

Holland Park School | *GCSE Classical Civilisations*

Literature and Culture Study | **Roman City Life**

Overview	In this component learners will explore everyday life in Roman cities, with a particular focus on the Imperial period and popular sites and artefacts from Rome, Ostia, Pompeii and Herculaneum. The Culture section of this component comprises a study of a variety of aspects of Roman society. Examining typical Roman housing can be an excellent way to make learning tangible and relatable for learners, as can the study of education and the lives of young people in the Roman world. The Roman social system was notorious for its intrigues and politics and this, coupled with the study of the spectacle provided by Roman entertainment, provides an exciting and enjoyable course for learners. The Literature topics examine poetry and prose, fiction and non-fiction texts to provide learners with an introduction to a variety of literature. The Satires of Horace and Juvenal, fiction of Petronius and letters of Pliny will give learners an insight into different literary styles and techniques, as well as into interesting areas of Roman life and society
Assessment	Assessment for this thematic study aligns with OCR's externally assessed Thematic Study paper, comprising a 90-mark, 1 hour 30 minute examination. The paper is structured in three 30-mark sections—Greek World, Roman City Life, and a synoptic comparison between the two thematic areas—featuring both short-answer and extended-response questions. Students are required to engage with prescribed and unseen literary and visual/material sources, demonstrating their ability to interpret evidence, evaluate its usefulness and make comparisons across source types. Assessment Objectives are evenly weighted across the course. In the Roman City Life component, AO1 (knowledge and understanding) assesses students' recall and understanding of the prescribed content, while AO2 (analysis and evaluation) rewards the interpretation, comparison and evaluation of literary and material evidence. Learners are expected to apply detailed contextual knowledge and construct well-supported arguments using evidence from both prescribed and unseen sources.
Key skills	• Source analysis: Interpreting archaeological evidence such as buildings, frescoes, mosaics, inscriptions, graffiti and artefacts to understand aspects of Roman urban life. • Literary analysis: Exploring how Roman authors present city life, considering purpose, audience, perspective and literary techniques. • Comparative evaluation: Comparing literary accounts with archaeological evidence to assess similarities, differences and reliability. • Critical evaluation: Assessing the strengths and limitations of different types of evidence, recognising bias, context and the challenges of interpreting the ancient world. • Argument construction: Developing clear, balanced and well-supported responses using accurate knowledge and integrated evidence in line with AO1 and AO2 requirements.

- | | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Synoptic thinking: Bringing together evidence from a range of literary and material sources to form informed judgements about the nature of Roman urban society and the experiences of its inhabitants. |
|--|---|

Topics	Key content
Roman Housing	• The design of apartments/blocks of flats (insula/insulae) • The layout and decoration of typical Pompeian, atrium-style domus • Evidence for living conditions of the rich and the poor • Comparison of the different living conditions in each setting
The Roman Home and Family	• Paterfamilias, his rights and duties • Patrons and clients • The education of children, including: ◦ the role of the litterator, grammaticus and rhetor ◦ subjects taught at each stage ◦ preparation for participation in society ◦ school equipment (stilus, wax tablet, pen, ink, papyrus) • The dinner party (cena), including organisation, guests, entertainment, purposes
Society	• Citizens and citizenship • Senators and equites ◦ property qualifications ◦ privileges ◦ duties and roles • Slaves and freedmen ◦ becoming a slave and the legal position ◦ skilled and unskilled jobs performed by domestic and public slaves ◦ ways of obtaining freedom and the limits placed on freedmen/women
Leisure and Entertainment	• The amphitheatre, including: ◦ design of amphitheatre buildings, including the Colosseum ◦ types of shows ◦ sponsorship of games by the Emperor or politicians ◦ gladiators; their status, training and types ◦ audience involvement • The chariot races, including: ◦ design of the Circus Maximus ◦ teams, colours, charioteers, horses and their status

	○ public attitudes and audience involvement • The theatre, including: ○ the design of theatre buildings and use of sets, costumes, masks ○ Roman comedy and its stock characters; mime and pantomime ○ actors and actresses; their reputation and social standing • The baths, including: ○ the reasons people used bath complexes ○ design of bath buildings, and the different types of bath ○ activities at the baths, including the use of the palaestra.
--	---

Prescribed Visual Sources

Pompeii

- House of Menander
- House of Octavius Quartio
- Tomb of Naevoleia Tyche including

Inscription

The large theatre Inscription From Cooley and Cooley Pompeii: A Sourcebook:

- F14 (CIL I IV 933)
- F15 (CIL IV 910)
- D80 (CIL IV 7698a–c)
- D51 (CIL X 833, 834)
- H45 (CIL IV 8562)
- D16 (CIL IV 1189)

Herculaneum

- House of the Wooden Partition
- Central (Forum) Baths

Ostia

- Insula of Diana

Rome

- The Colosseum
- The Circus Maximus

Where houses form part of the prescription it is expected that learners will be familiar with the decoration of these, including examples of frescoes and mosaics.

Prescribed Literary Sources

Prescribed Literary Sources The sources listed below are a mandatory part of the study of this component. Learners will be expected to respond to these in the assessment, and demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the contexts of these sources and the intention behind their production. They should also be prepared to discuss possible different interpretations of sources, such as those offered by an ancient and modern audience. Questions using these sources in the assessment will assume learners are familiar with these details and will expect learners to be prepared to discuss their content. For the 'Literature' section, sources used in the assessment will be from the prescribed list only. In questions requiring discussion of a range of sources learners will be given credit for referring to any appropriate sources, not only those listed in the specification document. However questions will be fully accessible to learners who are only familiar with the prescribed sources.

- Horace, Satires 2.2, 2.6, 2.8
- Juvenal, Satire 3.190–322
- Petronius, Satyricon: Dinner with Trimalchio, 29–33; 37–38; 49–50
- Pliny, Letters, 1.9, 2.6, 3.14, 4.19, 5.19, 9.6

When studying literature learners will be required to:

- know and understand aspects of plot, characterisation, events and settings
- know and understand themes and how to distinguish between them
- know and understand issues of form, purpose and genre
- apply their knowledge of the cultural contexts in which the texts were produced, to inform their judgements about them
- use the texts to develop an understanding of the social, historical and cultural context of the classical world
- know and understand the possible responses of different audiences