

A Crosswalk Document for Latin Learners: How Latin Aligns with New Goals and Standards

Learning LATIN will

- ✓ enhance *21st Century Skills*
- ✓ teach important skills in *Common Core English Language Arts Standards*
- ✓ reinforce connections between various disciplines, including STEAM

The phrases *21st Century Skills* and *Common Core Standards* have been headliners for most educational articles and guidelines in recent years. One discipline we might not expect to see closely aligned with them is Latin. In reality, however, today's Latin curriculum and current teaching styles do impart many of the skills deemed critical for the next generation. We often hear that adults of the future will change careers several times and that a subject-specific body of factual knowledge will be much less important than possessing specific skills that will allow them to reason logically, understand complex documents, connect, communicate, collaborate, and innovate. In addition, working alongside people from different countries and connecting effectively and sensitively across cultures will be essential elements of many jobs and *sine qua nons* for global citizenship.

The table below correlates many key elements of Common Core Standards and 21st Century Skills with the goals and methods of typical Latin classrooms across various levels of study. These are just examples of how closely Latin aligns with current thinking and supports educational efforts to prepare and equip our students for the future.

Common Core English Language Arts Standards (selected, Grades 3-12; web site links provided below)

Aligned Latin Skills and Goals

<i>Reading and Language</i>	
Students should know how to decode words by recognizing Latin and Greek roots, affixes, and suffixes, especially multisyllabic words. Students should understand how affixes and suffixes change the meaning of the root word.	<p>Students learn the meaning of Latin nouns and verbs that are used as the base of many thousands of English words. They learn prepositions, many of which are used as prefixes in both Latin and English, as well as various Latin suffixes that always denote a particular part of speech. This helps students understand if a new word is a noun or adjective, for example.</p> <p>Students regularly learn how to connect a given Latin vocabulary word to all its English derivatives, and how to decode word elements. They investigate how it is possible for dozens of English words to have come from a single Latin root word and how all of those derivative words connect to the root meanings. In the process, they greatly expand their general and domain-specific English vocabulary. <i>This knowledge of Latin becomes highly relevant to building their comprehension and communication skills, because over half of all English words are derived from Latin, and up to 90% of domain-specific vocabulary and terminology.</i></p>

<p>Students should accurately use conversational, academic, and domain-specific words and phrases.</p>	<p>Latin students, because they learn many key root words and study the processes of word derivation carefully, are more comfortable using higher level academic and domain-specific vocabulary. Because vocabulary in English and Latin seldom correspond exactly, they also learn how to recognize and understand various shades of meaning and how to identify the appropriate connotation in context. These same skills are applied to both reading and listening and therefore allow students to express ideas more clearly and read complex texts more accurately. An added bonus for Latin students is that they also understand both common and technical Latin phrases used verbatim in English, <i>i.e., per se, per capita, et al., alter ego, alibi, habeas corpus, post mortem, in memoriam, magna cum laude, Q.E.D., etc.</i></p>
<p>Students should be able to interpret figures of speech.....and mythological allusions in context.</p>	<p>Latin students learn to recognize, interpret, and employ the exact same figures of speech as those used in English, because these literary devices were commonly used by ancient authors. Indeed, even the names by which the figures are identified are those used by the Greeks and Romans. Moreover, students study classical mythology in detail within the Latin curriculum. Since they learn to interpret rhetorical devices and mythological allusions and metaphors while reading works of Latin literature, they can easily transfer this skill to their readings in English, European, and American literature.</p>
<p>Students should develop a knowledge of synonyms and antonyms.</p>	<p>Latin students develop a broader vocabulary base through derivative study, which necessarily increases the bank of words from which they can choose. This enhances effective communication. Command of more diverse vocabulary also improves their writing style.</p>
<p>Students should understand the structure of a sentence and how the parts of speech work together to express meaning accurately.</p>	<p>Latin sentences do not rely on word order for meaning in the way that English sentences do. Therefore Latin courses focus on teaching specific skills for recognizing the structure and meaning of sentences. Latin grammar is highly systematic and is taught both explicitly and implicitly, so that students see how the words of any sentence must work together, in agreement, to produce meaning. Latin students learn how to read a sentence by the spelling patterns of nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and verbs. Latin students learn to compare and contrast Latin and English grammar regularly, which reinforces their understanding of grammar in general.</p>
<p>Students should read closely to determine what a text says explicitly, make logical inferences, analyze themes, ideas, and literary styles, and support interpretations with textual evidence. They should learn how to determine and interpret an author's purpose, point of view, and perspective.</p> <p>Students should read and understand complex literary non-fiction.</p> <p>Students should understand or determine from context the meanings of words in scientific and technical texts, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.</p>	<p>The Latin literature commonly studied in class is written for sophisticated native speakers, with complex sentence structures and rich vocabulary. Students learn to interpret and comprehend all genres of writing, including works of fiction, history, science, philosophy, rhetoric, poetry, drama, satire, etc. Reading this literature requires students to make choices about variant word definitions, an author's tone, and underlying themes and meaning. They learn to see a piece within its cultural, historical, and literary context. Students are asked to justify their interpretations by referring to word choice, grammatical forms, literary devices, and the socio-political context of the text.</p> <p>Latin students develop a knowledge base of Latin word meanings that allow them to decode more complex English words and phrases used in scientific and technical texts. This also applies to non-fiction writing in general. Documentary, scientific, instructional, and technical texts all draw very heavily from a Latinate vocabulary base. Knowledge of Latinate roots and principles of word derivation allow Latin students to read more quickly, gathering meaning from prior knowledge and contextual clues.</p>

