



Classical Greek GCSE

Students with a particular interest in the Ancient World and who have enjoyed their study of Latin in Years 7 and 8 are encouraged to broaden their understanding of the language and culture of the period by opting to study Classical Greek GCSE. In undertaking this linguistically rigorous GCSE, they will be put in contact with the origins of European civilization and will be introduced to the earliest works of European literature through original works by Greek authors.

This is a standalone GCSE which can be studied instead of Latin or in addition to it. The two languages share common features which naturally support each other. For GCSE Greek we follow the OCR syllabus.

In Year 9, students are introduced to the Greek alphabet, basic forms of nouns (using a case system similar to that learnt in Latin during Years 7 and 8), adjectives and verbs and approximately 200 items of vocabulary. Students are expected to be able to recognise and manipulate the language while making connections with English vocabulary through derivations. The course also contains an introduction to Greek culture through examination of the history, culture, and development of 5th century BC Athens.

By the time of the Year 10 mid-GCSE mock examinations, students will have met all the remaining linguistic material and vocabulary required for the language component of the GCSE exam. Students will then begin applying their knowledge of Greek to original Greek works through the introduction of Greek literature. Students will read one piece of prose (usually taken from **Herodotus' Histories**, Europe's oldest surviving work of history) and one piece of verse literature (usually a play by **Euripides**, one of the three great tragedians of 5th century Athens). These will be examined in the Year 11 mock exams in preparation for the final GCSE exams. Throughout Year 11, students continue their study of Greek literature alongside consolidating their language ability and increasing the fluidity of their reading and comprehension skills.

As an illustration, students currently studying Greek will read the following texts which are due to be examined in 2023 and 2024:

- Selections from **Herodotus' History Book II** (the 'Egyptian Book') covering the reigns of the Egyptian Kings Psammeticus and Mycerinus along with Herodotus' thoughts on crocodiles and pygmies.
- Selections from **Euripides'** iconic play **The Bacchae**, the story of Dionysus' revenge on Pentheus, King of Thebes, when he refuses to worship him as a god. A savage play with a lasting legacy which is a favourite even of modern theatre audiences.

The exam board has not yet released details of the texts for study from 2025.