

Year 3 Term 3 Week 4 Day 2

Work this question from a past paper:

‘The contrast between the mythical creatures and humans is what makes the Aeneid so enjoyable.’  
How far do you agree with this statement based on the extract of the Aeneid you have read? Support your answer with reference to the text. You should write at least 100 words. [10]

Hints:

“How far do you agree...” so write an “On the one hand... on the other hand...” answer and then come down on one side or the other at the end. Go over the extract in your mind and group the mythical creatures and the human characters. What is the contrast between them? Use the words “contrast” and “enjoyable” in your answer. For “on the other hand...” consider other features of the extracts you have read that “make the Aeneid so enjoyable” e.g. use of language and vivid description.

My attempt is on the next page.

‘The contrast between the mythical creatures and humans is what makes the Aeneid so enjoyable.’

On the one hand, the contrast between the mythical Harpies and Cyclopes and Aeneas and his band of Trojans is certainly interesting. The Harpies and their leader Celaeno are vengeful, pitiless and (what would strike Virgil's readers as unforgivable) unwelcoming to strangers in trouble. Polyphemus is also violent, cruel and unwelcoming. The contrast with Aeneas and Anchises is subtle and enjoyable: they treat Achaemenides with generosity despite the fact that he is their enemy. On the other hand Virgil also points the similarities between mythical creatures and human beings. Achaemenides's plight draws out our sympathy but so does that of the shepherd Polyphemus *pastorem Polyphemum* as he tries to sooth his eye socket with sea water. This is just as enjoyable as the contrasts.

Before I wrote this I jotted down these points:

#### Mythical

Celaeno and the harpies: vengeful, pitiless, unwelcoming to strangers

Polyphemus and the Cyclopes: violent, cruel, unwelcoming to strangers

Polyphemus also to be pitied: loves his sheep, is in pain and blind

#### Human

Aeneas: leader/commander military, merciful

Anchises: merciful generous to an enemy

Achaemenides: to be pitied, terrified, at death's door

Looking at these points gave me the idea of similarities vs contrasts.

You may make different points and get full marks.

Quoting from the set text in Latin is difficult but bear in mind that quite a few lines from the poem will be on the paper in the other questions and you may find something you want to quote in them!

By practising questions like this one you will get used to answering similar questions. For instance here is one that turned up on a past paper for a different set of prescribed lines:

“It is the human characters, dead or alive, that make the Aeneid interesting, rather than the mythological creatures.” How far do you agree with this statement based on the extract of the Aeneid you have read? Support your answer with reference to the text.

You should write at least 100 words.

You could manipulate the same information to answer this question!