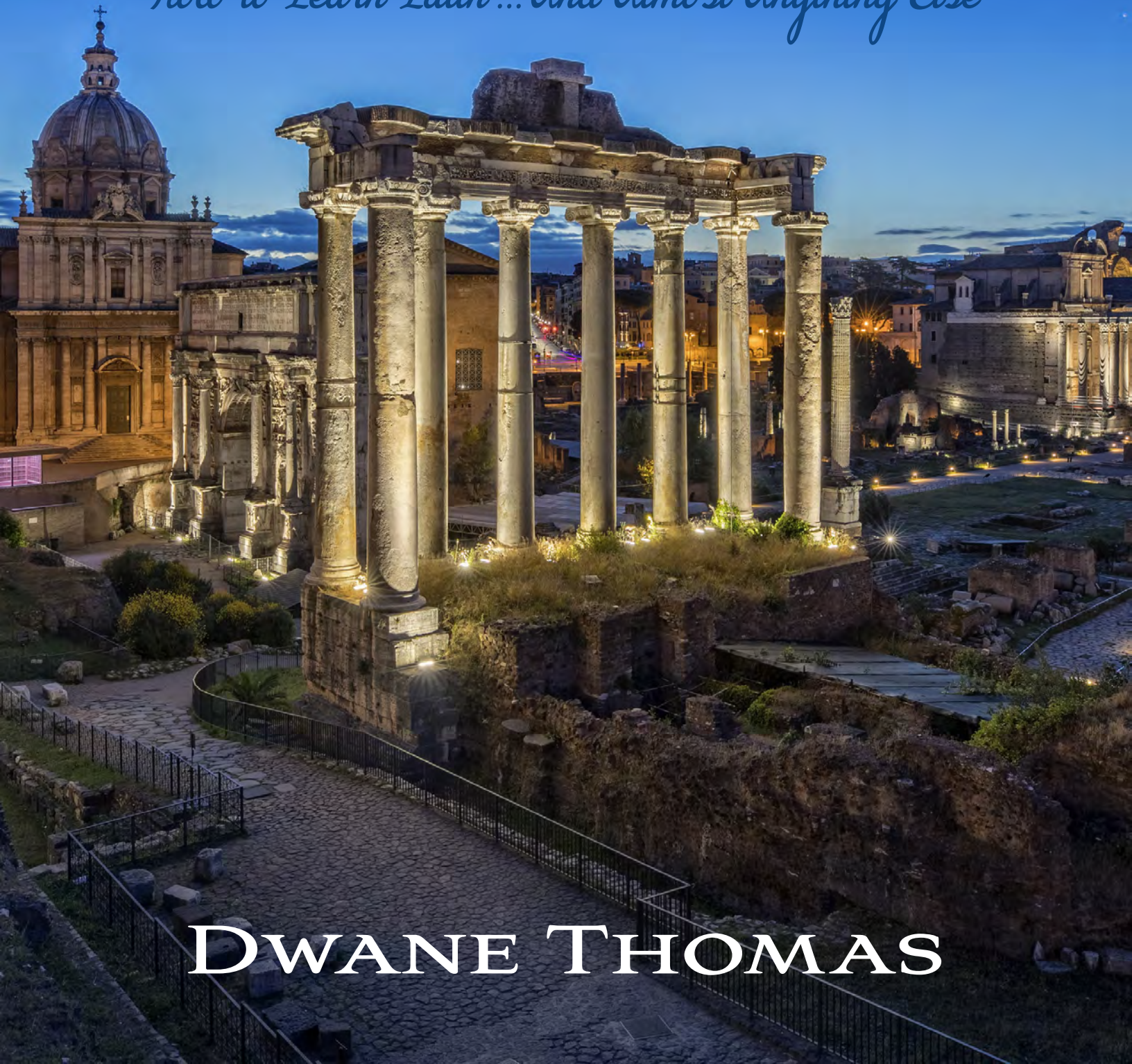


VIA

How to Learn Latin ... And Almost Anything Else



DWANE THOMAS

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TO MY FAMILY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	6
Chapter 1: SET A GOAL.	9
Chapter 2: FIND THE TIME.	13
Chapter 3: DO NOT QUIT.	29
Chapter 4: BECOME A MOVING TARGET.	36
Chapter 5: THE TOOLS YOU WILL NEED	41
Chapter 6: LISTEN UP!	50
Chapter 7: READ!	57
Chapter 8: WRITE!	64
Chapter 9: SPEAK UP!	69
Chapter 10: GET SOME HELP.	90
Chapter 11: SHOW OTHERS THE WAY.	94
CONCLUSION	101

