

Preparing for the M.A. Greek Literature Exam

Students should be prepared to demonstrate both a broad and deep knowledge of Greek literature on the M.A. Exam. Read widely in the various genres and periods in translations to broaden your repertoire. Know some authors and works well enough to cite examples and discuss details from more than one perspective.

To learn the literary and historical context, use handbooks (listed below) and introductions in commentaries and translations. Some of the recent translations in the Oxford World Classics series have introductions by leading scholars. The Oxford Classical Dictionary (4th ed) should also be consulted.

Cambridge History of Classical Literature: Volume 1, Greek Literature. Edited by P. Easterling and B.W. Knox. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Dover, K. J., ed. *Ancient Greek Literature*, 2nd ed, with contributions by M.L. West, J. Griffin, E.L. Bowie. Oxford University Press, 1997.

Read something of and be able to discuss the following genres and authors.

Poetry

Epic

Homer (incl. hymns)
Hesiod
Apollonius Rhodius

Lyric/Elegiac

Pindar
Bacchylides
Theognis
Lyric poets
Callimachus
Theocritus

Tragedy

Aeschylus
Sophocles
Euripides

Comedy

Aristophanes
Menander

Prose

History/Biography

Herodotus
Thucydides
Xenophon
Plutarch

Philosophy

Presocratics
Plato
Aristotle
Lucian

Oratory

Demosthenes
Lysias
Other orators (e.g. Aeschines, Andocides, Antiphon, Isocrates, Isaeus, Lycurgus)

Other genres

Novel
Science/medicine
Satire/parody

Preparing for the M.A. Greek Literature Exam

Format of the Exam

The Exam sets two essay questions and 12 identifications. There will be choice in both categories, but the candidate is reminded to demonstrate breadth and depth overall.

In preparing for the essays, consider the development of the genres and how individual works have shaped the conventions both innovating and responding to literary models. Know the literary arsenal: Be able to talk intelligently about, e.g., oral and written tradition, performance contexts, meters and rhetorical figures, historiography, periodic structure, and dialect. Be as familiar with the historical contexts of authors and works: When and where were they composed? What was happening in the Greek world at the time? In what ways does the work interact with Greek religion, politics, and culture? Think in terms of what you will want to be able to share with your students when you teach these authors.

As with all essay exams, it is useful to prepare outlines in advance. E.g. how would I answer a question on Comedy? Oratory? Marshal your ideas and your examples. Write up some sample thesis statements. Although you may not bring any notes or materials to the exam, this advance work will help you on the day of the exam.

Identifications will be drawn from the lists below. In a sentence or two or three, be able to report the who, when, where, and why for each. For authors, know something about what they composed. Be sure to know why each item is significant for Greek literature, and remember that there may be more than one significant context for each. For example, Pericles is of course important as a statesman, but why is he on a *literature* exam? Any author on the list above may also appear as an identification (boldface in the list below). In the list of persons, the name commonly used is underlined. N.B. These lists are also something of a study guide . . .

Persons

Aeschines

Aeschylus

Aesop

Alcaeus

Alcman

Anacreon

Anaxagoras

Antiphon

Archilochus

Aristophanes

Aristophanes of Byzantium

Aristotle

Bacchylides

Callimachus

Callinus

Corinna

Croesus

Democritus

Demosthenes

Empedocles

Eubulos

Eupolis

Euripides

Gorgias

Hecataeus

Heliodorus

Heraclitus

Herodotus

Hippocrates

Preparing for the M.A. Greek Literature Exam

Hipponax

Homer

Ibycus

Isaeus

Isocrates

Longinus

Longus

Lucian

Menander

Mimnermus

Parmenides

Pericles

Pindar

Plato

Polybius

Pythagoras

Sappho

Semonides

Simonides

Socrates

Solon

Sophocles

Stesichorus

Theocritus

Theognis

Thucydides

Tyrtaeus

Xenophon

Works

Aetia

Aethopica

Anabasis

Antigone

Apology (Plato)

Argonautica

Bacchae

Clouds

Daphnis and Chloe

Dyscolus

Frogs

Gorgias

Hippolytus

Homeric Hymn to Apollo

Homeric Hymn to Demeter

Iliad

Lysistrata

Medea

New Testament

Nicomachean Ethics

Odyssey

Oedipus at Colonus

Oedipus Rex

On the Crown

On the Murder of Eratosthenes

On the Mysteries

On the Sublime

Oresteia

Parallel Lives

Philippics

Poetics

Republic

Symposium

Tetralogies (Antiphon)

Theogony

Works and Days

Terms/Things

Aeolic (dialect)

agōn

Alexandrian poets

Attic (dialect)

Atticism

choral lyric

choregia

chorus

City Dionysia

cordax

deliberative oratory

didactic poetry

dithyramb

Doric (dialect)

ekphrasis

elegy

epic

Epic Cycle

epigram

Epinician

epithet

epode

fable

forensic oratory

Preparing for the M.A. Greek Literature Exam

funeral oration

hamartia

hexameter

hymns

iambic trimeter

iambus

Ionic (dialect)

koine

Lenaea

Melian dialogue

middle comedy

mimesis

monody

mythos

old comedy

paeon

parabasis

priamel

ring composition

Rural Dionysia

satyr play

Seven Sages

sophia

sophistry

stasimon

stichomythia

sympotic poetry