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EDUCATION

SAMPLE QUESTIONS
One question from each section of this exam, with its marking scheme, so teachers can see what the full paper is like. Full exam and solutions: captivateeducation.com.au/trial-exams

Classical Studies

Question and Answer Book

Practice examination 1 – 2027

- Reading time is 15 minutes
- Writing time is 2 hours

Approved materials

- An English and/or bilingual printed dictionary

Materials supplied

- Question and Answer Book
- Stimulus Book for Section A

Instructions

- Use the additional space at the end of this book if you need extra space to complete an answer.

Students are not permitted to bring mobile phones and/or any unauthorised electronic devices into the examination room.

Contents

Section A (2 of 4 questions, 40 marks)

Section B (1 of 8 questions, 40 marks)

Assessment criteria for Section B

Practice material in the layout of the 2025 VCAA paper – generated 2027. Not a VCAA examination.

SAMPLE

Section A – Classical expressions

Instructions

- Answer one epic tradition question and one material culture question.
- For the epic tradition, choose either Question 1 or Question 2. Answer **all** parts a–d.
- For material culture, choose either Question 3 or Question 4. Answer **all** parts a–d.

SAMPLE

- Write your responses in English.

Sample – Question 1 of the 4 questions in this section; Question 1 is shown to part c of its 4 parts.

Question 1 (10 marks)

The epic tradition: Homer, *The Iliad*, Book 18

Refer to pages 2–3 in the Stimulus Book when responding to this question.

a. Outline the events that take place immediately before this extract. 2 marks

b. Describe how Achilles is depicted in this extract. 4 marks

c. Explain the techniques used by Homer to create tension in this extract. 4 marks

SAMPLE

Section B – Classical perspectives

Instructions

- Write an essay on one of the following eight questions in the space provided.
- Questions are based on pairs of works studied. You must apply knowledge of the classical concern that you studied.
- Your response will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out at the end of this book.
- Write your response in English.

Sample – Question 1 of the 8 questions in this section.

Question 1 (40 marks)

Euripides, *Medea* and Sophocles, *Electra*

'Women who seek revenge are always destroyed by it.'

Evaluate this statement using evidence from the works studied this year. 40 marks

Write your essay on the ruled pages that follow the last essay question.

OR

End of sample questions

SAMPLE

Assessment criteria for Section B

The essay will be assessed against the following criteria:

- knowledge of the two classical works, and their relationships to their socio-historical contexts and the classical concern
- analysis of key ideas and the features and techniques used to explore these ideas in the two classical works
- construction of a comparative argument in response to a topic, with a focus on the comparison of key ideas and the features and techniques used to explore these ideas
- use of relevant evidence

SAMPLE

Contents: pages 2–3 — Classical expressions – The epic tradition: Homer, *The Iliad*, Book 18 (Question 1); pages 4–5 — Classical expressions – The epic tradition: Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Book 4 (Question 2); page 6 — Classical expressions – Material culture: The Parthenon (Question 3); page 7 — Classical expressions – Material culture: The Colosseum (Question 4).

You may keep this Stimulus Book.

SAMPLE

Classical expressions – The epic tradition

This stimulus relates to Question 1.

Homer, *The Iliad*, Book 18

Translated by Samuel Butler, 1898 (public domain). The prescribed translation is Robert Fagles, Penguin Classics, 1998; teachers may substitute the corresponding lines of Book 18 (Greek lines 165–238: Iris' message to Achilles, his appearance at the trench and the recovery of Patroclus' body) from the class text.

Extract

And now he would even have dragged it off and have won imperishable glory, had not Iris fleet as the wind, winged her way as messenger from Olympus to the son of Peleus and bidden him arm. She came secretly without the knowledge of Jove and of the other gods, for Juno sent her, and when she had got close to him she said, "Up, son of Peleus, mightiest of all mankind; rescue Patroclus about whom this fearful fight is now raging by the ships. Men are killing one another, the Danaans in defence of the dead body, while the Trojans are trying to hale it away, and take it to windy Ilius: Hector is the most furious of them all; he is for cutting the head from the body and fixing it on the stakes of the wall. Up, then, and bide here no longer; shrink from the thought that Patroclus may become meat for the dogs of Troy. Shame on you, should his body suffer any kind of outrage."

And Achilles said, "Iris, which of the gods was it that sent you to me?"

Iris answered, "It was Juno the royal spouse of Jove, but the son of Saturn does not know of my coming, nor yet does any other of the immortals who dwell on the snowy summits of Olympus."

