

Classical Civilisation

1) Unit 1 – The World of the Hero

We begin our journey by taking a look at some of the greatest stories written. **The Odyssey** tells of the ultimate attempt to reach home and has had a profound effect on cinema and literature ever since. We will follow the adventures of Odysseus and his crew as they travel from Troy, encountering monsters, Gods and magic. We will look at the various characters and critically question decisions made.

The Aeneid is the greatest piece of literature of the Roman era. This tells the story of the travels of Aeneas, son of the Goddess Venus. It is a story of sacrifice and duty; Aeneas' escape from Troy and the journey around the Mediterranean to fulfil his destiny by founding the settlement that will eventually rise to become the ancient superpower of Rome.

2) Unit 2 – The invention of the Barbarian

This unit looks at ideas of nationalism and identity. What constituted a 'barbarian' according to the Ancient Greeks? At a time when the Greek city states were separate, we will look at what united and divided the Greeks.

We will examine historical 'barbarians' – **the Achaemenid Empire**. This will include looking at a range of sources and comparing Greek views of these 'barbarians' with the reality of Persia. This unit also draws on the GCSE, by looking at the Persian invasion of Greece. We will also look at Aeschylus' portrayal of the Persians in his play the *Persians*.

Finally, we will investigate mythological 'barbarians', to show Greek attitudes towards foreigners. We will read the tragedy **Medea by Euripides**. The betrayed wife of Jason (of the Argonauts), after turning on her homeland and helping Jason retrieve the Golden Fleece; Medea gains her ultimate revenge when Jason selects a new Greek wife. We will also look at the **Amazons** and their role in mythology and how they have been depicted in art.

3) Unit 3 – The politics of the Late Roman Republic

The most famous political struggle of all time and led to one of the most remembered episodes in human history – the assassination of **Julius Caesar**.

This unit looks at the characters involved, how they tried to win power and ultimately how the Roman Republic was replaced by the Empire. We will look at the writings of **Cicero** and other key figures to understand their perception of the events that unfolded as the Republic crumbled. We will look at the letters of Cicero to gain a greater understanding of this remarkable politician.

Trips and other costs:

Copies of the texts will be provided; however, students may want to buy their own to annotate.

Academic scholarship will be provided and students will have access to online lectures.

A trip to Rome and Pompeii is planned for the summer term of 2026.

Career and further study:

Classical Civilisation is a highly regarded A Level, as it provides a very balanced education that develops you as a critical thinker.

The modern age is a direct product of the Ancient World – the languages we speak, the political systems live under and the culture that we enjoy. This A Level helps you understand why we are what we are and what we do.

Apart from the obvious career options of archaeologist, museum work, teaching or heritage industry; Classical Civilisation would prepare you well for a career in law, journalism, politics, management, human resources, research, media and many more.

Ultimately, Classical Civilisation develops your ability to argue and your ability to understand people, while engaged in fascinating content.