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**A Latin Dictionary Saved My Life**

**By Martin Stoleman**

In many ways, I have never been much of a student, especially if you are talking about being a

student within the confines of a classroom. I've always loved learning, don't get me wrong, but get me inside a classroom for months on end and there is little that can be done to keep me interested in even the most fascinating subjects. I have no real idea how I managed to make it through four years of college. My Latin class in particular almost had the power to ruin my college career. I am convinced that I might have quite school had it not been for my Latin dictionary. It saved my education, and hence, my life.

I realize the previous statement may sound extreme, but it is true. I was so fed up with the stresses of my Latin class in college that I nearly dropped out of school. I guess I didn't have things in the best perspective, but that is how deeply I was being affected by the class. In the sixth week of the fifteen week class I called my father on the phone and finally told him of the truth of my current plight. He simply listened and then laughed at me and muttered two words. "Latin dictionary," he said. I had no idea how much I needed to hear those two words nor how much they would change my semester and literally the rest of my life.

I have absolutely no idea why my Latin professor didn't suggest that I buy a Latin dictionary. I'm actually a little bitter about it now that I think about it. Anyway, I rushed off to a bookstore the next day and purchased the cheapest and biggest Latin dictionary I could find. I had little money, but I felt like bigger must be better when it came to a dictionary.

Over the days and weeks ahead, I poured over that dictionary as I studied for my Latin class. Having that resource taught me an amazing amount that I just wasn't getting in the classroom. I pulled my grade up from a failing score to a B in the remaining weeks of the class. But that's not all that happened: I had a renewed love of learning. Yes, the Latin dictionary was responsible for my pursuit of learning and of new knowledge in many areas. It did little to make me enjoy time in a classroom, but it did inspire me to pursue many of the things I now love.

Martin Stoleman is a writer that credits his college diploma and many other things to his Latin dictionary. See

<http://www.funlatindictionary.info>

to learn more for yourself.

## **Your Children Know More Latin Than You**

**By Daniel Detlaf**

The beautiful language of Latin has been undergoing an incredible revival of interest lately. Why has this formerly moldy language acquired a new luster?

What constitutes a "revival of interest"?

Last year 148,000 students applied to take the National Latin Exam, according to their website ([www.nle.org](http://www.nle.org)

). In North Carolina there was a 156% increase in the number of students taking the exam,

in Nevada an 84% increase. You didn't even know there was a National Latin Exam, did you? Get with the times! What's old is new, and Latin is cool again.

Pop-culture has had a big hand in this. The Harry Potter books and movies — insanely popular with adolescents — feature Latin prominently as the language of magic. There is even a complete Latin translation of the first Harry Potter novel, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. If your child is reading "*Harrius Potter et Philosphi Lapis*" you can feel pretty confident about the quality of instruction they're getting at school.

The more serious side of Latin has been in the movies recently, too. Mel Gibson's controversial film *The Passion of the Christ* featured actors speaking in Latin and Aramaic. Although the Bible was not originally written in Latin, Latin became the language of the Roman Catholic Church. Consequently the Latin Vulgate served as the standard Bible for centuries. Inspired by *The Passion*, many Christians have begun learning Latin so they can read the Vulgate directly.

Resaerch has shown that students who take Latin score higher on their SAT's, a big incentive for parents. Latin specifically improved English comprehension scores and was shown to sharpen language skills in general.

The study of Latin has significant benefits, and despite (or because of) its arcane reputation it is becoming more common in schools and universities. If you aren't curious about it now, you will be when your children ask you to read them *Harrius Potter* at night.

Daniel Detlaf has been infected with Latin-mania — if you are bitten by him you will likely contract this dreaded disease as well. For more information on the study of Latin, including verb conjugations, noun declensions, and basic grammar, visit:

<http://www.latin-nerds.com>



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