE>

