

A-Level Classical Civilisations Transition Project

We treat Classical Civilisation as a new subject for everyone, and are fully aware that you may not have looked at the ancient world since primary school! So to help prepare you for what is potentially an entirely new subject, and keep you occupied over the summer, choose one or more of the investigations outlined below.

The difficulty of each task is shown by the type of ancient coin next to it. These mirror the progression which you will experience over the course.



Bronze: knowledge gathering tasks. The internet is your friend here



Silver: a step beyond mere googling! Analysis and creative use of content



Gold: academic writing tasks or big searching questions (there's no right or wrong here; it's a matter of argument and persuasion!)

World of the Hero: Homer's *Odyssey*

To begin the course, we look at Homer's epic poem, the *Odyssey*. It is set after the *Iliad*, in the aftermath of the Trojan war. Here are your tasks:

- Watch the Overly Sarcastic Productions' version of the *Iliad* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=faSrRHw6eZ8>) and the *Odyssey* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A-3rHQ70Pag>). Use these and Schmoop summaries (*Iliad*: <https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/iliad/summary> ; and *Odyssey*: <https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/odyssey>) to make your own summary. You can use whatever format you like – bullet points, a slideshow, flash cards, quizlet; you decide!
- Design a book cover for the *Odyssey*. Think about which image is going to catch people's eye on the front cover, and best represents the plot, then write a blurb for the back. You could invent some reviews too if you like!
- Homer — who's that? Research the Homeric question (it's been debated for millennia, so there's quite a lot out there!) and write a 500 word essay on who you think Homer was. Consider the different sides of the argument, and explain why you have come to your judgment.
- Do you think that the *Odyssey* is still relevant today? Write a convincing speech, arguing for whichever side you believe in!



Imperial Image

This unit combines ancient history with history of art, and focuses on how the ruler Augustus rose to the position of ultimate authority in the Roman empire. The following tasks give you some background context and also start to hone the skills needed for this unit.

- Augustus, before he gained lots of power and prestige, was called Octavian, and he was the great-nephew of Julius Caesar. To understand how Octavian managed to become Rome's ruler, you need to know how Caesar acted as a role model and warning. Watch *Tony Robinson's Romans*, episode 2, on YouTube, and make some bullet-point notes as you go: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3duE5TzSWco>
- Create a timeline of Augustus' life. There are plenty of websites out there to help (Wikipedia is actually pretty good for basic information), and feel free to make your timeline on paper or on the computer.
- Imagine you were a Roman emperor – how would you want to be identified? Design three coins to commemorate your rule – one low denomination (which will be seen by all sorts of people), one mid (seen by those who are financially comfortable) and one high (only used by the mega wealthy). Consider how you would want your impression to be different on each coin, and how to appeal to your people to make sure they don't want to assassinate you!
- Research how historical leaders have attempted to increase and communicate their power and authority through art. Create a fact-file for one or more of the following, using three pieces of art as examples.
 - Queen Elizabeth I
 - Charles I
 - Lorenzo di Medici
 - Napoleon
 - Chairman Mao

Top tip: portraits and propaganda are often useful starting points, but feel free to branch out!

- Do you think that art still holds power as a medium for propaganda? Are there more effective methods in the modern world? Make a mind-map of your thoughts.
- What is art? (Big question! Answer as you like, although an artistic response grants more kudos!)

