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91394



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Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Level 3 Classical Studies 2025

91394 Analyse ideas and values of the classical world

Credits: Four

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

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INSTRUCTIONS

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

You must answer using paragraphs.

Characters in classical literary texts may be mythical, fictional, or historical.

QUESTIONS (Choose ONE)

- Discuss the extent to which one or more characters used their power to restore peace and / or order in a time of crisis.
- Discuss the extent to which one or more characters was a leader or a follower.
- Discuss the ways in which the identity of one or more characters was shaped by a sense of duty and / or obligation to others.
- Discuss the extent to which one or more character's adherence to traditional beliefs and / or values was challenged by others.

CLASSICAL LITERARY TEXT

Aristophanes Frogs

PLANNING

INTRO - Dionysus descended into a different world to bring back a great tragedian who was going to save Athens both culturally and politically. Introduce text and how Dionysus was not an ordinary leader, not a traditional god whom had no fear and was strong, instead he had many flaws and was cowardly, indecisive, and often ridiculous. However, these personal flaws of Dionysus were integral to the comedy of the play as Aristophanes used these ultimately reflect the confused and struggling Athens itself.

BP1

- Dionysus has many personal flaws like indecisiveness and cowardice. These flaws were apart of his identity and were shaped by his lack of duty and how he responded to others. As he was rowing down the stynx, Dionysus says, "I'm not much of a rower...I'm afraid of death". This quote portrays Dionysus not as a traditional god and highlights his lack of fearlessness which many gods usually have. Later on in the comedy, Dionysus tries to disguise himself as Heracles but this eventually backfires as he was getting beaten up and says, "don't hit me, I'm divine". No god usually has to declare their divine status but due to all of Dionysus' personal flaws, he is often looked down upon. Flip flopping around with Euriped and Aeschylus, "I choose Euriped, no I choose Aeschylus" shws his indecisiveness and inability to stand strong in his decisions. The flaws shape his identity and the ultimate lack of power that he seems to obtain. Aristophanes uses Dionysus' flaws to mock the inability of Athens politics and culture.

BP2

- Dionysus has little to no authority. In the role reversal with Xanthias who is meant to be a slave of Dionysus, but instead is ordering him around. They switch identities and Xanthias says, "you hold the luggage, I'm divine." This quote by Xanthias mocks the little power that Dionysus has. It forces the audience to question what status is really defined by. It is almost a battle between power and ability. Aristophanes mocks Dionysus' emotions, where instead of being feared, he is being laughed at. The lack of Dionysus' authority reflects the incompetent leaders of Athens who claim to hold power, but are unable to use this power for the greater good.

BP3

- Dionysus ultimately completes his tasks, and comes back successful. He ends up choosing Aeschylus over Euripides and says, "I will take the better man." Aristophanes uses the eventual success of Dionysus to suggest to the audience what kind of leader Athens should be looking for. His human flaws and relatable nature is what makes him more like an everyman rather than a god. Aristophanes suggests maybe this is what Athens was missing at the time. Someone who could relate to the people, instead of a leader who did not know how to use their power.

ANSWER

Type your answer in the space below. You should aim to write a concise answer of no more than 800–900 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   ↶ ↷ 🌐

In Aristophanes' *Frogs*, Dionysus is a god who descends into a different world with the aim of bringing back a great tragedian to ultimately save Athens after being in a cultural and political decline. Dionysus however, is not portrayed as a traditional god who is strong and fearless, instead; he has personal flaws, is cowardly, indecisive, and often ridiculous. Though they may be flaws, these traits are integral to the comedy of the play, particularly in the eyes of the audience. Dionysus is portrayed more like a human rather than a god, which makes him relatable and reflects the confusing and struggling state of Athens itself. Dionysus' personal flaws prove that although he was leader, to a very minimal extent was Dionysus a traditional leader.

Throughout *Frogs*, Aristophanes successfully communicated that Dionysus had many personal flaws like indecisiveness and cowardice. These flaws were not often seen with traditional leaders. Aristophanes cleverly explores Dionysus' leadership and proves that although he was a leader, to a very minimal extent was Dionysus a traditional leader. An example of this is when he was rowing down the styx with Xanthias, his slave, and refused to row. Dionysus says, "**No, I am not much of a rower...I am afraid of death.**" In classical society, traditional gods and leaders are usually fearless and are seen to be able to do anything, but not Dionysus. This quote emphasises his weakness and portrays Dionysus not as a traditional god, instead as a relatable human in Athens. Later on in the comedy, Dionysus tries to disguise himself as Heracles but this eventually backfires. He is getting beaten up by his slave Xanthias and commands not to be hit, "**How dare you hit me, I'm divine.**" No divine leader ever has to command to not be attacked, especially not by their slave. Aristophanes successfully highlights this lack of strength through Xanthias' 'power' over Dionysus which is not very common. Indecision is a trait that is heavily embedded within Dionysus and is often communicated through his back and forth approach toward making choices. Dionysus is seen flip-flopping around, unable to choose the greatest poet, between Euripides and Aeschylus. "**I choose Euripides, no no I choose Aeschylus.**" This quote highlights Dionysus' indecision and inability to stand strong in what he believes in, which is no trait of a traditional god or leader. Aristophanes uses Dionysus' flaws to mock the ultimate decline of Athens politics and culture, which prove that Dionysus was a leader, but to a minimal extent was a traditional leader.

