Clitheroe Royal Grammar Sixth Form: Transition Pack

Welcome to the Classics Department

I look forward to meeting you and welcoming you to the Sixth Form.

This Transition Pack contains information to support your transition from GCSE to A Level study.

Please read all the pack ready to begin Year 12:

- What independent learning looks like in Classics
- Classics Introductory Task

✓ **Read the Subject Information Sheet** which is available here:
CRGS Sixth Form Subject Sheet - Classics

✓ **Download the exam board specification** which is available here:
OCR A Level Classical Civilisation

✓ **Read the section called 'Specification at a Glance'**, focusing on the A Level content.

✓ Some of these resources will become more useful when you have moved further through the course, such as the A Level specification, so store them where you can revisit them over the next 2 years.

✓ Don't worry if some of the work sounds challenging. A Level work is more difficult than GCSE work after all. Your teachers will be supporting you through this transition. Please talk to us if you are unsure about any aspect of the course.

I look forward to seeing you soon.

Mr D Westworth - Head of Learning, Classics

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Classics – Introductory Task

Homer: The Iliad

Here is an extract from Book 1 of the Iliad, which tells the story of 10 days during the tenth year of the Trojan War in which an army of Greek warriors are besieging the city of Troy.

The extract follows on from an argument between Agamemnon, the leader of the Greek alliance, and Achilles, the greatest warrior of the Greeks. The two have argued because Agamemnon has been compelled to hand back to her father a woman who was captured during a raiding expedition. In order to maintain his sense of honour and respect among the Greeks, he has stolen a female slave of Achilles called Briseis.

ACTIVITY 1: Read the following extract twice

While Agamemnon spoke, Achilles was gnawed by pain, and the heart in his shaggy breast was torn; whether to draw the sharp blade at his side, scatter the crowd, and kill Agamemnon the son of Atreus, or curb his wrath and restrain his spirit. As he pondered this in his mind, his great sword half-unsheathed, the goddess Athene descended from the sky, sent by Hera, the white-armed goddess, who loved and cared for both the lords alike. Athene, standing behind Achilles, tugged at his golden hair, so that only he could see her, no one else. Achilles, turning in surprise, knew Pallas Athene at once, so terrible were her flashing eyes. He spoke out, with winged words, saying: 'Why are you here, daughter of aegis-bearing Zeus? Is it to witness Agamemnon's arrogance? I tell you and believe that this son of Atreus' will pay soon with his life for his insolent acts.'

The goddess, bright-eyed Athene, replied: 'I came from the heavens to quell your anger, if you'll but listen: I was sent by the goddess, white-armed Hera, who in her heart loves and cares for you both alike. Come, end this quarrel, and sheathe your sword. Taunt him with words of prophecy; for I say, and it shall come to pass, that three times as many glorious gifts shall be yours one day for this insult. Restrain yourself, now, and obey.'

Then swift-footed Achilles, in answer, said: 'Goddess, a man must attend to your word, no matter how great his heart's anger: that is right. Whoever obeys the gods will gain their hearing.'

So saying he checked his great hand on the silver hilt, and thrust the long sword back into its sheath, obeying the word of Athene; she meanwhile had left for Olympus, for the palace of aegis-bearing Zeus, and rejoined the other gods.

But, angered still, Achilles son of Peleus, once more turned on the son of Atreus with bitter taunts: 'You drunkard with a cur's mask and the courage of a doe, you've never dare to take up arms and fight beside your men, or join the Achaean leaders in an ambush. You'd sooner die. You'd rather steal the prize from any Achaean in this great army who contradicts you. Devourer of your own people you are, because they are weak, or else you, Agamemnon would have perpetrated your last outrage. But I say true, and swear a solemn oath See this staff, that will never leaf or sprout again now it is severed from its mountain

branch, doomed never to be green again, stripped by the bronze adze of its foliage and bark, now borne in their hands by the Greek judges who defend the laws of Zeus: I swear, on this, a solemn oath to you, that a day will surely come when the Greeks, one and all, shall long for Achilles, a day when you, despite your grief, are powerless to help them, as they fall in swathes at the hands of that best of Trojans, man-killing Hector. Then you will feel a gnawing pang of remorse for failing to honour the best of the Greeks.'

ACTIVITY 2: Make notes in bullet-point form answering the following questions

(a) What impression do you receive from this passage of Achilles?

You should consider what he says, what he does and what values seem important to him.

(b) What is the effect of the intervention of a goddess in the story?

You should consider what part she plays in the development of the plot, how the scene might have developed had she not appeared and whether you like the idea of a supernatural being playing a role in the story.

Please complete this work ready for when you begin Year 12. If you have any questions about the work, please make a note of them and bring them to your Classics lesson.