



Wakefield Girls' High School  
Queen Elizabeth Grammar School  
**Wakefield**

## Technical Information

### A-level

A-level Course Title	Unit Code	Awarding Body
Classical Civilisation	H408 C	OCR

### A-level Examinations:

Name	Method of Assessment	Marks
The World of the Hero	Examination 2 hours 20 mins	40%
Greek Theatre	Examination 1 hour 45 mins	30%
Democracy and the Athenians	Examination 1 hour 45 mins	30%

### WGHS Senior School

(Girls 11-18 years)  
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[www.wgsf.org.uk](http://www.wgsf.org.uk)

## Course Guide

# A-level Classical Civilisation

# Classical Civilisation

## Background Knowledge and Qualifications

You do not need to have studied Classical Civilisation, Latin or Classical Greek at GCSE to study this subject at A-level. All ancient literature and sources are studied in English. What is most important is that you should have a lively and enquiring mind, an interest in the classical world, a willingness to read and explore new ideas, and an ability to communicate your ideas and opinions effectively.

## Why Classical Civilisation?

- It provides a variety of topics that cover the civilisations of Ancient Greece and Rome
- It teaches an appreciation of the values of two ancient cultures that have had a profound effect on western civilisation
- Components cover literature, history and politics in the ancient world
- The study of primary source material helps develop analytical skills
- It's fun!

## Who Should Study Classical Civilisation?

- Anyone who is interested in the ancient world
- Anyone who likes History, Politics or Literature, especially comparing different cultures and societies from different periods
- Anyone who likes reading and drawing their own conclusions
- Remember, no prior knowledge is needed

## Course Description

The course components offer a blend of history, literature and drama from the Greek and Roman worlds. In addition, the components we offer combine to produce a cohesive course with strong links between all three:

### Component 1 – The World of the Hero

Homer's *Odyssey* tells of Odysseus' adventures with monsters and bewitching women until he finally reaches home and prizes his wife from the clutches of her unpleasant suitors. The gods and goddesses struggle to help and hinder him and as well as being an entertaining story the book raises questions about the concept of heroism and gives an insight into life and culture many centuries ago.

The Roman poet Virgil drew inspiration from Homer as well as from the turbulent, war-torn times in which he lived to produce the great Roman epic poem, the *Aeneid*, the story of Aeneas, a refugee from Troy, who struggles with the gods, relationships, warfare and duty to become a hero fit for the Romans.

Through the study of these epic poems, the origins of Western literature can be discovered.

### Component 2 – Greek Theatre

The ancient Greek theatre produced some of the most dramatic literature that continues to have a profound effect on modern culture. To fully understand its effect, it is necessary to study why and how the ancient Greeks staged their plays: you will study the surviving theatres and a range of famous Greek vases: the Greeks surrounded themselves with images from the theatre and the plays performed there. The tragedies 'Oedipus the King' and 'Bacchae' teach their audiences some important and terrible lessons through the changing fortunes of the leading characters, while the comedy 'Frogs' offers insights into the strange world of ancient Athens through its hilarious scenes. All three plays continue to be popular with modern theatre companies.

### Component 3 – Democracy and the Athenians

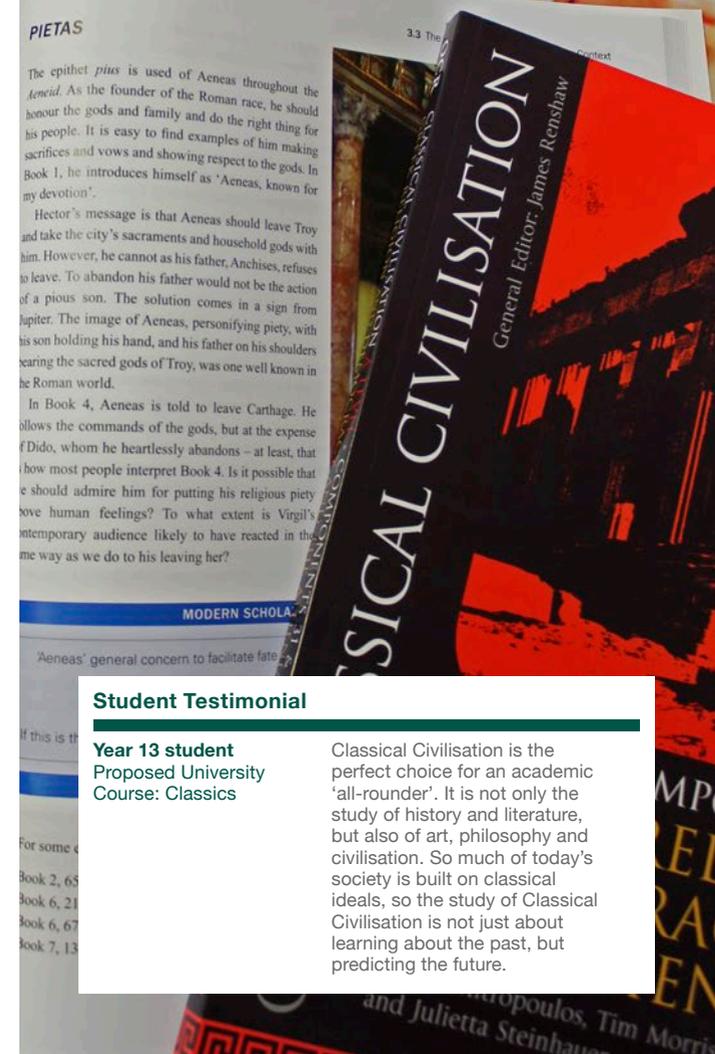
'Democracy' is held up by many as an ideal method of governing states in the twenty-first century, but two and a half thousand years ago, in ancient Greece, the Athenians developed the purest form of it, in which every citizen could vote on making every law. You will study how this radical form of government developed through the sixth and fifth centuries BC, how the Athenians themselves celebrated and idealised it, but how many Greeks were highly critical of it. The course will encourage you to think critically about democracy and other political systems.

## Use of Course and Qualifications

The subject combines well with any A-level subject. It sits well alongside ancient and modern languages, English, History, Geography, Politics, Religious Studies, Economics and Art. Students of Psychology and other sciences also find the course stimulating and relevant. Universities offer a wide range of attractive courses in Classics, Classical Civilisation, Ancient History and Archaeology which allow students to develop their interest in the ancient world in a variety of directions.

Classical Civilisation can also form part of a joint degree with a wide choice of other subjects, or in some highly regarded Combined Honours courses. Such degrees open up many diverse career paths from Teaching and Archaeology, through Journalism and Marketing to Law, Finance and Management.

You will develop and use a variety of skills in the various components studied. These include collecting, analysing, interpreting and evaluating information and ideas, as well as communicating your findings effectively in different ways. You will be encouraged to identify and develop the links between different parts of the subject, as well as to become increasingly independent and inquisitive in exploring your own avenues of study and thought. These skills are in great demand and are recognised by employers and universities as being of great value.



## Student Testimonial

**Year 13 student**  
Proposed University  
Course: Classics

Classical Civilisation is the perfect choice for an academic 'all-rounder'. It is not only the study of history and literature, but also of art, philosophy and civilisation. So much of today's society is built on classical ideals, so the study of Classical Civilisation is not just about learning about the past, but predicting the future.