



**Harris
Manchester
College**

Written Work Guidance

Classics and Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

As part of your application all candidates are required to submit the following:

- Two recent essays written in English. Where possible, at least one of these should be in an area relevant to Classics.

They should preferably not be short, timed essays or exercises answering questions on a short passage of text.

The particular topic of your essay and the A-level (or equivalent) subject from which it is drawn are not important; the point of the exercise is to show how you construct an argument and express your ideas in English. Please note, however, that if you are applying for Classics and are already taking a classical subject at school, at least one of your essays should be on a classical topic. NB this should not be an exercise answering questions on a short passage of text.

If you do not have any recent marked work written in English (for example, because of the combination of subjects you are currently studying), you may submit an essay in English on one of the topics you have been studying for A-level (or equivalent).

If you do not have any written work and need to produce some specifically for the purpose of your application, we will accept it unmarked. Here are some suggested topics:

Classics

1. Discuss the role of the gods in the literature of the ancient Greeks and/or Romans.
2. *Italiam non sponte sequor* / 'Not of my own accord do I seek Italy'. Is this an excuse on Aeneas's part, or an explanation?
3. Discuss the similarities and/or differences in how ideas of Fate operate in two pieces of ancient literature that you have read.
4. How important to the appreciation of ancient literature is knowledge of (a) the historical context and (b) the ancient language in which it was written?

Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

1. Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at Oxford used to be called 'Oriental Studies'. Can you explain why this change happened, and discuss?
2. What do you see as the main differences between your own culture and the culture you hope to study?
3. 'Human beings have more to unite than divide them.' Discuss the varied representations of what unites human beings in the culture of two or three countries, including your own.
4. Examine the relationship between religion and politics in one or two countries.
5. Examine the relationship between memory and politics in one or two countries.

Applicable to both

1. Does the study of any ancient civilization have any benefit and relevance for contemporary society?
2. 'Language study continues to be the best means of understanding a people.' Discuss.
3. 'Art and artists in antiquity must have been very different and understood differently from art in the modern world.' Discuss.