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91396



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Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Level 3 Classical Studies 2025

91396 Analyse the impact of a significant historical figure on the classical world

Credits: Six

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Analyse the impact of a significant historical figure on the classical world.	Analyse, in-depth, the impact of a significant historical figure on the classical world.	Analyse, with perception, the impact of a significant historical figure on 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 **historical figure of the classical world**.
You must answer using paragraphs.

QUESTIONS (Choose ONE)

- Discuss the extent to which a significant classical figure's leadership could be described as strategic.
- Discuss the extent to which a significant classical figure's status was challenged by others.
- Discuss whether a change(s) introduced by a significant classical figure was for the better or for the worse.
- Discuss how a significant classical figure's reputation was impacted by their involvement in a conflict(s).

HISTORICAL CLASSICAL FIGURE

Augustus

PLANNING

43 BCE - Second Triumvirate, "...their conference lasted for three days." Plutarch
42 BCE - Battle of Phillipi, "I drove into exile the murderers of my father." Augustus, Res Gestae Divi Augusti
31 BCE - Battle of Actium, "ships were severely battered... his men unwillingly surrendered at about four in the afternoon." Plutarch
Consequence - "He gave up his title of Triumvir, emphasising instead his position as consul." Tacitus
27 BCE - Pax Romana, Princeps; "First Citizen", "After putting out the civil war... I handed over the state from my power to the senate and Roman people." Augustus
Ara Pacis = Pax Romana, "Aware the city was architecture unworthy, Augustus so improved it that he could justifiably boast." Suetonius

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 primary-source evidence.

B I U     

Following the death of Julius Caesar in the classical era, Augustus was chosen to be next in line to rule over Rome, eventually becoming the first Emperor of the city with impacts that lasted centuries after his death. However, his rise to sole govern-ship over

ancient Rome wasn't straightforward as he was constantly challenged and placed in the centre of conflicts. In order to gain power, Augustus had to take advantage of every opportunity to positively raise his reputation in the eyes of the Roman people and to solidify his status as a leader.

Soon after Augustus' introduction into Roman high society, he was looked down upon by other influential figures such as Mark Antony and other members of the senate, starting off his journey with a low reputation as he was from the countryside and didn't have much knowledge toward political affairs. As well as that, the assassins, Brutus and Cassius, who murdered his 'father', Caesar, were still at large, needing to be brought to justice. Aligned by the same motivation of punishing the assassins for their treason, the Second Triumvirate was formed in 43 BCE, a joint governance between Augustus, Antony, and a third member who would take the mantle in leading Rome. Noted by Plutarch, their, "conference lasted three days," as they spent a long time discussing military control and how to properly defeat Cassius and Brutus. By getting involved in this conflict and joining the Second Triumvirate, Augustus enabled his advantageous position of still having control over Rome, but by sharing it with two other powerful figures, displayed himself as an equal to them and thereby also worthy of the Roman people's admiration. However, he was still doubted by some, meaning he had to use this conflict with the assassins in order to show his might as a strong, military general. In ancient Rome, society deeply valued an individual's battle prowess with valour and bravery being two extremely important values, therefore, in order to gain acceptance from the populace and improve his reputation, Augustus needed to convey that he possessed these traits. During the Battle of Phillipi in 42 BCE in which Augustus and Antony engaged in a civil war with the traitorous Cassius and Brutus, their conflict proved to be high successful, ending in the victory of the Second Triumvirate. In Augustus' *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, he himself stated that, "I drove into exile the murderers of my father," making himself out to be a key part of winning this conflict and therefore, positively improving his reputation in Rome. However, we have to consider the limitations of sources of evidence when using Augustus as, through wanting to make himself out to be a courageous military leader, he may be influenced by narcissism, wanting to be as admirable as possible in order to gain acceptance from the citizens of Rome and thereby solidify his position in governance regardless of how accurate his account is. To conclude, the formation of the Second Triumvirate caused Augustus' involvement in the Battle of Phillipi conflict which he used in order to stabilise his legitimacy in leading Rome in the eyes of the populace, positively impacting his reputation.

