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91203



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Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

## Level 2 Classical Studies 2025

### 91203 Examine socio-political life in the classical world

Credits: Six

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Examine socio-political life in the classical world.	Examine, in-depth, socio-political life in the classical world.	Examine, with perception, socio-political life in 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 attempt 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.**

**Excellence**

**TOTAL 07**

## Page 1

### INSTRUCTIONS

Answer ONE of the questions below with reference to a **classical civilisation**. This may include, but is not limited to, a city-state, republic, or empire.

You must answer using paragraphs.

### QUESTIONS (Choose ONE)

- Explain how a woman's role reflected her status in a classical civilisation.
- In what ways did a socio-political context lead to significant reforms in a classical civilisation?
- How did public events strengthen identity in a classical civilisation?
- Explain how a conflict in a classical civilisation impacted the balance of power.

### CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

Classical Rome

### PLANNING

"To be a senator is to dedicate yourself to Rome and its duties" cicero

"We owe our deepest affection... to the people of Rome, for it is due to their promotion that we owe our place in their most august assembly" cicero - post reditum in senatu

"the corn tribute, the monies from indirect taxation, and other revenues were handled by the knights of Rome" tacitus - annals

"We inhabit a Rome held up by slender props, as that is the way that management sees fit to keep the buildings from falling down. Once they have covered some ancient yawning crack, they will tell us to sleep soundly on the edge of ruin!" juvenal - satires

"Novius is my neighbour - I can lean out of the window and touch him with my hand." - marshall

"the three classes of instruments which are the articulate, the inarticulate, and the mute. The articulate comprising of the slaves, the inarticulate comprising of the cattle, and the mute comprising of the vehicles" - varo - on agriculture

"When well holes have been sunk deep, fumes of sulfur and alum rush to meet them" - pliny

"He had many well educated slaves, excellent readers, and numerous copyists." - life of atticus

"Does he think slaves have souls and bodies like us? Not on your life!" - juvenal

"The slaves who are involved in [the mines] generate for their masters' revenue sums beyond belief, but they wear out their bodies day and night in the mining under the earth."

"What could be better than staying in the city? A farmhouse is not a fit place for a girl!" tibellus

"You'd be hard pushed to find a girl who'd been off sex for nine days!" - juvenal

"If a man commits adultery, the wife cannot do anything: she holds no legal rights against her husband." atticus

"Octavian gathered the senate and read it aloud to them... he laid most stress on the clause in the will regarding antony's burial" - Plutarch, Life of Antony

"Octavian gathered the senate and read it aloud to them... he laid most stress on the clause in the will regarding antony's burial" - Suetonius - Life of Augustus

"So it happened as planned and Caesar fell in the senate chamber" - Plutarch - Life of Antony

"They were shouting, begging him to accept a monarchy, arguing every point in its favour, until they forced him, or so it was supposed to seem, to accept autocratic power" - Cassius Dio - Roman History

"His projected motive was that the senators could enjoy the best of the new empire without fear, while he held all of the responsibility and danger, but his true intentions were so that the senators would be unarmed and unprepared for war, while he was strong and maintained soldiers."

## 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 primary-source evidence.

B I U ☰ ∨ ☷ ∨ ↶ ↷ 🗨

In classical Rome, there was a major conflict in September 31 BC called the Battle of Actium. The Battle of Actium was a naval battle that was between Octavian, who was Julius Caesar's adopted heir and later known as Augustus, and Marc Antony, a prominent Roman General at the time. The Battle of Actium occurred due to a power vacuum left after the assassination of Julius Caesar, a man who was trying to become the first Emperor or Dictator of Rome. Before the battle of Actium, Rome was a republic, which meant that the ruling power was held by an assembly known as 'The Senate.' The senate was the central government in Republican Rome, and the power was shared between about 600 of the wealthiest men at the time. Before Julius Caesar got assassinated, he was trying to make himself a dictator, and have all the power that was in the hands of the 600 senators for himself. He had gained some momentum, so when he was assassinated, others tried to play a similar move. This led to Marc Antony and Octavian being at odds, and eventually going to war. Octavian defeated Antony, and in doing so, was able to convince the people of the senate to allow him to become the Dictator and Emperor of Rome, so the power balance shifted from one where the power is shared by many, to a system where one man holds all the power.