Introduction

From the summit of an animated cliff, a sad, starved coyote watches as his dinner runs away. The sun sets. Wile E. Coyote sighs. Another day without dinner.

As a child, I loved Wile E. Coyote versus the Road Runner.

The story is predictable. In show after show, Wile E. Coyote desperately chases his dream dinner; Road Runner. Coyote never catches him.

The cartoon was entertaining, nothing more.

So I thought.

Not long ago, it hit me.

You could learn a lot from Wile E. Coyote.

Latin is a famously tough subject. Wile E. Coyote can teach you how to learn Latin. You are probably wondering... what can a cartoon character teach me about Latin?

As it turns out, he can teach you a lot.



(Eatibus almost anythingus)

First, Wile E. Coyote shows you how to set clear goals. He knows *exactly* what he wants.

He has one, and only *one*, crystal clear goal: *Eat Road Runner!*

All obstacles, all distractions, all hurdles, all interruptions fade away. Nothing else matters. Not even his own safety matters. *Gotta get that bird!* Like Wile E. Coyote, *you* will need clear goals if you are going to learn Latin.

Second, Wile E. Coyote teaches determination. Nothing can stop him. He will capture Road Runner, or die trying. Coyote never gives up. Ever. Like Wile E. Coyote, *you* will need determination.

Third, Wile E. Coyote will teach you to take action. He moves. He does not wait until conditions are perfect. He wakes up each morning, jumps out of bed, and bolts after the goal. Like Wile E. Coyote, *you* must take action.

Fourth, Wile E. Coyote teaches you to invest in yourself. He is willing to order *anything* to get the job done. If there is a course titled, “How to capture a Road Runner in Seven easy steps”, you can bet it is on Coyote’s shelf. To learn Latin, you, like Wile E. Coyote, must invest in yourself.

Fifth, Wile E. Coyote reminds you to stay humble. He is willing to fail. He is not afraid to admit that he is not the sharpest elevater in the ocean. He is not afraid to ask for assistance. After he has given his best, Coyote holds up a sign, requesting help. To learn Latin, *you* must be willing to ask for help.

Sixth, Wile E. Coyote shows you that the target plays hard to get. The target is elusive. The target is slippery. Wile E. Coyote never does catch dinner. Road runner always manages to stay just out of reach. Unlike Wile E. Coyote, you *can* hit the target. You *can* learn Latin. Just remember this: Latin, like Road Runner, will play hard to get.

So... how does this help *you*?

In this book, you are going to find out *exactly* what you should do to learn Latin.

This is not a book about what you *should* do. You know what you *should* do.

If you are reading this, chances are high that you *know* the benefits of learning Latin.

As I said, You know what you *should* do. You are here because you need to know *exactly* what to do.

You may be asking, “What steps do I take? Which books should I read? Which pronunciation will I use? Where do I find the help I need?”

I have been teaching Latin for almost 20 years. I have taught students from elementary school to high school. I have taught college students and adults.

In this book, I will share *all* of my secrets with you. I will show you all the shortcuts I have discovered. I will give you every detail I can possibly think of. I will help you learn this ancient and beautiful language.

We will start with the basics. Ignore the basics at your own peril. These steps will guarantee your success. Once the basics are out of the way, we will get specific. Very specific.

Remember, I have done the research for you. All you have to do is join me.

So... Are you with me?

Good. Then, Let's go!

Chapter I

“You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream.”

- C. S. Lewis

Wile E. Coyote set *clear* goals. He knows *exactly* what he wants. He has one, crystal clear goal.

