Shrewsbury School

SHREWSBURY SCHOOL

SIXTH FORM ENTRANCE EXAMINATION
2025 ENTRY

CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

(1 Hour)

Instructions to candidates:

- Answer QUESTION 1 **and** QUESTION 2.
- The paper is out of 50 marks.
- Answer on lined paper.

1. Read the following passage and answer the questions.

Athene, in the disguise of the leader of the Taphians, Mentes, gives advice to the downhearted Telemachus:

"Come, attend, and pay attention to my words. After equipping a ship – the best one you have - with 20 oarsmen, go to enquire after your father who has been gone a long time, to see if any mortal can tell you, or you may hear from Zeus a rumour, which in particular brings a report to men. First go to Pylos and question godlike Nestor, and from there to Sparta to fair-haired Menelaus; for of the bronze-clad Achaeans he reached home last.
If you hear of your father's continued existence and his return, then, despite being ground down, you should still endure for a year. But if you hear he is dead and living no more, then after returning to your native land raise a mound for him and pay the funeral honours over it - a great many as is fitting - and give your mother to another man. But when you have accomplished and performed these things, consider then in your mind and heart how you may kill the suitors in your halls, either with a trick or openly; for you must not play with childish follies since you are no longer of such an age.
Or have you not heard what fame godlike Orestes won among men, when he killed the father-killer, wily Aegisthus, because he killed his glorious father? You too, my friend - for I see that you are very handsome and tall – be valiant, so that any of those yet to be born may speak well of you."

Odyssey Book I. 280-302

a) *Menelaus* (line 6): name his wife. [1]

b) *your father* (line 2): name this person. [1]

c) Pick out a stock epithet from the first paragraph (lines 1-7) [1]

d) What methods does Athene use to advise and inspire Telemachus in lines 8-20? **Refer closely to the text in your answer.** [20]

e) How sorry do you feel for Telemachus in this passage? Make **two** points. [2]

TOTAL: [25]

TURN OVER

2. Read the following passage and answer the questions.

Tacitus the Roman historian, writing about 50 years after events, describes the attempted assassination of the emperor Nero's mother Agrippina, by means of a specially booby-trapped ship.

As she arrived, Nero met her at the shore. After welcoming her with outstretched hands and embraces he conducted her to a mansion on the bay between Cape Misenum and the waters of Baiae*. Some ships were standing there. One, more sumptuous than the rest, was evidently another compliment to his mother, who had formerly been accustomed to travel in warships manned by the imperial navy. Then she was invited out to dinner. The crime was to take place on the ship under the cover of darkness....

Nero received her kindly and gave her the place of honour next to himself. The party went on for a long time. They talked about various things: Nero was boyish and intimate – or confidentially serious. When she left, he saw her off, gazing into her eyes and clinging to her. This may have been a final act of pretence – or perhaps even Nero's brutal heart was affected by the last sight of his mother, going to her death.

But heaven seemed determined to reveal the crime. For it was a quiet, star-lit night and the sea was calm. The ship began to go on its way. Agrippina was attended by two of her friends. One of them, Crepereius Gallus, stood near the tiller. The other, Acerronia, leant over the feet of her reclining mistress, happily talking about Nero's remorseful behaviour and his mother's re-established influence. Then came the signal. Under the pressure of heavy lead weights, the roof fell in. Crepereius was crushed and died instantly. Agrippina and Acerronia were saved by the raised sides of their couch, which happened to be strong enough to resist the pressure. Moreover, the ship held together.

TACITUS *Annals* XIV 3 (adapted)

**Baiae – a fashionable beach resort in Roman times*

a) How effective are Tacitus' powers of description and characterisation in lines 1 -14? **Refer closely to the text in your answer.** [10]

b) In lines 15-24, how effectively does Tacitus make his account of the boating accident seem realistic and credible? **Refer closely to the text in your answer.** [10]

c) Overall what do you think is the attitude of the writer towards Nero? [5]

TOTAL: [25]

END OF QUESTIONS