



**GCSE  
ANCIENT  
HISTORY**

OCR J198

## CONTENT WARNING

This course is a GCSE and is therefore aimed at students of 14+. Students who are younger than this are more than welcome, but there will be reference to adult themes from time to time. This course contains references to sexual assault and rape, violence, warfare and images of (ancient) nudity. I do not cover these things gratuitously but they are a core part of the course at times and feature in the textbook.

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## Key Information

Course Price	£380 divided over 12 months at £30, +£20 deposit.
Course Length	1 Year of 48 Lessons
Lesson Length	1 hour 30 minutes
Lesson Times	Tuesdays 10 – 11:30 am
Exam Board	OCR
Qualification	GCSE
Course Code	J198
Exams	2 Papers of 2 hours



## Component 1: Greece & Persia

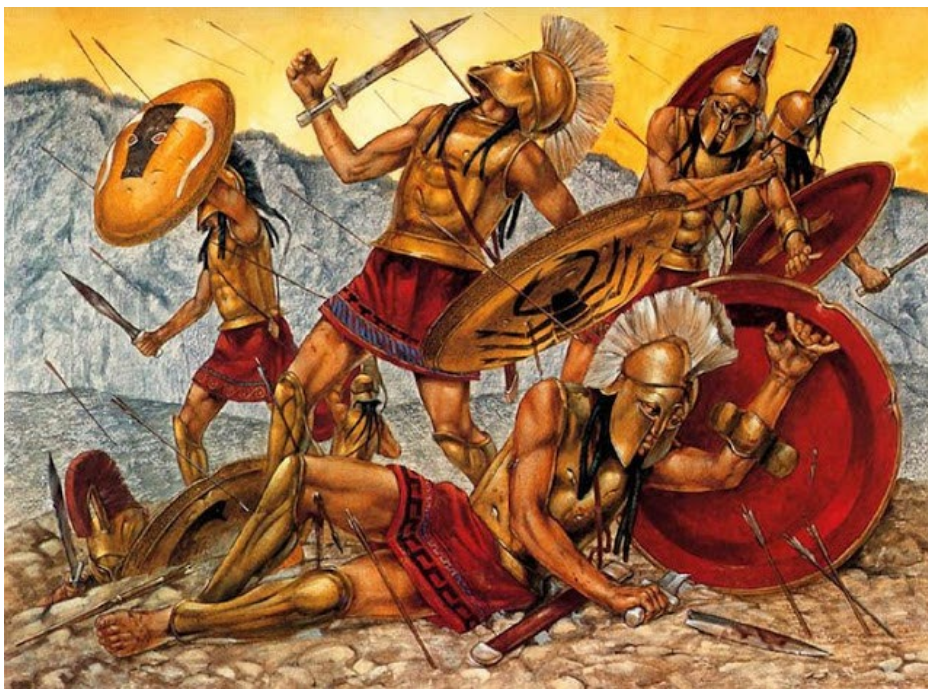
Our first unit of study will be all about the Persian kings of the Achaemenid dynasty.

We will explore how they came to power under the Cyrus the Great, how they expanded under Cambyses II and flourished under Darius I. We will then focus on the wars with Greece under Darius I and Xerxes I, with special attention to the battles of Marathon, Thermopylae and Salamis.

We will use a range of sources but with an emphasis on Herodotus, the Father of History.

*"Although extraordinary valour was displayed by the entire corps of Spartans and Thespians, yet bravest of all was declared the Spartan Dienekes. It is said that on the eve of battle, he was told by a native of Trachis that the Persian archers were so numerous that their arrows would block out the sun. Dienekes, however, undaunted by this prospect, remarked with a laugh, 'Good. Then we will fight in the shade.'"*

— Herodotus



## Alexander the Great

Our second unit of study will be all about Alexander the Great of Macedonia.

We will study who he was, his family and childhood. We'll look at his father Philip II's conquest of Greece and his creation of a powerful army. After Philip's assassination, Alexander will take his army on a mission to conquer the Persians under Darius III.

From Turkey to Egypt, Persia to India, we will look at significant battles like Granicus and Gaugamela, sieges like that of Tyre and the often-bloody politics of the Macedonians in Persia.

We will use a range of sources but with an emphasis on Plutarch and Arrian who each have their own versions of Alexander's life to tell.

*"When Alexander saw the breadth of his domain, he wept for there were no more worlds to conquer."*

— Plutarch



## Component 2: Rome and its Neighbours

Our third unit of study will be all about the Roman kings, their downfall and the creation of the Roman Republic.

We will explore how Romulus became the first king of Rome and the lives of the six kings who followed him. We will look in detail at the despicable acts of the last king of Rome, Tarquinius Superbus and how he was replaced by a republic led by the people.

