Junior Cycle Classics – Strand 3: Classical Language (Greek)
Supporting approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

Introduction:

Through studying this strand (strand 3: classical language), students are acquainted with the literature, thought and history of a civilisation at the roots of western culture. They learn to read, analyse, and appreciate Ancient Greek texts, focusing on both the literary sphere of myth and the historical reality of daily life. They investigate many kinds of texts, from stories, poems and staged dialogues to inscriptions, speeches, and historical accounts. By translating, interpreting, and creating these diverse texts, students engage in activities that help them appreciate Ancient Greek as a language which was spoken, heard, and written by real people to communicate with each other.

Comparison, systematic analysis, logical deduction, and etymological association are intrinsic parts of this strand. In addition to offering students the opportunity to enjoy the language of the Ancient Greeks, this strand also builds their confidence in their native and other languages, as well as strengthening analytical skills valuable to other subjects.

The teaching and learning approaches suggested below offer a support to help realise the ambition expressed above. The separation of the language into four areas below does not imply that language learning is seen as isolated areas of study; the students' engagement and learning will only be optimised by a fully integrated experience both across and within strands.

It should be noted that this document is not a prescriptive list of what aspects of Ancient Greek should be included in teaching and learning, nor is it an exhaustive list. It should be seen as an aid to teachers in seeing possibilities allowed by the learning outcomes in strand 3, and how these may be integrated with learning outcomes in strand 1 as well, thus allowing for the integration of language with students' full experience of the Classics specification.

A. Exploration of Ancient Greek texts

As students explore and discuss Ancient Greek texts with their classmates and teacher in a classroom setting, they will also be exposed to language categories and concepts beyond those listed here. The following list indicates, *exempli gratia*, some further language phenomena which students are likely to encounter in texts, with which they may engage in different ways in a classroom setting: the teacher may simply gloss, identify or explain what is unfamiliar, or students may be challenged to resolve unfamiliar words, expressions, forms or constructions from previous learning and contextual information, to interpret the general sense, identify specific information, or use language resources such as dictionaries, grammars, commentaries or existing translations to come to a satisfactory understanding and appreciation and explain the steps that led them to this result. Such activities, which can be included in the Language Portfolio might examine, for example:

- Further noun and adjective categories (for example, πῆχυς, γένος; γλυκύς, ἀληθής)
- Irregularly formed or declined nouns, adjectives, comparatives, superlatives, and adverbs (for example, βούς and ναῦς; or μείζων and μέγιστος with μέγας)
- Further pronominal forms (such as the demonstratives ὅδε and οὗτος or reflexive pronouns)
- Further tenses (the perfect and pluperfect) and moods (the subjunctive and optative)
- Irregular verbs and their principal parts

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- The concept of aspect versus tense
- The category and forms of the middle voice and passive voice
- Forms and uses of the participle, including the genitive absolute construction
- The meaning and cases of common prepositions (such as ἀπό, διά, εἰς, ἐκ, ἐν, μετά, περί, πρός)
- Further uses of the cases (for example, the accusative of respect)
- Different kinds of questions (such as rhetorical questions with οὐκοῦν) and commands (such as prohibitions with μή + subjunctive)
- Various types of main and subordinate clauses with indicative, subjunctive, optative, with and without ἄν (for example, hortative clauses, conditionals, indirect questions, purpose clauses)

B. Comprehension and translation

The following grammatical parameters are suggested for the teaching and assessment of students' ability to independently create accurate translations of sentences and passages of limited complexity; to recognise, describe and use language patterns such as word types, inflection, grammatical functions and word order; and to explore grammatical rules by writing, completing and transforming words, phrases and simple sentences:

