



# Unit 1

## An Introduction to Latin

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### LESSON

#### *What is Latin?*

Latin is a language. It originated in the Italian peninsula, located in the southern part of Europe, and specifically in an area once called Latium, where Rome was the principal city. The Latin language was initially spoken by the inhabitants of this small region, but it, like many other languages, spread. As the influence of Rome grew throughout the peninsula, the Latin language also grew. Eventually all peoples living in Italy spoke Latin. As Rome conquered parts of Europe—Spain and Gaul, which is modern-day France—and the ancient mediterranean world—Sicily and Sardinia—, Latin spread, becoming the official language of the conquered regions. Generally, where Rome conquered, Latin became the language.

When Rome became an empire, under the rule of Augustus Caesar, Latin became an imperial language. It was the universal language of government, education, and business. Even after the fall of the Roman Empire, Latin remained. Christians in Europe maintained it, using it to communicate the Christian faith throughout all of Europe. Eventually Latin developed into the romance languages—French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian. They are called “romance” languages because they come from Rome. During the Middle Ages, Latin was the common language used by governments, universities, and the Church. All educated peoples spoke and read Latin. It was the universal language of Europe.

#### *Latin & English*

More than half of the words in an English dictionary are derived from Latin. Even though English is, at its root, a Germanic language (similar to modern day German), a vast number of English words originally come from Latin. In the year 1066 A.D., William of Normandy (a region in France) crossed the English channel, and conquered England. He brought the French language with him. French became the language of the English court—of its kings and courtiers. French is simply the version of Latin spoken in the country of France. Many French, and thus Latin, words were adopted and added into the English language. When you learn Latin, you will better understand and know English vocabulary. In this paragraph alone, the words “derived,” “similar,” “vast,” “number,” “originally,” “conquered,” “courtiers,” “simply,” “version,” “country,” “adopted,” and “added” all have their origins in Latin.

*Why study Latin?*

One of the primary reasons that you should study Latin is to help you understand the present by looking into the past. Latin was the language in which the ancient Romans and medieval Christians thought and communicated, and these people laid the foundation of Western civilization, building it into the world in which we live. Learning about the religious customs, political structures, and social systems of those who spoke Latin can help you to better understand your culture. You will be able to see how things came to be as they are. It is definitely valuable to read the works of the medievals and ancients in translation, however by doing such, something is inevitably lost. Only by reading Latin can we truly understand the fullness of what these people were communicating.

By learning Latin you will learn how to pray as Christians have prayed for thousands of years, and you will also understand how they thought. Most importantly learning Latin will help you to understand the wisdom of medieval and Roman Christians, even wisdom from ancients such as Cicero and Caesar. Practically, learning Latin will give you greater understanding of English, both of its grammar and vocabulary. It will help you in any professional or literary career by strengthening your mind.

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

- After reading passage above multiple times, answer the following questions. (Refer back to it for answers, if necessary.)
- Answers should make use of complete sentences as well as good grammar, spelling, word choice, and so forth.
- Write your answers in the space provided.

1. What is Latin?

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2. From where did Latin originate?

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3. Why did people living in Gaul, modern-day France, speak Latin?

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4. After the fall of the Roman Empire, who maintained Latin as a language?

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5. Why are French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese called Romance languages?

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6. Why did French have an influence upon English?

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7. What are three words in the Reading Passage that have their origins in Latin?

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8. List two reasons you should study Latin.

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**LATIN READING PASSAGE**

- Read the passage aloud, multiple times.

In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

*English Translation*

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

*Vocabulary Exercise*

- Using the English translation, define the following Latin words.

1. In \_\_\_\_\_

2. nomine \_\_\_\_\_

3. Patris \_\_\_\_\_

4. et \_\_\_\_\_

5. Filii \_\_\_\_\_

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- 6. Spiritus \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Sancti \_\_\_\_\_

## LATIN COMPOSITION

### *Instructions*

**You should take care to model the example by using the same word order and verbs.** You will notice that there are two sentences.

- **First**, tell me your name.
- **Second**, tell me if you are a son or a daughter.

Follow the steps below to develop good composition habits.

### **Step 1: Read the example.**

*Magister Meyer sum. Filius sum.*

**Step 2: Prepare to Write.** Use the box below to understand the words in the example.

*Important Words from Example*

**sum**, verb = I am

**filius**, noun = son.

**filia**, noun = daughter

### **Step 3: Write your composition.**

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