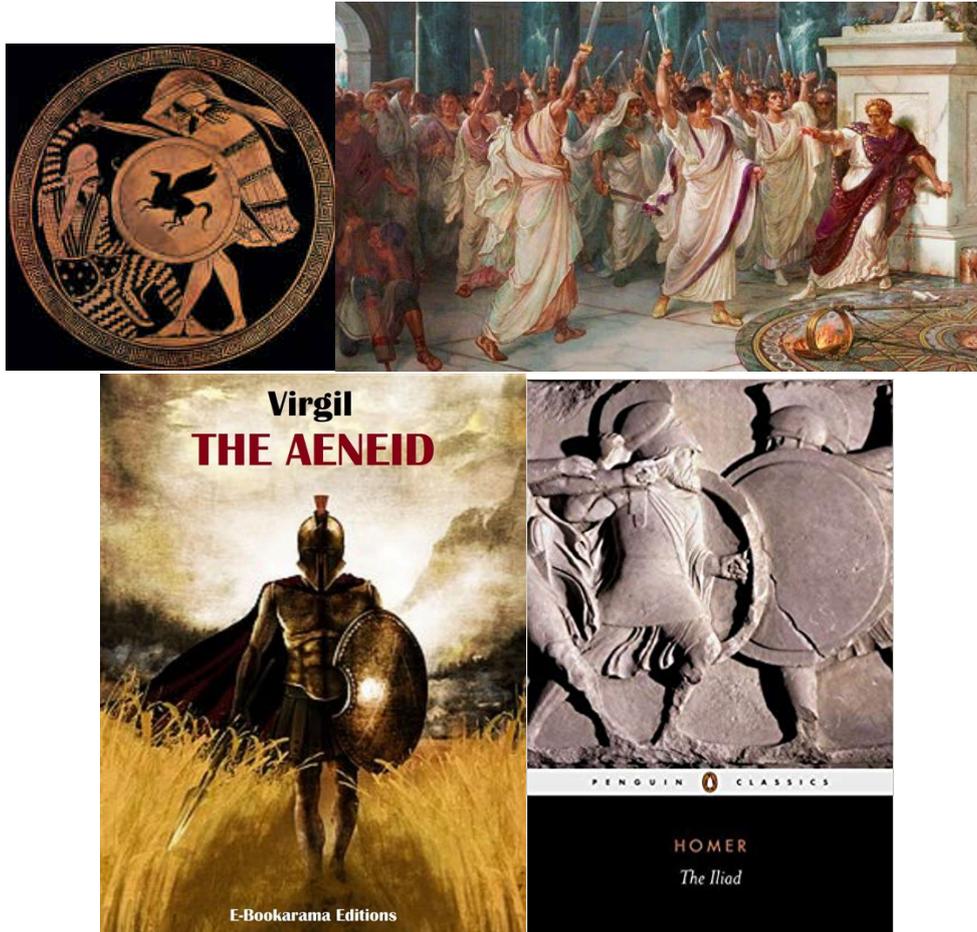


The Classics Department

A Level Options



It is simply unconscionable that our young people should not be given the opportunity to take their pick from this unmatched linguistic, literary, historical, artistic, crosscultural, intellectual feast. For, when young people do discover it, they realise exactly what they have been deprived of – and exactly what they want.

Dr Peter Jones, MBE

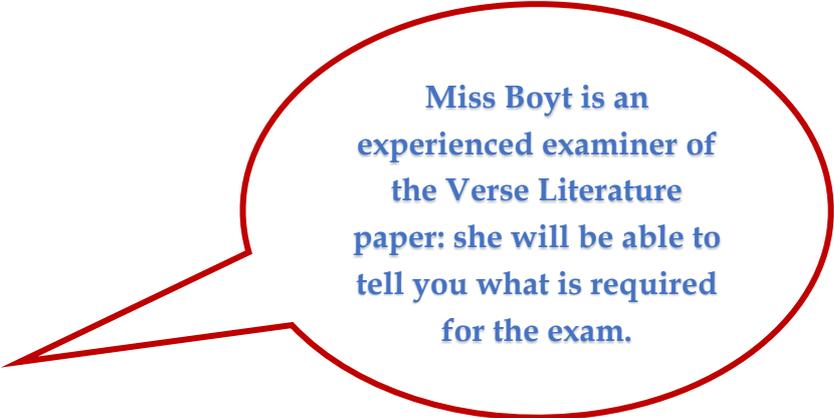


NORWICH SCHOOL

For more information please contact Miss Alexandra Boyt (Head of Classics)
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Latin and Greek:



Miss Boyt is an experienced examiner of the Verse Literature paper: she will be able to tell you what is required for the exam.

Latin and Greek demand and instil a high degree of intellectual rigour and cultural sensitivity towards our social, literary and historical origins. They involve logical thinking, precise analysis and lucid expression. Pupils invariably develop an enhanced vocabulary and an ability to write with greater fluency, not to mention a heightened awareness of linguistic processes and cultural heritage.

