



SWGS KS5 READING LIST: CLASSICS

The purpose of this reading list is to encourage students to read, enjoy and learn beyond the taught curriculum. You can use the resources here to support and to enrich your learning.

General Classics Books

Mary Beard. *Classics: A Very Short Introduction*

Theme: Ancient Greece

Paul Cartledge. *Democracy: A Life*

Zaidman, L.B., Pantel, P.S., Cartledge, P. *Religion in the Ancient Greek City*

Theme: Ancient Rome

Tony Allen. *The Roman World*

Mary Beard, Michael Crawford. *Rome in the Late Republic: Problems and Interpretations*

Jane Bingham. *Ancient Rome*

Paper 1: World of the Hero Odyssey

Primary Sources

Homer *Iliad*

The other great Greek epic which is traditionally attributed to 'Homer'. The text tells the story of the Trojan War and the heroism of Achilles, Patroclus and Hector.

Secondary Sources.

Blundell, S. *Women in Ancient Greece*

Blundell is one of the great scholars on gender in the Ancient World. The whole book is great but particularly worth consulting is 'Chapter 4: Women in the Poems of Homer'. A great study on how women are presented in the Homeric texts and what they can tell us about gender roles in Ancient Greece.

Finley, M.I. *The World of Odysseus*

Finley is a fantastic scholar and this text is absolutely worth reading. It is a masterclass on the mythological world of the *Odyssey* and most important the socio-historical context of 'Homer's' time. This is an essential book to read if you want to learn more about the *Odyssey's* historical context.

Fowler, R. (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Homer*

The Cambridge Companion series are arguably the most accessible academic guidebooks. They are also of consistently excellent quality. There's a great variety of themes on offer here: the literary context, characterisation, textual criticism and Homeric reception.

Jenkyns, R. *Classical Epic – Homer and Virgil*

Jenkyns is a legend in the Classics world, and he is a renowned scholar on epic poetry. This is a very accessible but high level overview of the traditions and themes of epic poetry by Homer and Virgil.

Paper 1: World of the Hero

Aeneid

Primary Sources

Apollonius *The Argonautica*

The *Argonautica* is a great work of epic poetry during the Hellenistic Age of Greece (after the conquests of Alexander the Great). It tells of Jason's stealing of the golden fleece with Medea. Virgil is famously influenced by Homer but he's also influenced by many other works of great epic. It would be useful to read the *Argonautica* and discover how the *Aeneid* is influenced by it.

Lucretius *On the Nature of the Universe*

A very unconventional work. It is Epicurean (but very much not traditional) and promotes the idea that philosophy can be understood by the nature of the universe. It's very difficult but Virgil's literary style was greatly influenced by Lucretius.

Ovid *Metamorphoses*.

You may have read this for Love and Relationships, but it is worth flagging up again. This is Ovid's mythological account of creation to the ascension of Julius Caesar. It's a masterpiece epic poetry and is worth reading for its own merits. Ovid is massively influenced by Virgil and even tells his own tale about Aeneas in Book 14.

Virgil *The Georgics*

It's useful to read Virgil's other texts to see how the themes of the *Aeneid* are especially 'Virgilian'. It's a pastoral work and deals with nature and farming which may

not seem especially exciting topics. But they do show us nicely that Virgil was dedicated to preserving the 'old fashioned' Roman values and nature.

Secondary Sources.

Jenkyns, R. *Classical Epic – Homer and Virgil*

You might have read this book previously in the Homer course but it is worth flagging again here. Jenkyns is a legend in the Classics world, and he is a renowned scholar on epic poetry. This is a very accessible but high level overview of the traditions and themes of epic poetry by Homer and Virgil.

Gransden, K.W. *Virgil's Aeneid – An Essay on Epic Narrative*

This is an excellent book when considering the ways in which the second half of the *Aeneid* (the war narrative) is influenced by the *Iliad*.

Martindale, C. *Virgil and his influence - bimillennial studies*

This is a very rare book which is rather bewilderingly in the library. You'd usually only get it at somewhere like Cambridge University! Who knows why it's here! It's a very serious edited volume on the literary influences on Virgil. It looks great!

Paper 2: Invention of the Barbarian

Primary Sources

Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*

Useful to read as it is arguably the most important Greek play in history. Written shortly after Aeschylus' *Persians* and presents the downfall of Oedipus, who marries his mother and kills his father.

Thucydides' *Histories*

Useful to read as a key example of another early Greek history. Thucydides is writing in the model of Herodotus and records the Peloponnesian war between Athens and Sparta.