Eat Road Runner!

All obstacles, all distractions, all hurdles, all interruptions fade from view.

To learn Latin, imitate Wile E. Coyote. Set goals. Go after those goals with “do or die” determination.

Unfortunately for Wile E. Coyote, he never reaches his goal. The show must go on, of course. Were he to eat Road Runner, the show would cease to entertain.

You, however, can reach your goal!

You can reach the goal. Unlike Wile E. Coyote, you do not have a scriptwriter preventing you from reaching the goal.

Several years ago, I discovered an interesting study in The Pledge by Michael Masterson. According to Masterson, Harvard business school conducted a study on its graduates 10 years after graduation. They found that:

27% of them were not doing well at all. They needed financial assistance.

60% of the graduates were living paycheck to paycheck.

10% of the graduates were living comfortably.

Only **3%** of the students were financially independent.

The researchers then looked at goal setting.

What they discovered stunned them...

The **27%** who needed financial assistance had *absolutely no goal setting processes* in their lives.

The **60%** who were living paycheck to paycheck had only *the most basic goals*. They had basic survival goals, like making it to the next paycheck.

The **10%** who were living comfortably had *general goals*. They had some idea where they were going and they had some idea how they wanted to get there.

The **3%** who were financially independent, however, had *written their goals down*. They had also written down the specific steps necessary to reach their goals.

What, then, is the lesson for us? Simple.

Aim at nothing and you will hit it every time.

You are reading this because you decided to learn Latin. Write the goal down. Really, *write it down*. Clear, written goals force you to focus. Clear, written goals keep you on track.

Do this now! Set a goal.

Be sure that your goal is *specific*.

I want to learn Latin, is a goal. It is not, however, specific enough.

Deciding that you will be able to read Latin within *one to two* years is specific. You might write something like:

Two years from today, by my 19th birthday, I will be able to read the New Testament in Latin. *That* is a specific, measurable goal.

But wait... Why should you try to learn Latin in one to two years?

Simple. In all my years of teaching, I have watched Latin students plod through Latin. Sometimes it takes seven or eight years. This is too long. They grow weary. They get bored. They quit. It will happen to you, too.

The finish line is so far off in the distant future, you feel you will never make it.

Take too long, and you will despair. You will be tempted to quit.

It should take you *no more* than two years to learn Latin grammar. After that, you will simply learn new words.

Take the next two years, dedicate an hour, or two a day to the study of Latin. In two years, you will have learned the complicated Latin grammar.

You should be able to read the Bible in Latin, *the Vulgate*, in two years.

Okay. Now that you have a specific, measurable goal, you have to ask yourself...

What *exactly* will this look like every day?

Do you know how to eat an elephant? Relax. It's just a figure of speech. I don't eat elephants. If you were to eat one, however, there is only one way I would do it... one bite at a time.

Your *goal* is an elephant.

You must break your large goal into smaller goals.

To learn Latin in two years, you must dedicate an hour or two, each day, to study.

Have you ever heard of the 80/20 rule? The rule states that 20% of your effort generates 80% of your results. In other words, we dedicate most of our time to low value tasks. These tasks keep us from our important work. What are these tasks? They vary for everyone. I do not know what your low value tasks are, but I can share mine.

Low value tasks, for me, include:

- Email
- Driving
- Phone Calls
- Watching Television
- Funny animal videos on YouTube
- Surfing the Internet
- Standing in line
- Sitting in traffic
- Facebook
- Twitter

It is easy for me to start the day with one, or any number of these low value tasks. If I am not careful, these tasks fill most (80%) of my day. Some of them are inescapable. No matter how hard I try, I can not seem to escape email. If possible, though, I push my low value tasks off to the end of the day.

Instead of checking email first thing every morning, I try spend the first 20% of the day focused on the most important task. Why? I believe we should focus on *the one thing* that will make *the greatest impact* in our lives.

Change your routine. Develop this one habit. It will change your life.

If we divide an 8 hour school or workday by the 80/20 rule, we end up with the following:

8 hours x 60 minutes = 480 minutes.