Classical languages are considered to be one of nine facilitating subjects by Oxbridge and Russel Group Universities.

We follow the OCR A level courses in Latin and Greek. Both subjects comprise four papers, all of which are taken at the end of the two-year course. Two papers focus on translation and comprehension skills; two papers concern prose and verse texts. In both Latin and Greek A level, texts are read in the original languages, alongside a wider selection of reading in translation, allowing for a greater and broader understanding of the historical and literary context in which such important texts were composed.

For examination in 2022, the Latin texts may include part of Cicero's *Pro Cluentio*, the great orator's defence of a man who is accused of poisoning his stepfather by his own mother. There may also be a historical text, by Livy, chronicling the early history of Rome and the despicable behaviour of Rome's king, Tarquin the Proud. Some poetry will sit alongside this rhetoric and history, most likely Virgil's Aeneid, Book XII, in which the poet brings to a dramatic conclusion his poem on the foundation of the

Roman people. There are few 'endings' more controversial in western literature.

In Greek, the prescribed texts include Thucydides' account of the doomed tyrant killers Harmodius and Aristogeiton, who became the poster boys of Athens' blossoming democracy. In the Upper Sixth, pupils may read Plutarch's account of Athens' 'bad boy', Alcibiades. In preparation for the verse literature paper, texts may Sophocles' tragedy *Ajax*, which tells the story of a great hero, who is destroyed by the vengeful Athene.

Classical Civilisation:

Classical Civilisation focuses on the civilisations of Greece and Rome, and is a wide ranging subject involving the study of ancient literature, art history, politics, philosophy and history. You don't need to know any languages, all the literature is in translation. Most importantly it doesn't matter if you haven't studied the Greeks and Romans before, all you need is an interest in the ancient world and its cultures.

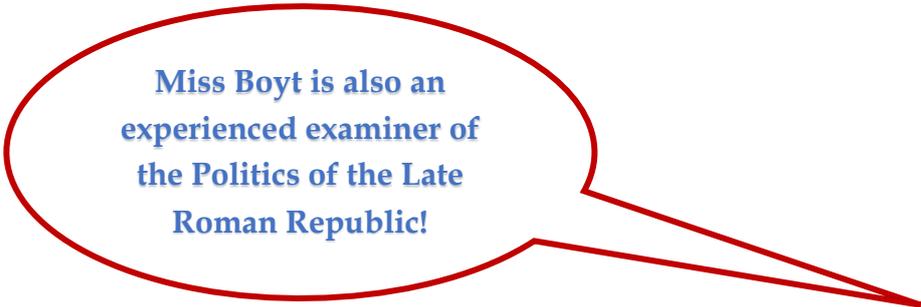
The Russell Group recognises Classical Civilisation as a facilitating subject and Cambridge recommends it for those interested in studying the arts and social sciences.

We follow the OCR A level course in Classical Civilisation, covering three areas of the Classical World:

The World of the Hero concerns the works of Homer and Virgil, epic poets of the Greek and Roman world. The Iliad stands at the beginning of the Western literary canon, the greatest telling of the tragic and bloody climax to the ten-year war at Troy. Virgil's Aeneid, a patriotic epic, written to honour the emperor Augustus, considers Aeneas' journey to Italy, and the future foundation of Rome.

Culture and the Arts topic 'Invention of the Barbarian' concerns conflict between the Greek and Persian empire during the 5th Century BC. This side of the course develops visual analysis skills, in addition to literary skills involved in the World of the Hero topic. The key to this topic is to understand the innate prejudice of the Greek world against the eastern empire of Xerxes the Great. We will not only study Greek culture, but also the reality of Persian society. This topic is a stunning combination of literature, culture and history.

Beliefs and Ideas involves the consideration of the philosophical ideas and political ideals of the Late Roman Republic. One of the most exciting times in western history, it was a period of considerable political upheaval, which eventually led to a bloody civil war and the rise of the emperors. An exploration of three very different political figures from this period, Cato, Julius Caesar and Cicero, unveils aspects of this tumultuous, and significant, half-century of Roman history and politics.



Miss Boyt is also an experienced examiner of the Politics of the Late Roman Republic!

Why classics?

Even a brief encounter with the ancient world not only fires the imagination of the young but also sheds a dazzling light on why we in the West are as we are, with all our massive strengths and disastrous failings.

For generations a classical education was considered a privilege for the few, not the many, but now its revival in primary and secondary state schools is well under way. Classical subjects equip pupils with grammar, critical thinking and language skills.

This is because teachers know that studying classics:

- **Develops English literacy:** students of Latin or Ancient Greek achieve a deep understanding of grammar which encourages accurate use of language. From the very early stages, concepts of singular and plural, tenses and case usage are taught. In GCSE

Latin or Ancient Greek, more complex grammatical structures are introduced than those in modern foreign language GCSEs.