We will use a range of sources but with an emphasis on the Roman historian Livy.

*“The old Romans all wished to have a king over them because they had not yet tasted the sweetness of freedom.”*

- Livy



## Cleopatra

Our fourth and final unit of study will be all about Cleopatra VII, the last pharaoh of the Ptolemaic Dynasty.

We will see how Cleopatra interacted with and often outshone the powerful men in her life from her brothers to Julius Caesar, Marc Antony to Octavius. We will explore her character and her rise to power as well as her tragic, almost Shakespearian, death.

We will use a range of sources but with an emphasis on the Roman historian Plutarch.

*Her beauty, as we are told, was in itself not altogether incomparable, nor such as to strike those who saw her; but converse with her had an irresistible charm, and her presence, combined with the persuasiveness of her discourse and the character which was somehow diffused about her behaviour towards others, had something stimulating about it. There was sweetness also in the tones of her voice; and her tongue, like an instrument of many strings, she could readily turn to whatever language she pleased.*

- Plutarch



## Examination Information

2 exam papers of 2 hours each.

There will be a range of partial and full mock exams throughout the year. We take mock exams in lessons which will be recorded in case we need evidence of work due to any exam complications in 2026.

I mark all exams and provide feedback. We will study all the required exam skills in class and most homework will be based on exam questions.

Exams are readily available across the county at independent exam centres such as A3, Faregos and Tutors & Exams. I am partnered with Tutors & Exams but this does not mean you must take the exam with them.

The deadline for exam entries is usually around the end of January. I suggest that you sign up before then to avoid any delays, especially if you require access arrangements due to any special needs (extra time, use of a laptop etc.)

I **cannot** sign up to exam for you, but I can offer help and advice. It is also no me who can decide if a student requires extra time etc; that's something you must arrange with the exam centre you choose to sit the exam with.

This specific GCSE is mostly focused on essay writing. The student must be able to write several pages of prose A4 confinity to achieve good grades. If a student is taking exams for the first time, it may be a good idea to do a different course first that contains less essay questions and more short-form questions.

You can find examples of exam papers on the OCR website.



## Assessment and Homework

In order to track student's progress, I ask them to complete regular homework and mock exam assessments.

Homework will be set every other week and will usually be based on exam questions so that they can be marked and graded.

All students must have access to a printer to print off homework and exam papers.

All students must have a way of sending me completed homework. You can either photograph this and send it or scan it in. (If you have completed work on the computer than this is a simple email).

It is much appreciated if work can be sent in .pdf form as this drastically cuts down the time it takes to mark.

All homework will be returned, marked, within two days of being sent unless we are taking a holiday. Most homework is sent back the next day.

## Drop-In

If a student requires help with homework, or anything else, they can email me at any time or join my drop-in session every **Saturday from 11-12pm**.

This session is open to all students and their parents for free and you can ask me anything!

## Reports

I send out written reports each November to give parents and students a good idea of how they are progressing. This report will show how regularly homework is completed, attendance and average grades so far.

## How Lessons Work

All lessons are online and use the Zoom platform. Students will have a link that they can use for the entire year.

All lessons are recorded so should you miss a lesson, you can catch up. These are all stored on a central Google Drive. These are also great for revision!

Students are not required to use cameras or mics, although they are more than welcome to do so. The exception to this is during mock exams when all students are expected to have a camera pointing at their work, not faces and must have their mics muted.

Students will be able to use the Zoom chat function during lessons if they are uncomfortable with speaking.

Equipment you will need:

- Camera
- Mic
- Stable internet connection
- Notepads and pens for notetaking
- Working printer for printing off assessments etc.

## Holidays and Taking Breaks

This is an intensive course and as such we do not stop for most holidays, including Bank Holidays.

We will have four weeks off throughout the year:

Summer	August 11 <sup>th</sup> – 15 <sup>th</sup>
Winter	December 22 <sup>nd</sup> – January 2 <sup>nd</sup>
Spring	April 6 <sup>th</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup>

As all lessons are recorded, it's no problem at all to take additional weeks off. Please be prepared to catch up with missed lessons though by watching recordings and doing any homework set.

If you cannot make a mock exam for any reason, please send me an email. We can usually work out an alternative time to sit these exams.

## Textbooks

These textbooks are required for the course.

OCR Ancient History GCSE Component 1 Greece and Persia  
(ISBN: 9781350015159)

OCR Ancient History GCSE Component 2 Rome  
(ISBN: 9781350015197)

You will also require a copy of the Prescribed Sources for the sections on Alexander and Cleopatra. These can be downloaded from the OCR website and can either be printed or kept digitally.

<https://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse/ancient-history-j198-from-2017/planning-and-teaching/>