480 minutes x 20% (.20) = 96 minutes.

Using these numbers, we now know what to do. We should spend the first 96 minutes of our day working on our most important goal. 96 minutes is a bit more than an hour and a half.

If you are serious about learning another language (in this case, Latin), you should spend the first hour and a half of each day doing several things. You should

- **Listen to Latin audio recordings**
- **Read in Latin**
- **Study Latin vocabulary**
- **Speak in Latin**
- **Write in Latin**

In this book, you will learn exactly how to accomplish each of these tasks. I will not only show you *what* you should do, I will also show you *exactly how* to do it. I will show you *how* to reach the goal.

Latin is a tough language, but you can learn it. It is not out of reach.

But, before we get to that, I am willing to bet you are already asking an important question.

Great. Where am I going to find this much time every day?

Glad you asked...

Chapter II

“You can learn a language in twelve months using only the moments you didn’t realize you had.”

- Barry Farber, How to Learn Any Language

You have the time.

I will help you find it.

Let’s start with the obvious.

Do you spend a lot of time watching television?

Turn it off.

According to the United States Department of Labor, [Americans spend almost 3 hours a day watching television](#). I have seen higher numbers on other sites. But, hey, let’s give our fellow countrymen the benefit of the doubt. Let’s stick with the lower number.

The average American watches television for 3 hours a day.

Consider this:

“Wikipedia took one hundred million hours of volunteer time to create. How do we measure this relative to other uses of time? Well, TV watching, which is the largest use of time, takes two hundred billion hours every year -- in the US alone. To put this in perspective, we spend a Wikipedia worth of time every weekend in the US watching advertisements alone. If we were to forgo our television addiction for just one year, the world would have over a trillion hours of cognitive surplus to commit to share projects. Imagine what we could do for the world’s grand challenges with a trillion hours of focused attention.”

- Peter Diamandis in, Abundance

If you are watching an average of 3 hours of television daily, you have *all* the time you need to learn a new language. You could close this book right now and use this tip alone to learn Latin, or any other language.

But... you like watching television. You have favorite shows you can't miss!

Fine. Record them. Take one day a week. Watch them. Have fun.

During the other six days of the week, however, leave the T.V. off. Study Latin instead. Study 3 hours a day.

3 hours a day, 6 days a week, equals 18 hours a week. Those 18 hours turn into 72 hours a month. 72 hours a month equals 900 hours a year! (By the way, I am giving you two weeks off a year. You're welcome. 50 weeks x 18 hours equals 900 hours.)

In Michael Masterson's book, The Pledge, he states that you need roughly 1,000 hours in any subject to become proficient. Simply by turning the T.V. off, you could become proficient in Latin... in one year.

Cut	Day	Week	Month	Year
<i>Television</i>	<i>3 hours</i>	<i>18 hours</i>	<i>72 hours</i>	<i>900 hours</i>

You just found 900 hours a year! Use those hours to become proficient in Latin. You could stop here and you would surpass most Americans. But, guess what? There is more time available in your day.

Do you spend a lot of time surfing the Net?

Stop surfing the internet foolishly. Stop watching YouTube videos of cute kittens. Stop watching videos of goats that scream like humans. Stop watching dumb videos.

According to [one study](#), the average American now spends 23 hours a week online. Let's assume much of that time is productive, and slash it. The average American spends 10 unproductive hours a week online. Fair enough?

1.6 hours a day equals 10 hours a week. 10 hours a week equals 40 hours a month, which in turn, becomes 500 hours a year.

Cut	Day	Week	Month	Year
<i>Television</i>	<i>3 hours</i>	<i>18 hours</i>	<i>72 hours</i>	<i>900 hours</i>
<i>Internet</i>	<i>1.6 hours</i>	<i>10 hours</i>	<i>40 hours</i>	<i>500 hours</i>
Total	4.6 hours	28 hours	112 hours	1,300 hours!

Remember, it only takes 1,000 hours of concentrated effort to become proficient in a language. You could move *beyond* “proficient in Latin” in just *one year*!