Then fleet Achilles answered her saying, "How can I go up into the battle? They have my armour. My mother forbade me to arm till I should see her come, for she promised to bring me goodly armour from Vulcan; I know no man whose arms I can put on, save only the shield of Ajax son of Telamon, and he surely must be fighting in the front rank and wielding his spear about the body of dead Patroclus."

Iris said, "We know that your armour has been taken, but go as you are; go to the deep trench and show yourself before the Trojans, that they may fear you and cease fighting. Thus will the fainting sons of the Achaeans gain some brief breathing time, which in battle may hardly be."

SAMPLE

Iris left him when she had so spoken. But Achilles dear to Jove arose, and Minerva flung her tasselled aegis round his strong shoulders; she crowned his head with a halo of golden cloud from which she kindled a glow of gleaming fire. As the smoke that goes up into heaven from some city that is being beleaguered on an island far out at sea—all day long do men sally from the city and fight their hardest, and at the going down of the sun the line of beacon-fires blazes forth, flaring high for those that dwell near them to behold, if so be that they may come with their ships and succour them—even so did the light flare from the head of Achilles, as he stood by the trench, going beyond the wall—but he did not join the Achaeans for he heeded the charge which his mother laid upon him.

There did he stand and shout aloud. Minerva also raised her voice from afar, and spread terror unspeakable among the Trojans. Ringing as the note of a trumpet that sounds alarm then the foe is at the gates of a city, even so brazen was the voice of the son of Aeacus, and when the Trojans heard its clarion tones they were dismayed; the horses turned back with their chariots for they boded mischief, and their drivers were awe-struck by the steady flame which the grey-eyed goddess had kindled above the head of the great son of Peleus.

Thrice did Achilles raise his loud cry as he stood by the trench, and thrice were the Trojans and their brave allies thrown into confusion; whereon twelve of their noblest champions fell beneath the wheels of their chariots and perished by their own spears. The Achaeans to their great joy then drew Patroclus out of reach of the weapons, and laid him on a litter: his comrades stood mourning round him, and among them fleet Achilles who wept bitterly as he saw his true comrade lying dead upon his bier. He had sent him out with horses and chariots into battle, but his return he was not to welcome.

Butler uses the Roman names of the gods: Jove (Zeus), Juno (Hera), Minerva (Athena), Mars (Ares), Vulcan (Hephaestus).

SAMPLE

Classical expressions – The epic tradition

This stimulus relates to Question 2.

Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Book 4

Translated by J. W. Mackail, 1885 (public domain). The prescribed translation is David West, Penguin Classics, 2003; teachers may substitute the corresponding lines of Book 4 (Latin lines 129–197: the royal hunt, the cave and the flight of Rumour) from the class text.

Extract

Meanwhile Dawn rises forth of ocean. A chosen company issue from the gates while the morning star is high; they pour forth with meshed nets, toils, broad-headed hunting spears, Massylian horsemen and sinewy sleuth-hounds. At her doorway the chief of Carthage await their queen, who yet lingers in her chamber, and her horse stands splendid in gold and purple with clattering feet and jaws champing on the foamy bit. At last she comes forth amid a great thronging train, girt in a Sidonian mantle, broidered with needlework; her quiver is of gold, her tresses knotted into gold, a golden buckle clasps up her crimson gown. Therewithal the Phrygian train advances with joyous Iülus. Himself first and foremost of all, Aeneas joins her company and unites his party to hers: even as Apollo, when he leaves wintry Lycia and the streams of Xanthus to visit his mother's Delos, and renews the dance, while Cretans and Dryopes and painted Agathyrsians mingle clamorous about his altars: himself he treads the Cynthian ridges, and plaits his flowing hair with soft heavy sprays and entwines it with gold; the arrows rattle on his shoulder: as lightly as he went Aeneas; such glow and beauty is on his princely face. When they are come to the mountain heights and pathless coverts, lo, wild goats driven from the cliff-tops run down the ridge; in another quarter stags speed over the open plain and gather their flying column in a cloud of dust as they leave the hills. But the boy Ascanius is in the valleys, exultant on his fiery horse, and gallops past one and another, praying that among the unwarlike herds a foaming boar may issue or a tawny lion descend the hill.