Scholarly Sources

Sue Blundell *Women in Ancient Greece*

Blundell is a legendary scholar on women and gender in the ancient world. You particularly want to read her chapters on Amazons (Chapter Five), and women in drama (Chapter Fifteen),

Edith Hall *Inventing the Barbarian*

This is the book OCR has used as a model for the entire unit 'Invention of the Barbarian'. Read Hall's original book and see the true version of the argument which OCR have clearly not completely understood!

Lloyd Llewyn-Jones *Persians: The Age of the Great Kings*

You have seen Llewyn-Jones' energetic speeches on the Persians and it is well worth reading his book on the Persian empire. It is easy-to-read and he is easily the most famous historian on the Persian empire. He's opinionated and so is fun to read!

Edward Said *Orientalism*

Arguably one of the greatest theoretical works of the twentieth century. We have read parts of Said in class, but it is worth reading all of Said's *Orientalism*. It is easy to read, and you can uncover his views on modern examples of Orientalism, such as the conflict of Israel and Palestine.

Paper 3: Love and Relationships

Primary Sources

Greek Sources

Aristophanes *Lysistrata*, *Acharnians*, *Clouds*.

Aristophanes is a character in Plato's *Symposium* which we study. Good plays for understanding Aristophanes' attitude to women. Aristophanes is a comic playwright who is representative of Greek attitudes to women. Although in an exaggerated and parodied form! *Clouds* is a parody of Socrates so is very interesting.

Aristotle *Politics*, *Nicomachean Ethics*

Much more difficult than the other texts and not quite as directly relevant. However, if you are interested in Plato then Aristotle is the other contemporary great philosopher. Both texts can give us insight into Plato's influence on Greek thought.

Plato *Early Socratic Dialogues*. *Republic*. *Laws*. *Phaedrus*.

The *Early Socratic Dialogues* are very entertaining texts about Socrates' philosophy on virtue. We read *Republic*, *Laws* and *Phaedrus* as passages for *Love and Relationships* but it's also very useful to read the complete texts. These books can tell us about Plato's philosophies on desire and moderation. As well as Plato's radical views on politics and women's role in society (*Republic Book 4*).

Roman Sources

Catullus *The Poems of Catullus*

Catullus is an elegiac poet in much the same vein as Ovid. Like Ovid, he has a *persona* which is utterly ridiculous and entertaining to read. 'Poor miserable Catullus!' His poetry is more traditional than *Ars Amatoria* 3 and so they are useful for understanding the wider elegiac tradition of poetry of Rome.

Ovid *Metamorphoses*.

The prescribed *Ars Amatoria* uses a lot of mythology and Ovid's use of myth is on the examination. It's therefore useful to read through at least parts of the *Metamorphoses*. This is Ovid's mythological account of creation to the ascension of Julius Caesar. It's a masterpiece epic poetry and is worth reading for its own merits.

Seneca *Thyestes; Phaedra; The Trojan women; Oedipus; with, Octavia; Four Tragedies and Octavia*.

Useful plays for understanding Seneca's attitudes to women and desire. Seneca is also highly underestimated as a playwright.

Phaedra is particularly useful because we read passages of the work throughout the module. It can tell us a lot about Seneca's attitudes to women and desire.

Secondary Sources.

Theme: Gender in the Ancient World

Sue Blundell and Margaret Williamson *The sacred and the feminine in ancient Greece*

This edited volume is a bit harder than those above. If you really just can't get enough of gender roles in the ancient world then this book is for you! Blundell in particular is a legend in the world of Classics so the book is great!

Mary Lefkowitz and Maureen Fant *Women's Life in Greece and Rome*

Lefkowitz and Fant are both renowned experts in the study of gender roles in the ancient world. It's a bit of a cliché that if you want to know about gender in the ancient world you consult Lefkowitz. A great starting point on this topic.

Sarah Pomeroy *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, Slaves*

In addition to the incredible name of this book, it is very much worth reading. This book is very famous for being the first 'modern' feminist monograph on women in the ancient world.

Theme: Specialist Works on Prescribed Authors

G.C. Field *Plato and his contemporaries - a study in fourth-century life and thought*

A rather serious and intense book on Plato and the philosophical movement of Greece. This is the perfect book for those crazy for Platonic philosophy!

R.W. Sharples. *Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics – an Introduction to Hellenistic Philosophy*.

This is a good general introduction to the philosophies which will be important when studying Seneca. It'll give you a true understanding into Stoicism and Epicureanism! It'll also be useful to know the ways in which the Sceptics influenced the Stoics.