But, we are *not* done!

Do you spend a lot of time in the car?

According to Anne Lutz Fernandez in her book, [Carjacked: The Culture of the Automobile and its Effect on our Lives](#), Americans spend 18 and a half hours a week in their cars! That’s more than 2 and a half hours in the car... everyday!

I am always amazed how well versed my students are in pop culture and in pop music. Now I know why. It’s because they are studying pop music nearly 20 hours a week!

Turn the radio off. Life is too short to busy your brain with trouble in the Middle East or with dumb pop music. You can catch up later. There will *always* be trouble in the Middle East and there will *always* be dumb pop music.

Before we run the numbers, let’s assume a *lower* number just to be safe. Let’s say you spend only 2 hours in your car every day.

Cut	Day	Week	Month	Year
<i>Television</i>	<i>3 hours</i>	<i>18 hours</i>	<i>72 hours</i>	<i>900 hours</i>
<i>Internet</i>	<i>1.6 hours</i>	<i>10 hours</i>	<i>40 hours</i>	<i>500 hours</i>
<i>Drive Time</i>	<i>2 hours</i>	<i>12 hours</i>	<i>48 hours</i>	<i>600 hours</i>
Total	6.6 hours	40 hours	160 hours	2,000 hours!

In case you forgot, it only takes 1,000 hours of concentrated effort to become proficient in a language. You could move *way* beyond “proficient in Latin” in just *one year*!

Yet, there is at least one more action you could take to propel your knowledge of Latin.

Warning: You are not going to like this one.

You could get out of bed earlier.

Get started first thing in the morning. No more sleeping in. Start rising early.

Hey! Don’t put the book down! Let me explain.

For most of my life, I was not an early riser. In fact, I was the polar opposite of an early riser. I *loved* sleeping late. Actually, I *still* love sleeping late. Were I allowed to do so, I would still sleep until 9 or 10 each morning. I do not, however, allow myself to do this. I deeply regret that I ever slept that late. In fact, I often wonder how much I could have accomplished had I only learned, much younger, the critical habit of rising early.

The Spanish have a saying,

“Al que madruga, Dios le ayuda.”
(*God helps the one who rises early.*)

The famous William Pitt would agree with the Spanish on this one. He once said:

“I would have inscribed on the walls of my house and the curtains of my bed, if you do not rise early, you can excel at nothing.”

Of course, there is also the world famous Benjamin Franklin quote:

“Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.”

If there is a silver bullet to success in any endeavor, I believe *this* is it. Get up early. Get to work.

As I said, I didn’t discover this silver bullet to success until I was well into my twenties. Yet, this simple discovery revolutionized my life. I am far more productive as an early riser than I ever was as a late sleeper.

And... I am not alone.

In his book The Pledge, Michael Masterson writes:

“It wasn’t until I hit my thirties that I came to understand the value of waking up early. I was bringing home the bacon, as they say, having mastered the art of making money. But rising at 8:30 every morning left me no time to accomplish other goals. So I started setting my alarm for one minute earlier every day.

Soon I was up at 8 a.m.... then 7:30... then 6:30... and, eventually, at one point in my career, 5:30. (These days, I wake up a little later – usually 6:00 or 6:30.)

Rising early has given me the time to write fiction, study Spanish, get in great physical shape, spend more time with my family, and more. Become an early riser yourself, and there’s no telling what you can accomplish.”

- Michael Masterson in, The Pledge

The truth is, sleeping late is a new luxury.

I can hear your questions.

“Are you kidding me? You are going to tell me laziness is a brand new, modern problem?”

Don’t get me wrong. There have been lazy people in every chapter of the world’s history. Still, for most people, I believe that sleeping late is a new luxury.

Think about it. For most of world history, people went to bed with the setting sun and rose with the morning light.

Since the invention of the light bulb it has become easier to stay up late. Often, late nights turn into late mornings.

In his book [At Home: A Short History of Private Life](#), Bill Bryson recommends an experiment.

“This evening, draw the curtains in your home. Turn off every light. Try to live for just fifteen minutes by the light of a single candle. Try reading. Try walking around your home.”