Meanwhile the sky begins to thicken and roar aloud. A rain-cloud comes down mingled with hail; the Tyrian train and the men of Troy, and the Dardanian boy of Venus' son scatter in fear, and seek shelter far over the fields. Streams pour from the hills. Dido and the Trojan captain take refuge in the same cavern. Primeval Earth and Juno the bridesmaid give the sign; fires flash out high in air, witnessing the union, and Nymphs cry aloud on the mountain-top. That day opened the gate of death and the springs of ill. For now Dido recks not of eye or tongue, nor sets her heart on love in secret: she calls it marriage, and with this name veils her fall.

SAMPLE

Straightway Rumour runs through the great cities of Libya,—Rumour, than whom none other is more swift to mischief; she thrives on restlessness and gains strength by going: at first small and timorous; soon she lifts herself on high and paces the ground with head hidden among the clouds. Her, one saith, Mother Earth, when stung by wrath against the gods, bore last sister to Coeus and Enceladus, fleet-footed and swift of wing, ominous, awful, vast; for every feather on her body is a waking eye beneath, wonderful to tell, and a tongue, and as many loud lips and straining ears. By night she flits between sky and land, shrilling through the dusk, and droops not her lids in sweet slumber; in daylight she sits on guard upon tall towers or the ridge of the house-roof, and makes great cities afraid; obstinate in perverseness and forgery no less than messenger of truth. She then exultingly filled the countries with manifold talk, and blazoned alike what was done and undone: one Aeneas is come, born of Trojan blood; on him beautiful Dido thinks no shame to fling herself; now they hold their winter, long-drawn through mutual caresses, regardless of their realms and enthralled by passionate dishonour. This the pestilent goddess spreads abroad in the mouths of men, and bends her course right on to King Iarbas, and with her words fires his spirit and swells his wrath.

Mackail calls Jupiter ‘Jove’ and Aeneas’ son both Ascanius and Iülus; the Latin line numbers printed in brackets in his edition are omitted.

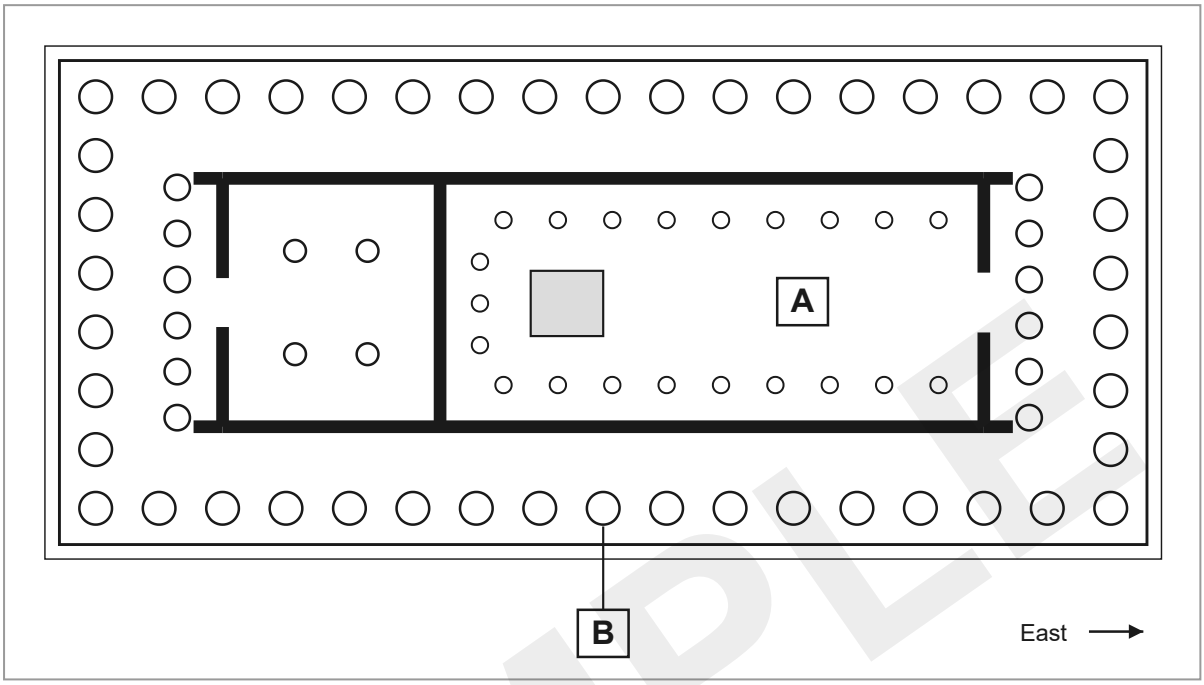
SAMPLE

Classical expressions – Material culture

This stimulus relates to Question 3.

