



**Harris
Manchester
College**

Written Work Guidance

Classics and English

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

- Two pieces of written work, where possible one relevant to Classics and one to English.

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 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:

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

English

Applicants are advised to submit an essay on one or more works of literature originally written in English. This may be on poetry, fiction, non-fictional writing or drama, either studied in school or college or read for pleasure. We would expect essays to combine an argument or discussion of a particular aspect of the literature read, with close attention to the text(s). Essays should be no longer than 2,000 words, including notes. Please do not submit creative writing, essays on non-literary topics or pieces that solely comprise close reading (practical criticism). Please do not submit essays written under exam conditions (i.e. timed, closed-book exams). At interview there is usually some time devoted to discussion of the submitted essay.

For those who do not have any appropriate written work to hand and are required to produce some specifically for the purposes of their application we will accept unmarked work. Suggested topics on which you may write are:

1. 'Characters are delineated autonomous wholes, clearly distinguished from others.' Discuss this statement in relation to two works of English literature of your choice.
2. 'It is striking that many novelists write almost obsessively about the uncertain crossing and invasion of identities.' Discuss how two works of English literature of your choice explore the 'uncertainties', 'crossings' and 'invasion' of identities. You need not confine your answer to the novel.
3. 'We are as separate from ourselves as from other people.' Do the works of English literature you have read support this claim? Write on two works of your choice.