Following the Battle of Phillipi, the Second Triumvirate continued its rein in Rome for the next years with Augustus keeping a continued, joint leadership position up until its eventual disbandment. This resulted from Antony's association with the Egyptian Queen, Cleopatra, in which caused the conflict of the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE. Augustus advantageously used this conflict to boost his reputation, depicting Antony to be a traitor of Roman values by associating closely with another, foreign leader. Therefore, he promoted his own status as a admirable figurehead who would protect Rome from international threats, upholding valued characteristics. According to Plutarch's account on events, during the Battle of Actium, Antony's, "ships had been severely battered... his men unwillingly surrendered at about four in the afternoon," deciding his absolute defeat to Augustus. This victorious conflict heavily, positively impacted Augustus' reputation, displaying his dedicated military prowess to the Roman people leading to him being utterly capable and worthy of leading Rome in the public's eyes. However, in terms of Plutarch's account on events, we must consider limitations of using him as a primary source. Even as a historian, Plutarch focused more on the emotional side of events, judging conflicts based off his own moral compass and, therefore, may tend to depict things more dramatically than historically accurate. After the Battle of Actium came to its conclusion, Augustus took sole rule over Rome, as documented by Tacitus, "He gave up his title of Triumvir, emphasising instead his position as consul." With this, Augustus was able to, with his newly advanced reputation, take over complete dominion of Rome and become Emperor as, in the eyes of the people, he was extraordinarily capable and possessed key Roman values, such as hardworking and valiant, needed to govern a successful society.

Finally, a last conflict Augustus faced in his rise to the 'greatest' Emperor of Rome, was the conflict of legitimacy. To continue his rule and ensure he remained accepted by the populace, he needed to enable their continued support of him through various actions. Firstly, Augustus took on the title of Princeps, meaning "First citizen", a title that solidified him as the sole ruler of Rome and allowed him complete power. As Princeps, he decided that in order to gain favour from the Roman people, he'd act in generosity, making sure his subjects were happy through various, strategically philanthropical means. In his *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, he himself stated that, "After putting out the civil war... I handed over the state from my power to the senate and Roman people." By giving parts of his authority to the citizens, he portrayed himself as a benevolent ruler, gaining utmost favour and positive reputation from the people as he depicted himself as someone who put Rome and it's subjects first. However, once again, as it is his personal account, the legitimacy of Augustus' sources must be queried as, he has a narcissistic tendency to make himself seem better than he actually is in order to gain favour. To further conquer the conflictual nature of ensuring his remained legitimacy, Augustus also, following the civil wars, maintained a long lasting era of Pax Romana, meaning Roman peace. During this, he made improvements to Rome in order to prove himself as an Emperor who cares for the maintained status of the country, something the Roman people deeply appreciated. Suetonius made note of this by mentioning, "Aware the city was architecture unworthy, Augustus so improved it that he could justifiably boast." This was extremely successful in positively impacting his reputation, as the population strongly valued a clean, magnificent city they could be proud of which Augustus ensured with his pieces of added constructs. One of which was the Ara Pacis which also acted as a symbol of propaganda, an aesthetically pleasing peace that conveyed Augustus' era of Pax Romana, further causing the Roman people to admire him as, because of him, civil wars were no longer a concern. Overall, in order to remain a legitimate ruler in the eyes of the Roman people Augustus accomplished feats such as constructing stunning architecture and giving power to plebeians in order to keep a strong reputation in this classical society.

In conclusion, through conflicts such as the Battle of Phillipi and the Battle of Actium, Augustus was able to advantageously use these events in order to positively impact his reputation, making himself out to be an upholding, dutiful, and generous ruler who possessed Roman values such as valour and determination. This stabilised his continued rule in this era, promoting his leadership as legitimate in the eyes of the populace.

Merit

Subject: Classical Studies

Standard: 91396

Total score: 05

Grade score	Marker commentary
M5	<p>The candidate addresses the question by explaining how Augustus used conflicts to improve his reputation and secure power. The argument is clear but not consistently sustained; some sections become descriptive rather than analytical, and the conclusion largely restates points rather than synthesising them.</p> <p>There is some analysis of causes and consequences, for example, linking the Battle of Actium to Augustus' portrayal as a defender of Roman values. However, the discussion often stops at explanation rather than exploring complexity or wider significance. The response mentions source limitations (e.g., Augustus' bias in <i>Res Gestae</i> and Plutarch's moral lens), showing awareness, but this is brief and does not develop fully into critical evaluation.</p> <p>The essay uses relevant primary sources (<i>Res Gestae</i>, Plutarch, Suetonius, Tacitus) and refers to Roman values like <i>valour</i> and <i>Princeps</i>. Evidence is often quoted without deeper interpretation or comparison of perspectives. Modern scholarship is absent, which limits historiographical depth.</p> <p>The response is logically organised with an introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion. Paragraphs generally follow a clear pattern (conflict → impact on reputation → source limitation), though transitions could be stronger to reinforce the argument throughout.</p>