The Parthenon

Image 1



Drawn for this practice examination after published ground plans of the Parthenon, Athens (447–432 BCE); simplified, not to scale. East is to the right.

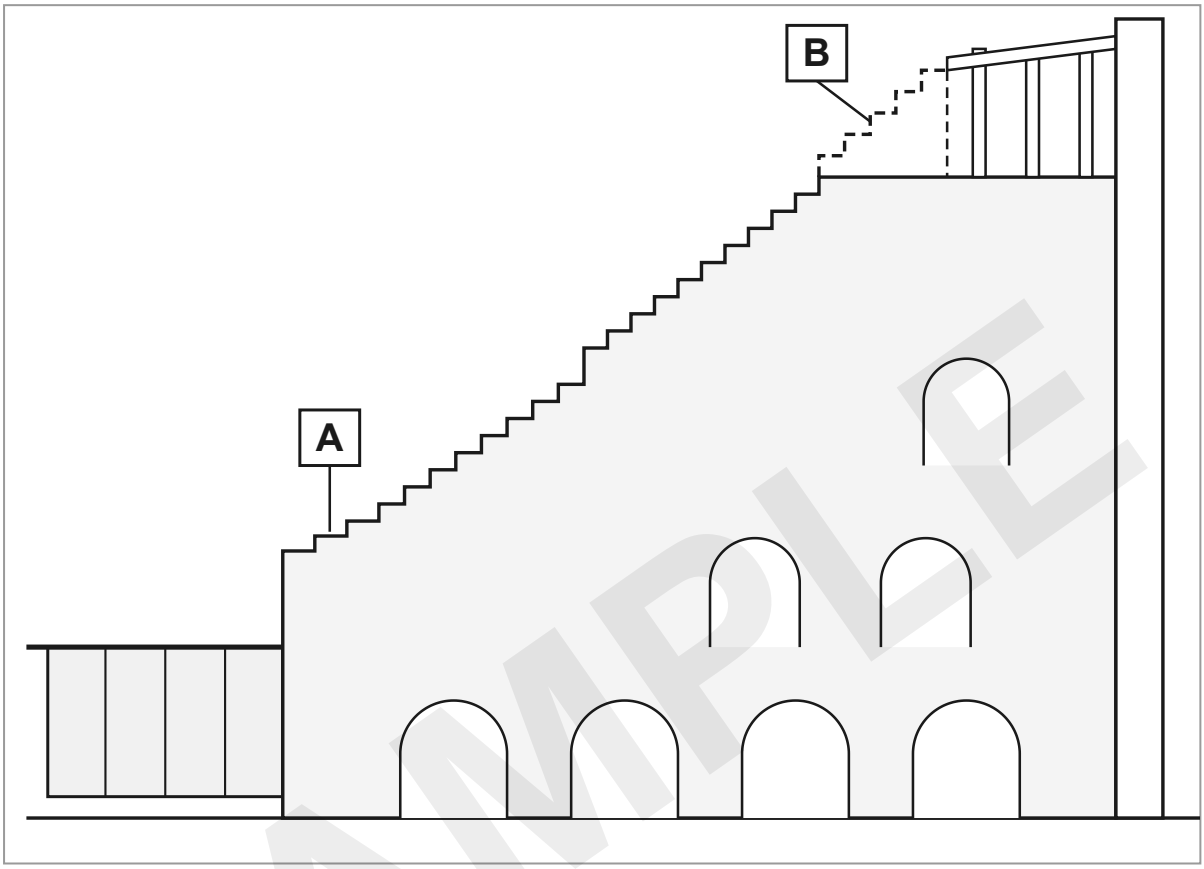
SAMPLE

Classical expressions – Material culture

This stimulus relates to Question 4.

The Colosseum

Image 1



Drawn for this practice examination after published reconstruction sections of the Flavian Amphitheatre (the Colosseum), Rome (70–80 CE); simplified, not to scale.

SAMPLE

End of Stimulus Book

Marking scheme for the sample questions

Section A

Question 1a. (2 marks)

Outline the events that take place immediately before this extract.

To be awarded full marks, students were required to:

outline, in sequence, the events immediately before the extract, which opens with Hector about to drag away the body of Patroclus.

Common errors included: events from earlier books (the death of Patroclus) or from later in Book 18 (the shield); a general account of Achilles' grief with no sequence.

Mark allocation: 1 mark for each correctly sequenced event, to a maximum of 2.

