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91200



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Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

## Level 2 Classical Studies 2025

91200 Examine ideas and values of the classical world

Credits: Four

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Examine ideas and values of the classical world.	Examine, in-depth, ideas and values of the classical world.	Examine, with perception, ideas and values of the classical world.

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

**You should answer ONE of the questions in this booklet.**

If you need more room for any answer, use the extra space provided at the back of this booklet.

Check that this booklet has pages 2–11 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

Do not write in the margins (//////). This area will be cut off when the booklet is marked.

**YOU MUST HAND THIS BOOKLET TO THE SUPERVISOR AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.**

Merit

TOTAL 05

# Page 1

## INSTRUCTIONS

Answer ONE of the questions below with reference to a **classical literary text**.

You must answer using paragraphs.

## QUESTIONS (Choose ONE)

- In what ways did a hero exemplify the expectations of a classical society?
- Explain the significance of a custom in a classical text.
- In what ways was the role of an individual challenged by others?
- How has the portrayal of a classical hero influenced a later culture?

## CLASSICAL LITERARY TEXT

Antigone by Sophocles

## PLANNING

i did it i do not deny it  
convicted of reverence i shall be content to lie beside a brother whom i love  
i did not think your edicts strong enough to overrule the unwritten, unalterable laws of god and heaven, you being only a man  
blasphemy, to say the gods could give a thought to carrion flesh  
live if you will, live and defy the holiest laws of heaven  
we are women, it is not for us to fight against men  
what will be the end of us if we transgress the law and defy the king  
i know my duty, where true duty lies

## ANSWER

Type your answer in the space below. You should aim to write a concise answer of no more than 750–800 words. (The counter will change colour when you reach the recommended word count.) The quality of your writing is more important than the length of your answer.

Support your answer with evidence from a classical literary text.

B I U     

*Antigone* is a classical play written by Sophocles. It includes themes of morality vs law, hubris, and loyalty but the most significant overarching idea in the play is the Greek custom of burial rites/funeral honours. Classical Greece had the belief that leaving bodies unburied would mean their souls would never find a resting place and instead forever wander, never to find peace. This meant giving everyone a proper burial and funeral honours was extremely important.

The significance of burial rites is seen in *Antigone* in how it causes such major conflict between characters in the play, specifically Antigone and King Creon. Antigone's brothers (Polynices and Eteocles) were ruling the city of Thebes year by year, however Eteocles took his year out of turn and exiled Polynices causing Polynices to attack the city. In the end both brothers died, each slain by the others hand and Thebes' new ruler, Creon, declared Polynices a traitor to the city and therefore undeserving of burial rites while Eteocles was honoured. Antigone hears of this and is appalled, so she sets out to bury Polynices herself. This decision alone showcases how significant burial rites were. To leave Polynices unburied was a direct order from the king and "the price for disobedience is death by stoning." This shows that Antigone was willing to die to give her brother funeral honours, showing both her loyalty and her significant belief in the ancient greek custom of burial rites. In the text, Antigone also says (about her burial of Polynices), "I know my duty, where true duty lies." Calling burying her brother, her "true duty" showcases how important this was to Antigone. Antigone's willingness to die in order to bury her brother is also seen when she says, "convicted of reverence, I shall be content to lie beside a brother whom I love." This quote shows that by burying her brother, Antigone will be "convicted of reverence", meaning that by burying her brother, she will gain respect as she did what she was supposed to and therefore die content as she fulfilled both her duty and her belief in what she thought was right.

This belief that burying her brother meant more than just burying him was also seen through the character of Creon. In the text, Antigone says to Creon, "I did not think your edicts strong enough to overrule the unwritten, unalterable laws of God and heaven, you being only a man." In context, this quote was said when Creon was displaying hubris (excessive arrogance and pride) in that he was denying Polynices a burial. Creon said it was "Blasphemy! To think the Gods would give a thought to carrion flesh." (carrion flesh meaning Polynices). The significance of burial rites is shown through Antigone's choice of words. She calls Creon's decision to leave Polynices unburied, an attempt to "overrule the unwritten, unalterable laws of God and heaven." The belief in Gods and their laws was very significant to Greek culture which is why Antigone says this, because to try and overrule that belief is to show extreme hubris (which was very frowned upon in ancient greece) and to thoroughly disrespect the gods (also heavily frowned upon). Because of Antigone's beliefs in what burial rites meant (which reflects the beliefs of many ancient greeks), and how significant those beliefs were, it really shows just how significant the custom of giving proper burials and funeral honours to the dead was in the text *Antigone*.

Antigone's decision to bury Polynices was because of her good morality and her strong beliefs in her customs while Creon's refusal to bury Polynices was because he believed strongly in law and order, "no man who is my country's enemy shall call himself my friend." This belief led to him believing Polynices was a traitor which caused his decision to not give him funeral honours. The conflict of Antigone vs Creon is one of morality vs law. However, the general consensus of the play is that Antigone is the hero therefore the audience is led to be on her side which was that of honouring her customs and burying her brother. This shows the significance of burial rites in that the audience of the play is on the side of Antigone.

This custom of burial rites is included in *Antigone* because it was a cultural custom of ancient greece and playwrights in classical times were often inspired by the society around them. The significance of this belief is reflected in the play because audiences could go to watch it and relate to or learn more about this custom. Seeing how significant it is in the play is most likely a reflection of how significant it was to the real ancient greek society as well. In turn, the significance of burial rites to ancient greeks explains why it is so prominent in the text.

## Merit

**Subject:** Classical Studies

**Standard:** 91200

**Total score:** 05

<b>Grade score</b>	<b>Marker commentary</b>
M5	<p>The candidate demonstrates sound understanding of ancient Greek burial customs. The response is informed and detailed and demonstrates some depth. Primary source evidence has been used appropriately. There are inaccuracies which affect the overall answer, for example the idea that there was a general consensus that Antigone was the hero and everyone supported her. As the standard is about the ideas and values of the classical world, this idea is inconsistent with the understanding of the time. When looking at the marking schedule, the response is too detailed and in depth for A4 but not consistent enough for M6. There is no insight demonstrated as required for E7.</p>