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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.

Merit

TOTAL 05

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

Ancient Athens

PLANNING

Solons reforms,
what led to the reforms
conflict between classes due to debt slavery
demiourgoi wanted political power
georgoi wanted freedom from debt slavery

horoi
hekktemorioi 1/6 partners
debt-bondage

archons
ekklesia
heilleia
boule

penta
hipp

zeu
the
slaves

eupa
geor
demiougoi
thetes
slaves/women

standardising money
banned eexport of food (olive oil)

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   ↶ ↷ 🌐

Introduction

Known as the "Father of Democracy" by many, in 594 BC Ancient Athens saw the leadership of Solon and the significant changes of the reforms not only change the polis politically, but also socially. Faced with a city that was ripe with problems and underlying challenges, Solon turned what was an incomplete attempt at creating a democracy through an oligarchy to a functioning society with moderate equality through a timocracy.

Context

Prior to the reforms of Solon, the social class structure included the Eupatridai, those who had all the political rights and primarily made decisions using Eupatridai Archons and the Aereopagus (made of retired archons), making up just 10% of the population. Following them, there were the small farmers called the Georgoi, who had far less political power and rights. Then, there were the Demiourgoi, craftsmen, who similarly to the Georgoi, had very little rights and land. Below them were the Thetes, and at this time had no rights or political power, often used as labourers. Finally, there were the slaves; the slaves were often prisoners of war, or criminals of the state. In general, this social structure had very little mobility, which resulted in those born into power (Eupatridai) being able to maintain it, while those in other classes were never given the same opportunities.

Following the Draconian period, where Draco had attempted to lead Athens to a brighter future using severe and harsh punishments, and other unpleasant activities such as writing the new laws on stone tablets in the Polis, the changes had failed, leaving the citizens in Athens in even more disarray than before.

For the Athenians, the unbalance of political power, with only Eupatridai holding government created major problems for other classes. At this time, it was common for the Georgoi to become hekketemoroi, with Eupatridai 1/6 of their produce in return for money to fund them and their families. It was a process that benefited both sides of the agreement, with the demiorgoi receiving a large horoi (stone) placed on their land to symbolise the agreement that was taking place. However, if there was a deficiency in products produced during a year, or the weather conditions prevented any produce from growing, it would result in the debtor needing to put themselves as bondage for the debt. This outcome had begun to see many debtors and their families becoming slaves, as they were unable to provide the produce in exchange for the loan; a problem that had begun to cause internal conflict between the Georgoi, the debtors, and the Eupatridai, the lenders. For the Georgoi, they had become to feel a sense of angst

towards the Eupatridai, with jealousy around political rights and anger surrounding the increasing debt, and in turn, causing the Eupatridai to become nervous surrounding their security.

Alongside this conflict, the Demiourgoi had begun to feel anger towards the lack of political rights they had, and were looking for more political involvement.

Reforms

With the rising unrest in the city, and the previous history of Solon being a poet and a strong leader, the leadership within Athens insisted that Solon could change the state of the situation, making him the Euponymous archon.

The first key reform that Solon implemented was the Seisachtheia, where he not only abolished debt slavery, but also cancelled all remaining debts. This allowed slaves to go back to being citizens of Athens, no longer subject to the pressure of being a hekkteteroi. However, initially this reform was not popular for the Georgoi, as they thought they would be receiving land "like they expected," according to primary source Aristotle. On the other hand, the Eupatridai did not think fondly of the reform as it resulted in the loss of slaves, and therefore the loss of help in their individual properties.

Another vital reform that Solon created was the change of social class structure from one based off lineage to one surrounding the idea of a timocracy. This monumental reform resulted in the change of classes, going from Eupatridai to Pentakosiomedemnoi (with 500 measures), Georgoi to Hippeis (with 300 measures), Demiourgoi to Zeugatai (with 200 measures), while keeping Thetes the same. This reform not only altered the class structure to one based off wealth that permitted social mobility, but also allowed for more political participation from different classes. Some of the main changes including the significant reduction of power from the Aereopagus, instead giving it to newly formed Ekklesia (Assembly). The Ekklesia involved the gathering of classes to discuss the agenda, as well as the opportunity for Thetes to vote for the first time. Alongside this, Solon's reforms included the development of the Boulē, or the people's court, where more classes could become politically involved by creating the agenda for the Ekklesia. Finally, Solon created the Heliaea (the people's court), where citizens were allowed to challenge magistrates decisions.

Other reforms that Solon created in Athens was the standardising of currency to allow an economy to flourish free from any scams, a reform that also made Athens more efficient when selling, trading, and purchasing products. Solon also prohibited the exports of food from Athens (except olive oil) to ensure that it would be self-sufficient, and would provide for it's citizens first. Lastly, one of Solon's reforms called for fathers to teach sons various trades, in an effort to create a work force in the future that was educated and filled with diverse knowledge. For this particular reform, in exchange for fathers bringing up their sons with valuable knowledge, sons would be required to assist their fathers in old age.

Summary

Through the dramatic reforms implemented by Euponymous Archon Solon, the classical civilisation of Ancient Athens was transformed from it's previous politically segregated state. From the reforms that included changes to the social structure from one based on heritage to one based on wealth, the standardising of currency, the prohibition of exported food, and the father-son responsibility put in place, Solon reformed an ancient society to allow for equal opportunities. With the addition of social mobility and the Seisachtheia, Solon created an environment that promoted involvement in political events, while also possibly boosting motivation for citizens to reach the next social class - therefore strengthening the entire economy. Through Solon's reforms in 594 BC, it provided the next influential reformer, Cleisthenes, a base to begin forming the eventual 'first democracy' that would begin to form in the following years.

Merit

Subject: Classical Studies

Standard: 91203

Total score: 05

Grade score	Marker commentary
M5	<p>The candidate's context is the social / political conditions that lead to the reforms of Solon. The response is logical and well-developed, explaining both the causes and the reforms. Each explanation is detailed, using precise figures and giving clear examples of how institutional measures of power were changed. Quotes are woven into the discussion and some explanation is provided. Conclusions are drawn from the candidate's own evidence, and they address both the positive and negative outcomes for the groups affected. Looking deeper into the social conditions caused by stasis would have provided the candidate better opportunities for evaluation more in line with what the question required.</p>