

2009 HSC Classical Greek Continuers

Sample Answers — Written Examination

This document contains ‘sample answers’, or, in the case of some questions, ‘answer may include’. These are developed by the examination committee for two purposes. The committee does this:

- (a) as part of the development of the examination paper to ensure the questions will effectively assess students’ knowledge and skills, and
- (b) in order to provide some advice to the Supervisor of Marking about the nature and scope of the responses expected of students.

The ‘sample answers’ or similar advice, are not intended to be exemplary or even complete responses. They have been reproduced in their original form as part of the examination committee’s ‘working document’. While the handwritten notes have been typed for legibility, no further editorial change or addition has occurred.

Section I — Prescribed Text – Plato, *Apology*

Question 2 (a)

Sample answer:

Socrates refers to two sets of accusations. The ‘first false accusations’ represented him as a clever man who was interested in natural science and rhetoric. The ‘later charges’ are those which have brought him to court, namely of religious innovation and corrupting the youth.

Question 2 (b)

Sample answer:

Socrates fears the older accusations more than the later ones because these falsely associated him with natural philosophers, who were popularly believed to be irreligious. These accusations have become so ingrained in the Athenian audience over such a long period of time that he is afraid the jurors will be unable to dissociate him from this image, which he has never had the opportunity to refute.

Question 2 (c)

Answers may include:

- Socrates begins by restating the old accusations in the form of a sworn declaration, mentioning interest in natural science and rhetoric, and in teaching these to others.
- He refers to the representation of him in these terms in Aristophanes’ *Clouds*.
- He rejects this characterisation, and invites the jurors to provide evidence from their own experience to the contrary.
- He denies teaching for money, as various sophists do, on the grounds that he does not have the requisite knowledge.
- He attributes the origin of the prejudice against him to his reputation as the wisest of men, deriving from the oracle obtained by Chaerephon from Delphi.
- He explains how his attempts to test this oracle by cross-examining various Athenians made him unpopular with those who were subjected to his young followers imitating his methods.

Question 3 (a)

Answers may include points such as the following:

- In the quotation Meletus denies that Socrates believes in any god
- This statement is made in the course of Socrates' cross-examination of Meletus, and it is Socrates who leads Meletus to state his view in these terms
- Socrates points out the inconsistency of this view with the indictment, which accused him of introducing new gods.
- Socrates attributes this change to a confusion of his own views with those of Anaxagoras and others, as illustrated in Aristophanes' *Clouds*
- Socrates argues that belief in daimonia implies belief in daimones, which implies belief in theoi, thus contradicting Meletus' statement
- Socrates early in the speech referred to the oracle obtained by Chaephon from Delphi and how his own belief in the God's infallibility led him to investigate the meaning of the oracle. By making this his priority, Socrates aroused the indignation of those Athenians whom he questioned, leading to suspicion and ultimately the charges against him
- Socrates bases his whole defence against the charges on his devotion to the God of Delphi

Question 3 (b)

Answers may include points such as the following:

- Socrates denies rhetorical skill in the introduction but demonstrates it both there and in his cross-examination of Meletus
- He does not concentrate merely on refuting the 'new' charges brought against him in the indictment but focuses for the major part of his speech on what he defines as the 'old accusations'. Thus his speech is a defence of his whole life and his divine mission
- He displays skill in maintaining consistency in his presentation of his life's work and his beliefs
- His description of his investigations of the oracle and his cross-examination of Meletus demonstrate his skill in leading opponents to express indefensible views and then easily demolishing them
- This very skill explains the prejudice which arose against him and was counter-productive to obtaining an acquittal

Section II — Prescribed Text – Aristophanes, *Frogs*

Question 5 (a)

Sample answer:

Dionysus is shown as confident in his approach to Heracles' door but not clever at interpreting Heracles' response as Xanthias' comments make clear. Dionysus, apparently oblivious to the mockery of Heracles and Xanthias, remains confident throughout, which contributes to his presentation as a figure of fun. His appearance and the reference to Cleisthenes suggest effeminacy.

Question 5 (b)

Answers may include:

- Lines 46–47 describe the incongruities of Dionysus' costume with the heroic lion skin and club not disguising the effeminacy of the robe and boots
- Lines 38–39 (especially 39) indicate a complete change in Heracles' attitude after he opens the door.
- Lines 41–42 suggest that Heracles is shaking; Dionysus interprets this as fear but Heracles' words show that he is laughing
- Lines 51 suggest that Xanthias is addressing an aside to the audience, which includes them in the mockery of Dionysus.

Question 5 (c)

Answers may include:

- Dionysus' encounter with Heracles in this extract foreshadows a number of further episodes where the impersonation of Heracles provides opportunities for humour, including the exchange of costumes with Xanthias i.e. encounters with Aeacus, the servant of Persephone and the town inn-keepers
- The comic exchanges in this extract foreshadow verbal exchanges in the encounters with the corpse, Charon and the frogs
- Xanthias' comically non-servile attitude to Dionysus is further demonstrated in the encounter with imaginary monsters

Question 6 (a)

Answers may include points such as the following:

- Dionysus is trying to decide whether Euripides or Aeschylus would provide the better political advice for Athens
- In the Parabasis (lines 674–737) Aristophanes’ own views of the political situation in Athens are expressed through the chorus
- He pleads for those Athenians deprived of civil rights after supporting the oligarchs in 411BC, urging a general amnesty in view of the ongoing Peloponnesian War
- Using the analogy of Athens’ recently debased coinage, he condemns recent politicians and urges a return to the political ascendancy of kaloi te kagathoi
- Aeschylus has been shown in the competition with Euripides to be the champion of such traditional values

Question 6 (b)

Answers may include points such as the following:

- Aristophanes’ *Frogs* is laced with references to the political situation in Athens at the time of its production but owing to our knowledge of this historical period many of the references to people and events can still be appreciated
- The literary contest between two deceased poets has particular immediacy for Aristophanes’ audience who had seen their plays performed, but can still be appreciated today owing to the survival of a number of their plays
- Other components of Aristophanic humour have formed the basis of the Western comic tradition and do not depend for their appeal on knowledge of the social context— e.g. lavatory humour, witty exchange, slapstick, role reversal, fantastic setting, absurdity, farce, satire and parody