



# **National 5 Classical Studies: constructing a question paper**

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## **Section 1: Life in classical Greece and Section 3: Life in the Roman world**

- ◆ The content for each section is divided into four areas. For example, the areas for section 1 are religion, citizenship, democracy, and daily life. At least one question must come from each of these areas to ensure that a range of content is covered.
- ◆ For the same reason, do not ask two questions in any section on exactly the same issue.
- ◆ Ensure that each question is freestanding and does not depend on the candidate's answer to a previous question.
- ◆ Candidates should be able to attain full marks in a question without having to give every detail possible about the issue.
- ◆ In the source-based questions, the sources should not provide information that candidates could use to answer any other question.
- ◆ If you think one question is extremely challenging, do not set an 'easy' question in the same section to balance it, rather make appropriate adjustments to the 'difficult' question.
- ◆ You can use Greek and Latin words in teaching, and some appear, with English equivalents, in the lists of course content. In a question, always give the English term first and add the Greek or Latin in brackets afterwards. For example, 'Describe the marketplace (agora) in classical Athens'.
- ◆ In questions, use English vocabulary that is appropriate for National 5 candidates.
- ◆ Follow the model shown in the specimen paper and most recent past question paper.

### **Describe (4 marks)**

- ◆ Must have the stem 'Describe ...'.
- ◆ The issue must not be too narrow or too wide.

### **Explain the reasons why (6 marks)**

- ◆ Must have the stem 'Explain the reasons why ...'.
- ◆ The issue must be wide enough, with enough aspects, to allow candidates to draw on a reasonable spread of knowledge.

### **To what extent (8 marks)**

- ◆ Must have the stem 'To what extent ...'.
- ◆ The issue must be wide enough, with enough aspects, to allow candidates to draw on a reasonable spread of knowledge.

### **Compare (4 marks)**

- ◆ Must have the stem 'Compare ... in classical Greece/classical Athens/Pompeii/Roman Britain with ... in the modern world'.
- ◆ The issue chosen should allow candidates to give both similarities and differences.

## **Explain a written source — section 1 (4 marks)**

- ◆ Must have the stem 'Explain what Source X tells us ...'.
- ◆ Must be based on a primary or secondary source of approximately 70–90 words.
- ◆ The source should contain more than the minimum of four words, phrases or ideas relating to the issue, which the candidate can explain.
- ◆ Introduce the source as by a modern writer or by an ancient writer. Do not name the writer or give details about the type of source or its date as this may encourage candidates to evaluate rather than explain.
- ◆ You may need to edit a source to make it more appropriate or accessible for National 5 level, for example by omitting an irrelevant part or making vocabulary clearer.

## **Explain a picture source and a written source — section 3 (4 marks)**

- ◆ Must have the stem 'Explain what Sources A and B tell us ...'.
- ◆ Both the picture source and the written source should deal with the same issue.
- ◆ You can use a coloured picture source but it should be in black and white when presented to candidates as the question paper is not printed in colour.
- ◆ The picture may be of an archaeological object or site, or of an archaeological reconstruction.
- ◆ The picture should show at least four clearly identifiable things that a candidate can explain.
- ◆ Introduce the picture source as simply as possible, making clear what the picture shows.
- ◆ You should deal with the written source in the same way as for section 1 above.
- ◆ The written source will also be used for an evaluation question, so state the author, date and any other necessary information in the introduction.

## **Evaluate a written source (4 marks)**

- ◆ Must have the stem 'Evaluate the usefulness of Source X for ...'.
- ◆ Must be based on a primary source of approximately 70–90 words.
- ◆ State the author, type of source, date and any other necessary information in the introduction.
- ◆ While the introduction should be as concise as possible, it must contain the facts about the source necessary to answer the question. Candidates are not expected to have prior knowledge of classical writers.
- ◆ You may need to edit a source to make it more appropriate or accessible for National 5 level, for example by omitting an irrelevant part or making vocabulary clearer.
- ◆ In section 3, you must use the same written source as the one used for the 'Explain a picture source and a written source' question.