When Julius Caesar was assassinated, both Antony and Octavian thought they deserved to be his successor. Octavian was the named heir, but Antony was a prominent General in the army, so thought he should be the one. This led to Antony and Octavian despising each other. Antony removed himself to Egypt, where he combined forces with Queen Cleopatra, and started plotting against Octavian. Octavian stayed in Rome, and gathered support for a movement against Antony. Even at this early stage in the conflict, Octavian was already altering the power balance, and setting himself up to become Emperor. To gain the trust and support of the senate, and sow distrust and hatred of Antony, Octavian used different propaganda tactics. One piece of propaganda he used was Marc Antony's will. In that will, there were many clauses that the patriotic Roman senators would not have liked, including donating large sums of land and money to his Egyptian children that he had with Cleopatra, and worst of all, it stated that when he died, his body was to be shipped off to Alexandria in Egypt to be buried with Cleopatra. This is shown in the quote from Plutarch's Life of Antony: "Octavian gathered the senate and read it aloud to them... he laid most stress on the clause in the will regarding Antony's burial." Seeing as Octavian laid stress on the part about the burial shows that this would have been unacceptable to the Romans of the time, and it was a smart ploy by Octavian to gain support. The reason he did this was so the senate would hate Marc Antony so much, that when Octavian defeated him in combat, which was almost inevitable as the battle was on the ocean where Octavian had superior fleets and tactics, the senate would praise him so much that he wouldn't even need to ask to be the Emperor, instead, they would give it to him.

After the victory at Actium, Octavian knew that the people may not accept his rule as dictator. To fix this problem, he used more propaganda to perpetuate his fame and glorify his victory to levels which were needed for the people to transition him to the position of Emperor. One of the ways he did this was through his victory celebration. When he came back, he held a very spectacular victory celebration. He built many archways, and held many games. Also, to top off the celebrations, he founded a city, called 'Nicomopolis,' which means 'Victory City.' This is shown in the quote from Suetonius' Life of Augustus: "To increase his fame from Actium, and perpetuate his memory, he founded a city near Actium called Nicopolis, and paid for the celebration of games there every five years." This quote shows how Octavian knew he needed the people to love him so much, so he went so far out of his way that he

even built an entire city, just to remind the people of how awesome he was, so they would make him the Dictator and Emperor of Rome.

Another piece of propaganda Augustus used was Coins. One coin that he made and rolled out was a coin that said 'Aegyptio captura,' which means 'Egypt has been captured' and it had a picture of a crocodile, the symbol of Egypt. As Antony had gone to Cleopatra, the Queen of Egypt, he wanted to remind the people of how he had 'captured' and subdued Egypt, and the threat was all under control, thanks to his selfless deeds of heroism. Alongside the Victory celebrations, and the founding of Nicopolis, and his earlier seduction of the senate, Octavian's work paid off, and the senate and people of Rome were ecstatic, and were practically begging Octavian to take full autocratic power and become the Emperor. This idea is shown in the quote from Cassius Dio's Roman History, in Book 53: "They were shouting, begging him to accept a monarchy, arguing every point in its favour, until they forced him, or so it was supposed to seem, to accept autocratic power." This quote is the fulfilment of all of Octavian's work, as it shows how the people were essentially forcing him to take up the mantle of Emperor. This is what he wanted, as he needed it to seem to everyone that it wasn't his idea to become the Emperor, but it was the people who wished it. This was his idea all along, as he knew he couldn't take the throne by force, but only with the support of the senate and people elevating him to the position, could he change the balance of power from being a system where the power is shared by many, to being a system where the power is held by one man alone, who just happened to be Octavian, who changed his name to Augustus to show his magnificence. This crafty idea that he had is backed up by a quote from the Deeds of the divine Augustus, written by Augustus himself: "I was offered dictatorship five times in my presence, and seven times, not in my presence. I refused every offer." This shows that he wanted people to remember how he was so generous by refusing the offer to be dictator, and instead running off the pretext that the senate still held power, so the people would see him as a selfless hero who isn't tempted by power.

All in all, the Battle of Actium was a very influential event on the balance of power in Classical Rome. Before the battle, the power was held by many people, in an assembly of rich men called the senate, but through various propaganda tactics, and long planning, Octavian was able to sway the senate and people of Rome into believing that he was a grand hero who saved the Roman people from separatist threats from Egypt and a traitor, and that resulted in his promotion and glorification to the first Emperor of Rome, who held all the power.

1240 WORDS / 800 RECOMMENDED

## Excellence

**Subject:** Classical Studies

**Standard:** 91203

**Total score:** 07

<b>Grade score</b>	<b>Marker commentary</b>
E7	<p>The candidate demonstrates an extensive understanding of the transference of power in Rome post-Actium. The candidate is concise, and examples are boiled down to their essence. The consequence of this are paragraphs full of precision, Latin terminology, and well-rounded theories. Extensive and carefully selected quotes are used to direct discussion (rather than tacked on). Conclusions are littered throughout, addressing both public and private motivations for Octavian's actions and how these affected the balance of power. This helps to demonstrate perception as the candidate creates a multi-perspectival picture of Rome's transition from republic to principate.</p>