<i>Writing and Speaking</i>	
<p>Students should be able to write analytical, informative, or expository text, citing evidence and effectively organizing thoughts to express ideas clearly.</p> <p>Students should support their claims or arguments and convey complex ideas and information clearly.</p> <p>Students should be able to conduct short as well as sustained research projects, gathering information from multiple print and digital sources.</p> <p>Students should be able to write original narrative, drama, and poetry.</p>	<p>Latin students learn how to write sentences and short paragraphs in Latin to respond to questions, describe situations, or paraphrase text content clearly, with details and structure organized effectively. They also write longer essays in English analyzing political and historical situations, debating social issues from various points of view, frequently comparing and contrasting Roman culture with the modern world. They also learn how to write sentences, paragraphs, and essays in which they must cite evidence to support their opinion about what they have heard or read in class.</p> <p>Latin students regularly conduct research on topics in Roman history, culture, archaeology, and literature as they move through course content. They use a wide variety of internet resources (in English and Latin), as well as books and periodicals to acquire information. Longer-term projects include expository or opinion papers with considerable depth, including elements such as descriptions of cultural products, archaeological field work, political comparisons, historical perspectives, literary analysis, and various modes of illustration. Final projects might be in print form or use various sharable digital media.</p> <p>Students learn how to brainstorm, organize, and compose original skits, imagined conversations, and simple poetry in order to convey information, tell a story, or practice lesson vocabulary and sentence patterns in real life contexts. They set their goal, choose appropriate vocabulary and expressions, and then organize their thoughts into a coherent presentation of their ideas. Advanced Latin students study poetic meter extensively, as well as figures of speech common in poetry.</p>
<i>Speaking and Listening</i>	
<p>Students evaluate information presented in diverse media....including visually, quantitatively, and orally; they evaluate a person's point of view, use of evidence and rhetoric.</p>	<p>Latin students learn to comprehend what they hear, evaluate it, and respond to it. Taking in visual cues, body language, and tone, they interpret the speaker's intent or the content of what is being said(command, question, narrative). More advanced learners are asked to "hear" more subtle things, such as intent or motivation, often expressed in the Latin word order or in vocabulary choice. Advanced students also learn about the rules and models of ancient rhetoric and how to use them to advantage today in their own speeches, persuasive speaking and writing, or classroom debates.</p>
<p>Students should be able to participate effectively in conversations and collaborations with partners, expressing ideas, building on ideas of others, and evaluating information presented in diverse media or modes.</p>	<p>Latin students learn to ask and answer questions in order to acquire information and form opinions. They interview each other or converse with their teacher. Within small group and partner collaborations, students strive to understand a text or complete an assigned task through offering ideas and interpretations, supporting their ideas with reasons or textual evidence, and resolving differences of opinion to achieve the best result.</p>
<p>Students should be able to present information and findings so that listeners can follow the line of reasoning....making strategic use of digital media and visual displays.</p>	<p>Latin students learn to use various modes of presentation to share information with classmates. They might use traditional visual aids, charts, graphs, and maps, as well as models, props, masks, and costumes. Many shared projects, however, include multimedia formatting, such as enhanced presentations on video, movies, slideshows, enhanced media, annotated slides, podcasts, videos linked to QR codes, etc.</p>

21st Century Skills
(selected)