Responses could have included:

- Thetis promises Achilles new armour from Hephaestus at dawn and tells him not to enter the battle until she returns.
- She sends the Nereids back to the house of Nereus and goes to Olympus.
- Meanwhile the Achaeans flee before Hector to the ships and cannot carry Patroclus' body out of range.
- Three times Hector seizes the body by the feet and three times the two Ajaxes beat him off; he will not give ground, like a hungry lion that shepherds cannot drive from a carcass.

Sample full-mark response

> Thetis promised Achilles new armour from Hephaestus and told him not to fight until she returned, then left for Olympus. Meanwhile Hector drove the Achaeans back to the ships and three times seized Patroclus' body by the feet, while the two Ajaxes beat him off each time.

Question 1b. (4 marks)

Describe how Achilles is depicted in this extract.

To be awarded full marks, students were required to:

describe two or more aspects of how Achilles is depicted, each supported by detail from the extract.

Common errors included: quoting without describing; describing Achilles from the start of Book 18 (his grief at the news) or from the shield.

SAMPLE

Mark allocation: 2 marks for each aspect of the depiction described with supporting detail from the extract, to a maximum of 4.

Responses could have included:

- Hesitant and dutiful: without armour and bound by his mother's command, he asks Iris how he can go into battle and does not join the Achaeans, 'for he heeded the charge which his mother laid upon him'.
- Divinely favoured: 'dear to Jove'; Athena throws the aegis round his shoulders and crowns him with a golden cloud from which a flame blazes.
- Terrifying and supreme as a warrior: called 'mightiest of all mankind'; unarmed, his shout alone throws the Trojans into confusion and twelve champions die beneath their own chariots.
- Grieving and loving: he weeps bitterly over Patroclus on the bier, remembering that he sent him out but would never welcome him back.

Sample full-mark response

> Achilles is depicted first as hesitant and obedient: he has no armour and will not break his mother's command, so he only stands at the trench. He is also shown as a figure of overwhelming, god-given power — Athena wraps him in the aegis and sets a flame above his head, and his shout alone routs the Trojans. Finally he is a grieving friend who weeps over Patroclus' bier, aware that the comrade he sent out will never return.

Question 1c. (4 marks)

Explain the techniques used by Homer to create tension in this extract.

To be awarded full marks, students were required to:

explain a range of techniques Homer uses and show how each creates tension in this extract.

Common errors included: commenting on the sound of English words ('clarion', 'brazen') — a feature of the translation; naming similes without explaining how they create tension.

Mark allocation: 2 marks for each technique named and explained in its effect of creating tension, to a maximum of 4; a range of techniques is needed for full marks.

Responses could have included:

- The 'near miss' opening — Hector 'would even have dragged it off … had not Iris' — makes the audience feel how close the body is to being lost.
- Iris' direct speech raises the stakes: Hector means to cut off the head and fix it on the stakes; Patroclus may become 'meat for the dogs of Troy'.
- The dialogue between Iris and Achilles delays the action: he has no armour and has been forbidden to fight, so the audience waits to see how he can help.

SAMPLE

- Extended simile of the smoke and beacon-fires of a besieged island city: the flame on his head is a signal of crisis and of rescue at hand.
- Simile of the trumpet sounding when the enemy is at the gates, and the triple repetition of the cry and of the Trojans' confusion, build to the climax of twelve deaths.
- Divine intervention: Hera acts secretly, without Zeus' knowledge, and Athena's voice joins Achilles' shout, adding supernatural terror.

Sample full-mark response

> Homer opens with a near miss — Hector 'would even have dragged it off' had Iris not come — so the audience feels the body is almost lost. Iris' speech then sharpens the danger with the threat that Hector will fix Patroclus' head on a stake. The extended simile of beacon-fires from a besieged city and the trumpet simile for Achilles' shout present the moment as a city in crisis, and the triple repetition of the cry builds the tension until twelve Trojans fall.

Section B

Question 1. (40 marks)

Euripides, Medea and Sophocles, Electra
'Women who seek revenge are always destroyed by it.'
Evaluate this statement using evidence from the works studied this year.

To be awarded full marks, students were required to:

evaluate the statement 'Women who seek revenge are always destroyed by it.' using evidence from *Medea* and *Electra*, applying knowledge of the concern Classical identities (Classical Identities (1), Work 1: Medea).

The statement asked students to evaluate whether revenge always destroys the women who pursue it — testing 'always' and the meaning of 'destroyed' (physically, morally, emotionally or socially).