Aristophanes strongly highlights Dionysus' weakened authority and his lack of traditional leadership skills through this comedy because he is often pushed around both physically and emotionally, further proving his stance in society and how much he is seen as a leader, particularly in the audience's eyes. In *Frogs*, there is a role reversal between Dionysus and Xanthias. Dionysus becomes the slave, and Xanthias becomes the god. As they switched roles Xanthias says to Dionysus, "**you hold the luggage, I'm a god.**" This quote by Xanthias mocks the very little power that Dionysus has. For someone who is meant to have an ample amount of divine authority, Xanthias shows that Dionysus holds none, which is not common between leaders and their slaves. This

interaction between a leader and slave ultimately forces the audience to question what divine authority, or status, is really defined by. It eventually turns into a battle between power and ability, questioning which one is needed to be a traditional leader in Athens. Aristophanes continues to mock Dionysus' emotions, when he is recorded to be upset when Xanthias makes him hold the luggage. The audience finds humour in his upset which is abnormal for traditional leaders because instead of his emotions being feared, he is being laughed at. The lack of Dionysus' divine authority reflects the incompetent leaders of Athens who claim to hold power, but are unsure what to do with all the power that they obtain, resulting in the political and social decline of the people. Divine authority is a trait held by many leaders in Athenian culture and Aristophanes clearly portrays that Dionysus lacks this integral trait. This proves that although he is a leader, to a very minimal extent is Dionysus a traditional leader.

To the Audiences surprise, Dionysus ends up completing his quest of bringing back a great tragedian. Because Dionysus carries doubt, flaws, weakness, and indecision with him, this success came as a shock to many. Through this, Aristophanes explores the idea of Dionysus being a leader, but a minimal extent was Dionysus a traditional leader. Previously, Dionysus was seen stalling around, unable to make a decision between Euripides and Aeschylus, but eventually he says, "***I am going to take back the better man***", and chooses Aeschylus. This quote emphasises the growth of Dionysus and his identity. Although he was often mocked and laughed at, he ultimately came to a decision and showed traits of a traditional leader. Aristophanes uses this eventual success of Dionysus to suggest the kind of leader Athens needs. His human like flaws and relatable nature is what makes him more like an everyman rather than a traditional god. Aristophanes suggests that Dionysus' traits is potentially what Athens was missing at the time, a leader to lead the people, not rule the people into a national decline. The realisation of Dionysus success is a symbol of growth for Athenian society. Forcing the people of Athens to turn away from their default and truly ask themselves what a true leader is. Dionysus ultimately becomes a symbol of personal growth and through this eventual success, Aristophanes clearly highlights that Dionysus was a leader, but to a very minimal extent was he a traditional leader who carried traditional Athenian leadership qualities.

Throughout Aristophanes '*Frogs*', Dionysus travels through to an underworld, and successfully completes his quest of bringing back a great tragedian. His personal flaws in the beginning is a testament to his identity, but were also integral to the comedy of the play. He lacked divine authority and was unable to make simple decisions, and although Dionysus faced many negative instances, he ultimately became a symbol of growth and success. Aristophanes cleverly uses Dionysus' journey to reflect the political world of Athens and how change must occur for the better of the people. Dionysus' symbolic character, flawfulness, and weak divine authority proves that although he is a leader, to a very minimal extent is he a traditional leader who carries traditional Athenian leadership qualities.

1082 WORDS / 900 RECOMMENDED

Excellence

Subject: Classical Studies

Standard: 91394

Total score: 07

Grade score	Marker commentary
E7	<p>This response demonstrates perceptive understanding of both the text and the precise demands of the question. From the outset, the candidate establishes a clear evaluative position and explicitly defines the character's role and identity in relation to the focus of the question. It is clearly stated <i>who the character is</i> and <i>how they are being judged</i>, which provides a clear foundation for the analysis that follows.</p> <p>Key values central to the question are named and framed clearly rather than implied. The candidate explicitly articulates these values, allowing the argument to remain tightly focused and coherent.</p> <p>Analysis is sustained across the entire response. The candidate consistently evaluates the <i>extent</i> to which the character fulfils the role or embodies the qualities addressed in the question. The response explains <i>how, why, and to what degree</i> to show control over both content and argument.</p> <p>Evidence is carefully selected and integrated to support interpretation, with minimal narrative description. Examples are used purposefully and link back to the central argument, demonstrating the candidate's ability to prioritise analysis over plot summary and use of the text as proof rather than recounting content.</p> <p>The response demonstrates clear awareness of authorial purpose and broader social, political, or ideological context. Contextual material is applied selectively and meaningfully, enhancing analysis without overwhelming it. Rather than presenting context as background information, the candidate uses it to explain <i>why</i> the text presents characters and ideas in particular ways. This shows strong judgement and avoids excessive historical exposition.</p> <p>While the response does not fully explore alternative interpretations or interrogate ideological tensions at the most abstract level, it is evaluative, perceptive, and consistently analytical. The argument acknowledges complexity where appropriate but prioritises clarity and sustained evaluation over breadth. This level of control, clarity of argument, and explicit engagement with key concepts places the response securely at Excellence.</p>