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Teaching The Latin Language In High School

By John Davison

Latin was the language of the Roman Empire. All of the Romance languages, including French,

Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian, are directly descended from this native tongue. Our own English language is heavily influenced by roots from the Latin Language (as many as 80 percent of our language can be traced to Latin). Today, Ecclesiastical Latin is the official language of the Roman Catholic Church and the Vatican. With so much influence on our own language coming from Latin, it is surprising that students are not encouraged to study it in high school and college. Though considered a "dead language", Latin education can actually help students improve English grammar, as well as provide a historical foundation for their educations.

Today, Latin is taught primarily for the purpose of translating ancient literature. It is not really taught conversationally. Proficiency in Latin is achieved in reading and translating. Often, students that study Latin in college are majors in Classical Studies, wherein they study all aspects of Ancient Greek and Roman history and Culture, or they are pre-Law or pre-Medicine students. Having a knowledge of the Latin language has obvious benefits for Law and Medical students in that they will be better able to learn technical terminology, most of which is comprised of Latin words and phrases. Classical studies majors often go on to earn Master's degrees and Doctoral degrees either in Art History or Archaeology, where knowledge of the Latin language helps them in their research, or they often devote their graduate studies to the language itself, where they can go on to teach Latin in high schools or earn a place as a professor of Classics at a college or University.

Teaching the Latin language in high school can be challenging. Most students take foreign languages to satisfy requirements for graduation, not for the enjoyment of learning a new language. And they often take "easier" language such as Spanish or French. And since Latin is not taught conversationally, learning it can be considered a boring series of memorization or vocabulary words and noun and verb endings. It is important for the Latin teacher to make learning the language for those students that do decide to tackle it interesting and not just a matter of memorizing verb conjugations and noun declension charts. There are several ways in which success in teaching Latin in high school can be achieved.

Teaching The Latin Language In High School

Using modern technology to teach an ancient language might seem unlikely. But, there are many resources available online to assist the Latin teacher in his or her pursuits. Many websites offer charts, tutorials, and games to not only help the teacher, but to help engage the students. Learning Latin can be made easier using technology, while allowing the students to use the Internet as a means of education. Students today are all but required to use the Internet academically, and eventually professionally. Combining learning Latin with learning Internet skills is a perfect way to bridge the gap between ancient and modern.

Another way to make learning the Latin language interesting is by incorporating Roman history and Mythology into the subject. By bringing history and myth into the study of the Latin language, students will understand the origins of the language, as well as understand the impact the language and the history of Rome has had on our modern world. Games can be played and plays can be put on, utilizing Roman mythological stories and literature, and students can learn everything from Roman military strategy to Roman engineering to Roman cooking to how Roman people dressed.

As a high school Latin teacher, it can be frustrating that the language is misunderstood and under-appreciated. But, by using modern technology and creative teaching methods, The "dead" Latin language can be brought to life, and students will learn not only the language, but have a clearer understanding of English grammar, as well as a foundation that will open up their options as they enter college.

FiJohn is a director of numerous Internet companies and is a published author. Many articles have been produced on a variety of subjects with excellent content and depth. All his articles may be reproduced provided that an active link is included to

<http://www.foreign-languages-school.com/the-latin-language-in-high-school.html>

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<http://www.foreign-languages-school.com>

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

). 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 Philosophi 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.

Research 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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