Medea

- Medea achieves her revenge on Jason — the deaths of Glauce, Creon and her own sons — and escapes in the chariot of the Sun: she is not physically destroyed.
- Yet her revenge destroys her as a mother: her monologue shows her struggling between her love for her children and her anger; the Chorus is horrified; she must kill what she loves.
- Techniques: the agōn with Jason, the messenger speech of Glauce's death, the monologue, the Chorus' odes, the final appearance on the chariot (the 'machine').

Electra

- Electra seeks revenge for Agamemnon through Orestes and is not destroyed: the play ends with the deaths of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus and the Chorus' sense of release for the house of Atreus.

SAMPLE

- But her long grief has hardened her — she calls on Orestes to strike again — and Chrysothemis' caution shows the price of her stance.
- Techniques: Electra's laments, the false messenger speech of the chariot race, the recognition scene with the urn, stichomythia with Chrysothemis and Clytemnestra.

The concern: Classical identities — feminine identities in fifth-century Athens: Medea as a foreign woman who claims a hero's honour; Electra as an unmarried daughter outside the norms of the oikos; Pericles' advice to women in Thucydides 2.45, Lysias' *On the Murder of Eratosthenes* and the grave stele of Hegeso as contrasting ideals; Hesiod's Pandora in *Works and Days* 53–99.

Structure: An introduction that qualifies 'always' and defines 'destroyed'; paragraphs that compare the two women on each idea (survival, moral cost, divine sanction), not one play then the other; genre and staging integrated; a conclusion that answers the statement.

The essay is marked holistically against the four assessment criteria.

Common errors included: writing on the plays separately joined only by 'similarly'; treating 'destroyed' only as death; modern judgements of Medea rather than the likely intention of the playwright.

Mark allocation: Criteria: knowledge of the two classical works, and their relationships to their socio-historical contexts and the classical concern; analysis of key ideas and the features and techniques used to explore these ideas in the two classical works; construction of a comparative argument in response to a topic, with a focus on the comparison of key ideas and the features and techniques used to explore these ideas; use of relevant evidence.
Band guide (published 20-point scale, doubled to 40): 19–20: thorough and insightful knowledge with relevant, selective and integrated connections to context and the concern; insightful analysis of features and techniques; in-depth, sustained comparison addressing the specific demands of the topic; accurate, wide-ranging, integrated evidence; 17–18: complex knowledge; convincing analysis; detailed comparison through a sustained argument; evidence accurate and highly relevant; 15–16: strong knowledge; an analysis; relevant comparison with a considered argument; evidence accurate and relevant; 13–14: detailed knowledge; discussion of how features and techniques are used; a clear comparison and argument; 11–12: clear knowledge; discusses key ideas and techniques; a clear comparison and argument that includes key ideas drawn from the topic; 9–10: knowledge with links; a comparison and an argument; evidence may not be accurate and/or relevant; 7–8: basic knowledge; describes key ideas and features; elements of argument and comparison; 5–6: familiarity with one or both works; an attempt at an argument; 3–4: some familiarity; superficial, unfocused discussion; 1–2: very brief, with some attempt to meet the assessment criteria; 0: no evidence of addressing the assessment criteria

Responses could have included:

- Medea achieves her revenge on Jason — the deaths of Glauce, Creon and her own sons — and escapes in the chariot of the Sun: she is not physically destroyed.
- Yet her revenge destroys her as a mother: her monologue shows her struggling between her love for her children and her anger; the Chorus is horrified; she must kill what she loves.
- Techniques: the agōn with Jason, the messenger speech of Glauce's death, the monologue, the Chorus' odes, the final appearance on the chariot (the 'machine').
- Electra seeks revenge for Agamemnon through Orestes and is not destroyed: the play ends with the deaths of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus and the Chorus' sense of release for the house of

SAMPLE

Atreus.

- But her long grief has hardened her — she calls on Orestes to strike again — and Chrysothemis' caution shows the price of her stance.
- Techniques: Electra's laments, the false messenger speech of the chariot race, the recognition scene with the urn, stichomythia with Chrysothemis and Clytemnestra.

Sample full-mark response

> Sample plan: Introduction: revenge does not destroy either woman physically, but it costs both something essential. 1: survival — Medea's escape on the Sun's chariot and Electra's triumph. 2: moral and emotional cost — Medea's monologue and the children; Electra's hardened cry to strike again. 3: divine sanction and context — Helios and Apollo's oracle; Athenian ideals of women (Thucydides 2.45, Hegeso). Conclusion: largely disagree, with qualification.

SAMPLE