- The definite article and its use (for example, the 'sandwich construction')
- Regular nouns of the first, second and third declensions (τιμή, χώρα, θάλασσα, ναύτης, νεανίας; λόγος, δῶρον; φύλαξ, γέρων, γίγας, σῶμα, πόλις, βασιλεύς) and some key irregular nouns of the third declension (γυνή, ἀνήρ, μήτηρ, θυγάτηρ, πατήρ)
- Regular adjectives of three endings (σοφός, -ή, -όν; μακρός, -ά, -όν), used as attribute and predicate, with their adverbial forms (σοφῶς, μακρόν) and comparatives (μακρότερος, σοφώτερος with ἤ) and superlatives (μακρότατος, σοφώτατος)
- Numbers 1–10, 100, 1000 with the inflection of εἷς and οὐδείς, δύο, τρεῖς, τέσσαρες
- Personal pronouns ἐγώ, ἡμεῖς, σύ and ὑμεῖς; oblique forms of αὐτός used as third person pronoun; demonstrative ἐκεῖνος; possessive ἐμός, σός, ἡμέτερος and ὑμέτερος; relative ὅς (nominative and accusative only); indefinite τις; interrogative τίς, τί (these two forms only)
- Present, future and imperfect active indicative of ω-verbs (παύω, παύσω, ἔπαυον)
- Active indicative of the first (weak, sigmatic) and second (strong, thematic) aorist (ἔπαυσα, ἔλαβον)
- Present active imperative and present active infinitives of ω-verbs (παῦε, παύετε; παύειν)
- Present and imperfect indicative of εἰμί and impersonal δεῖ, χρῆ, δοκεῖ, ἐξέστι with infinitive
- Standard uses of the cases: nominative as subject and predicate; accusative as object; genitive of possession; dative of indirect object, instrument/manner, possession; vocative for direct address
- Direct statements, questions, and commands
- Temporal, relative, and conditional subordinate clauses with indicative forms and indirect statements with ὅτι and indicative

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C. Vocabulary

- Like the Junior Cycle specification for Modern Foreign Languages, the Classics specification has indicative areas for vocabulary building. These areas are the themes of Strand 1, myth and daily life, which provide a stock of frequently-used and familiar words and phrases and familiar topics.
- In exploring and discussing Ancient Greek texts with their classmates and teacher, students will learn additional words to expand their vocabulary.
- To expand and consolidate their vocabulary, students can be encouraged to keep a record of words learned in their Language Portfolio, to relate new words they encounter to cognate words they already know in Greek or in modern foreign languages and English – for example, ὕδωρ/hydration, περιφέρω/peripheral, θέατρον/theatre). Engagement with mottoes, common expressions and abbreviations, proverbs and famous sayings may also enrich and consolidate students' vocabulary – for example, the Delphic oracle's γνῶθι σεαυτόν, Archimedes' ηὕρηκα, Protagoras' ἄνθρωπος μέτρον, Socrates' ἓν οἶδα ὅτι οὐδὲν οἶδα.
- In an assessment context, it is sensible to gloss words whose meaning students cannot reasonably be expected to infer (from known words, English derivatives, the context, or otherwise).

D. Composition and conversation

- The expectation that students explore vocabulary and grammatical rules by writing, completing, and transforming phrases and simple sentences invites composition exercises in a classroom setting (rather than examination setting), which may contribute to students' Language Portfolio. Such exercises might focus on forms of regular nouns and adjectives of the first, second and third declensions; present, imperfect, future and aorist active indicative forms, and present active imperative forms of the ω-verbs; present and imperfect indicative forms of εἰμί; standard uses of the cases; direct statements, direct questions and commands.
- The oral and aural skills envisaged in strand 3 (accurately pronounce words, phrases and simple sentences, recognise frequently-used words and phrases in listening) invite reading aloud of sentences and texts and, for example, short conversations using common interactional utterances, such as Χαῖρε, ὦ φίλε! Χαῖρε καὶ σύ. Ὄνομά σοι τί ἐστιν; Πῶς ἔχεις; Καλῶς ἔχω, etc.
- Any active language use in written *assessment* would reasonably have to be much less ambitious. Suitable assignments in this context might be, for example, putting nouns or verbs in the correct form in a sentence, or creating a phrase or clause using *provided* vocabulary.