## **General hints on sources**

- ◆ Really suitable primary sources are not always easy to find. When constructing a whole section or paper, it is probably best to begin with the source questions. In that way, you

have the freedom to select any issue you like for them and are not restricted by having already set a question on a particular issue.

- ◆ A useful source to use is the [Perseus Digital Library of Tufts University](#) as it allows you to search by key words as well as author.
- ◆ For example, entering 'water clock', 'klepsydra' or 'jury' might lead you to a suitable source for Athenian law courts.
- ◆ It is a good idea to use a modern author for the 'Explain a written source' question in section 1. That way you are not using up a primary source that would be ideal for evaluation. As a modern author yourself, it allows you to write a tailor-made source.

## Section 2: Classical literature

- ◆ Two of the five themes must be sampled. The themes are leadership, fate versus free will, heroism, conflict, and women in society.
- ◆ If there is a question on women in section 1 (Life in classical Greece), it is best to avoid setting a question on women in the literature section. If it cannot be avoided, take care that candidates will not be able to use material from their section 1 answer, or from any source there, when writing answers on women in section 2.
- ◆ As there can be an overlap between the themes of leadership and heroism, do not set questions on both these themes together in section 2. Having both these themes in one paper tends to lead to repetition by candidates.
- ◆ There are no prescribed texts, so you should word questions in a way that allows them to be answered using any suitable text, even if you know which texts your own candidates will actually use in their answers.
- ◆ Although literature questions are generic, it is good practice to introduce an angle to make candidates think and not merely repeat or produce a prepared answer.
- ◆ The different parts of a Classical literature question (a, b, c or a, b) are not freestanding: (c) must follow on from (b) and (b) must follow on from (a).

### Describe (5 marks)

- ◆ Must have the stem 'Describe ... in a classical text (...)'.  
◆ In the 2018 and 2019 question papers, '... in a classical text(s) ...' was used in order to follow the wording in the Higher question paper. The wording in the National 5 question paper has now returned to 'text', as it is better for candidates to use a single text in their response to a question of this length.

### Explain (3 marks)

- ◆ Must have the stem 'Explain what this ... in the classical world'.  
◆ What is asked should require candidates to relate points made in their answer to the previous part of the question to the wider classical world.

## **Comparison with today (2 marks)**

- ◆ Must have the stem 'Do we still ... today/in the modern world' or an appropriate variation on this stem.
- ◆ This question should require candidates to build on points made in their answers to the previous parts of the question and not be entirely freestanding.

## **Combined 'Explain' and 'Comparison with today' (5 marks)**

- ◆ Must have the stem 'Explain ... in the classical world compared to today/the modern world'.
- ◆ What is asked should require candidates to relate points made in their answer to the previous part of the question to the wider classical world and to the modern world.

## **Using past question papers as a source of questions**

- ◆ Question papers that have been published are in the public domain and can be seen by candidates. They may also be used as a teaching resource.
- ◆ However, it is still possible to use past papers as a source for developing valid centre-based assessments.
- ◆ A prelim consisting of a single past paper would not be considered valid, however, one constructed from individual questions taken from a number of past papers would.
- ◆ An existing question can also be adapted by changing the wording. For example:
  - The 2022 question 'Explain the reasons why the casts of those who died in the eruption of Vesuvius are so useful' could become 'Explain the reasons why archaeologists find the casts of those who died in the eruption of Vesuvius so valuable'.
- ◆ An existing question can be adapted by changing the issue. For example:
  - The 2018 question 'Compare the working conditions in a bakery in Pompeii with the working conditions in a bakery in the modern world' could become 'Compare the working conditions in a laundry (fullery) in Pompeii with the working conditions in a laundry in the modern world'.
- ◆ A question of one type can be converted into a question of another type. For example:
  - The 2018 question 'To what extent did men in classical Athens have better lives than women?' could be converted into 'Describe some of the factors that meant men had better lives than women in classical Athens'.
- ◆ A primary source used in an 'Explain' question could be used to create an 'Evaluate' question.
- ◆ A primary source used in an 'Evaluate' question could, if the content allows, be used to create an 'Explain' question.