Latin Course Goals and Teaching Methodology

<p>Communication: using oral and written expressive language to inform, instruct, and persuade.</p>	<p>On a daily basis Latin students learn how to respond to questions that involve interpreting oral, visual, and written information and are prompted to express their own ideas and reactions. They are asked to justify answers and opinions, using both English and Latin. They are expected to use supporting facts to justify their answer, interpretation, or opinion. Rhetoric was an important focus in Roman education, so students learn to identify and evaluate rhetorical methods of persuasion in Latin literature and can apply these same devices in their speaking and writing in general.</p>
<p>Collaboration: articulating, compromising, sharing, designing, and delegating responsibility within a setting involving two or more people working together.</p>	<p>Latin students frequently work with partners or small groups to read and understand written language. In these situations, they must learn to agree upon goals, compromise, delegate responsibilities and work together constructively. They might be asked to compose a conversation, act out a skit, create or evaluate a video, or complete art projects. They might reenact larger events, such as a Roman election, Saturnalia feast, or Roman wedding, which involve collaboration in choosing roles, collecting props, rehearsing, and critiquing. Students can also share things they have made or done with students in other classes or grades.</p>
<p>Critical Thinking/Problem Solving: reasoning, decision-making, understanding relationships and connections, forming questions, analyzing, synthesizing, and forming solutions.</p>	<p>Latin students are constantly asked to analyze grammar in order to justify their interpretations of meaning. Latin grammar is very systematic and so students learn to follow the clues given by the forms of words. In this way, they are able to comprehend accurately what is written or spoken, i.e., they analyze and synthesize to acquire meaning. They learn to compare and contrast expressions in English and Latin and are encouraged to see the connections between the languages. In completing projects or homework assignments, Latin students often need solve problems that arise due to technology and media sources. They learn to choose between various tech tools and then use those media creatively and effectively. They learn to use internationally based websites and must learn to evaluate content written from non-American perspectives and deal with the limitations of translated text.</p>
<p>Creativity and Innovation: using imaginative and original language, communicating new ideas and perspectives, acting on ideas to bring results or contributions.</p>	<p>Students are asked to choose topics, literary themes or art projects and create their own designs for the end product, such as a mosaic, model, mask, media presentation, album, or skit. They might write and illustrate promotional slogans, create and act out an original myth or skit, write original poetry using lesson-specific vocabulary or grammar, write about family members and illustrate a family album, or create their own alternative versions of the textbook story line. They might communicate with Italian penpals and explore similarities and differences in cultural ideas, products, and perspectives.</p>
<p>Information and Media Literacy: accessing and understanding digital sources of information, applying said information to situation at hand, using media ethically to persuade, express messages, values, and views, and using technology as a tool for research, organization, communication.</p>	<p>Latin students use various technologies, including the internet, podcasting, video, Skyping, email, Google Docs, Google Earth, etc., in collecting information for classwork, sharing work, real-time collaborating and editing, making virtual visits to geographical areas or cities, communicating with classmates and students overseas. Students necessarily learn through these experiences the importance of proper etiquette and ethics when using tools that permit instantaneous communication that cannot be “taken back.” Students can also compare the use and abuse of media messages, especially political messages, and how these have or have not changed over the course of history.</p>

STEAM Content Initiatives

Science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics are important skill and content areas for current students. It is clear that school courses and teaching methodologies should help students build their understanding of basic principles in these disciplines, teach specific skills applicable to future careers, foster collaboration in accomplishing tasks, employ problem-solving techniques, and direct students toward innovative design.

The Latin Connection

There are connections beyond the obvious ones mentioned above, such as linking Latin to an improved understanding of scientific and technical vocabulary. As students study Roman culture, they invariably discover the roots of many principles of design and engineering present in STEAM content. They learn how Romans designed many very complex structures, solved problems of hydraulics and water supply, developed strong cement, keystone arches, large domes and vaulted roof designs, well-paved roads, military machinery, and specialized ship construction. They also learn about the mathematical ideas of Pythagoras, Euclid, and Eratosthenes and how Romans surveyed and measured land. Some Romans followed Aristotle in studying nature more scientifically, understood plant grafting, and herbal properties. Linnaeus later began the worldwide use of Latin nomenclature to classify every living thing on the planet. Students can read in Latin some early mathematical works, geographical descriptions, accounts of new world explorers, and historical scientific works published in Latin over the centuries in Europe, such as those of Copernicus and Newton.

The continuance of Greco-Roman art styles also becomes quite evident to students studying Latin. Some methods of painting, mosaic work, clay firing, and sculpture have changed little over the millennia and studying their history can both inform and inspire students to devise modern applications.

Through such study of culture and history in the Latin class, students can see how people in the past have viewed the world and tried to solve certain problems they were facing. Now students can draw on this knowledge to gain new insights for their own work in STEAM disciplines.

Latin students necessarily study how many scientific processes are used by archeologists to discover, identify, date, and preserve artifacts of past cultures. When studying culture, just as when approaching grammar and vocabulary, they learn to see patterns and relationships, argue from evidence, investigate connections, and form models and schema. All of these follow the scientific method closely.

Latin courses often engage students in collaborative activities in which they must build consensus through sharing, critiquing, and compromising to complete a task. Latin also offers opportunities to design and create projects and artistic works, using various physical and technological media. Classroom, regional, state, and national level competitions offer challenges for interested students and a venue to share their work.

Links:

Common Core Standards home page: <http://www.corestandards.org/>

Common Core English Language Arts document: <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy>

21st Century Skills home page: <http://www.p21.org>

21st Century Skills Framework document: <http://www.p21.org/our-work/p21-framework>

Definition of 21st Century skills: http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/P21_Framework_Definitions.pdf

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