- **Aids cultural literacy:** Classical mythology forms the bedrock of much modern art and literature, and is constantly reworked in theatre and in the visual arts, film and pop-culture.
- **Teaches the foundations of philosophy and history:** The ancient Greeks and Romans have profoundly influenced western society and thought. They established the disciplines of philosophy and history and the foundations of our political systems.
- **Encourages cultural insight:** In some ways, the ancient Greeks and the Romans seem just like us, but in other ways, they are very different. This can lead students to reflect deeply about themselves and the lives of others – an important quality in a modern, multi-cultural society.
- **Gives opportunities for wide-ranging thinking:** Classical subjects encourage students to cross subject boundaries through thinking that touches on language, literature and civilisation.
- **Allows for depth and breadth:** The study of classical subjects is interdisciplinary. All four classical subjects – Latin, Ancient Greek, Classical Civilisation and Ancient History – can involve literature, history, philosophy and the visual arts.
- **Improves employment opportunities:** Evidence suggests that employers have respect for potential employees who have studied classical subjects at school or university. Many Classics graduates have made a name for themselves in various fields, including JK Rowling, Boris Johnson and Mark Zuckerberg. This is because, among other things, the study of Classics encourages clarity of thought, attention to detail, and the ability to argue a case.

Through the centuries, the works of Homer, Sophocles, Virgil and Ovid have profoundly influenced Britain's greatest writers, dramatists and poets, including Chaucer, Milton and Shakespeare.

The examples set by Pythagoras, Archimedes, Euclid, Ptolemy, Lucretius and Vitruvius continue to inspire scientists, engineers, architects and astronomers around the world.

Plato and Aristotle established the foundations of western philosophy and political thought; Herodotus, Thucydides, Tacitus and Plutarch invented the arts of the historian and biographer.

The lives of great men and women such as Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar, Cleopatra and Constantine teach us lessons in leadership, power and downfall.

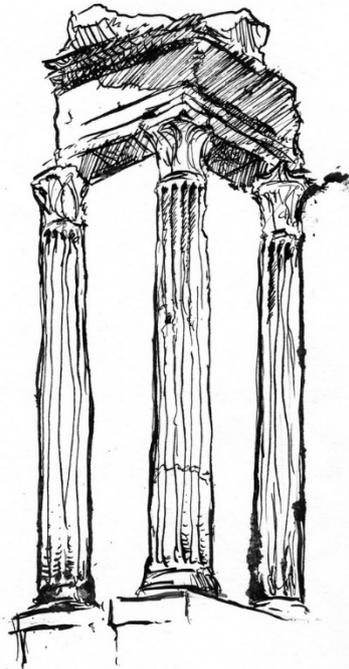
Dr Peter Jones on 'Why Classics'

Western civilisation began nearly 3,000 years ago, in this sense – that it was the moment when the first voice of the West was heard. That first voice of our civilisation was Greek literature: Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, c. 700 BC. Greeks taught the Romans about literature; and the Roman taught all Europe about it. Since when everyone has been churning the stuff out like mowing machines.

And what a literature it was! And now accessible to every school pupil in translation. There you can read the West's first shot at dealing with love, sex, same-sex relationships, death, old age, citizenship (local and global), education: (Plutarch on lectures: So sit upright, do not sprawl, pay close attention; do not frown, writhe about, doze, whisper to chums.), crime, culpability: (Aristotle: since we have control over the decision whether to be good or bad, it follows that both virtue and vice spring from the same source: ourselves. So any argument: 'that absolves bad men of responsibility for wickedness would also deprive good men of responsibility for virtue. '), law-making, property-rights, politics, the

just war, marriage, the uses of power, xenophobia, punishment theory, the good life.

You can see them inventing or radically developing our alphabet, democracy, republicanism, atomic theory; philosophy, history, rational, though based on totally wrong premises, medicine (the key to those last three being the observation that if you invoke the gods to solve the problems you are not solving them – perhaps the Greeks’ most important intellectual breakthrough, that only human intelligibility can solve human problems); logic, literary criticism, biology (Aristotle responsible for those three); tragedy, comedy, geometry, the arch and concrete (the last two enabling Romans to build the first gigantic free-standing buildings – the Colosseum held 50,000); and establishing those architectural orders and ratios that so grace our land – churches, grand houses, Whitehall. Look at the room in a grand house: the skirting board is the footing of a pillar; if it had a picture rail above, the space between



it and the cornice would be a frieze; then the cornice, and often a panelled ceiling. These rooms are trying to look like a grand Roman temple. Draw a pillar from skirting board to frieze and you would almost be there.

And I have not even mentioned myth, magnificent stories which captivate children, with fascinating cross-cultural links to the Near East, like much of Greek thought, already evident in Homer.

All this is what is unique about Classics.