According to Mr. Bryson, it is not easy.

Yet, this was the way of life for our ancestors. They went to bed with the setting sun. They woke with the rising sun. They followed natural patterns. They were not up reading or watching television until eleven at night. They were awake by five or six in the morning.

For our grandparents, it was *early to bed, early to rise*.

Imitate your ancestors. Get to bed at a decent time. Rise early.

Fool yourself into rising early.

Developing the early morning habit may be difficult for you. It was *extremely* difficult for me. Most likely, you will have to develop several routines and habits just to get yourself out of bed in the morning. I did.

I still have to trick myself into getting up early.

I discovered that getting ready the *night before* is the trick. Before going to bed, I set several *traps* for myself.

Here are some of the traps I set to wake myself early:

Trap # 1

Before going to bed, I put my phone, which doubles as my alarm clock, in the kitchen. Keeping my phone, or alarm near me while I sleep is a mistake. It is too easy to hit the snooze button. Instead, when my alarm blares in the morning, I have to get up, walk to the kitchen, and turn it off. This step does not necessarily wake me up. As I said, I *hate* rising early.

Trap # 2

I place bottles of water in the kitchen the night before. When I see them in the morning I remember to start drinking water. Drinking water wakes me up. I need that. Slowly, I begin to wake up. There is still a risk of me crawling back into bed, though.

Trap # 3

Sometimes, before going to bed, I will leave a piece of dark chocolate in the kitchen. I love dark chocolate. As ridiculous as it must seem, seeing that piece of chocolate helps wake me. Usually, this does the trick.

Trap # 4

Before going to bed, I make sure my computer is ready to go. My day starts with writing. I wake up, stagger to the kitchen, turn my alarm off, start drinking water, eat a piece of chocolate, shower, and finally, begin typing. I write every morning from 5 until 7. By 5 am, I am *finally* awake.

My morning routine may seem a bit ridiculous to you. That's fine. It works for me... most of the time. Find what works for you. Develop your own routines.

Power Napping

If you are rising before 5 in the morning, you will need to develop the habit of power napping.

There are many articles on the internet about power napping. Here is a practical site you can use immediately. You can download relaxing tunes to help you relax as you recharge: <http://www.napsounds.com/>

At some point each day, I lay my head down on my desk and sleep for twenty minutes. Before you do this, make sure your alarm is set at some distance away. If you can reach it, you will turn it off... and go right back to sleep. I fell asleep once in my office at school and slept right through one of my afternoon classes. *That* was embarrassing.

If you are used to getting up at *eight* in the morning, and you slowly back that up to *six* in the morning, you will gain an extra **600** hours a year!

Cut	Day	Week	Month	Year
Television	<i>3 hours</i>	<i>18 hours</i>	<i>72 hours</i>	<i>900 hours</i>
Internet	<i>1.6 hours</i>	<i>10 hours</i>	<i>40 hours</i>	<i>500 hours</i>
Drive Time	<i>2 hours</i>	<i>12 hours</i>	<i>48 hours</i>	<i>600 hours</i>
Sleeping in	<i>2 hours</i>	<i>12 hours</i>	<i>48 hours</i>	<i>600 hours</i>
Total	8.6 hours	52 hours	208 hours	2,600 hours!

Tally it up. I've just showed you how to free up **2,600** extra hours this year! That's **65** extra **40** hour work weeks, or nearly **5** extra "working" months! What could you do with that much *extra* time?

Well... among other things, you could learn Latin!

You do not need me to remind you again, but I am going to anyway...

It only takes 1,000 hours of concentrated effort to become proficient in a language.

You have the time. You have more than enough time.

By the way, there is something else you can do to gain even more time. However, I am not able to put a number on this one.

Script each day.

For most of my life, I did not script my days. I would wake up, usually late, feeling behind, and brace myself for whatever the day had decided to throw at me.

Since everyone else was already up, I was usually at their mercy. Often, *they* had the day scripted for me. My day would begin with other people's emergencies.

Let me give you an example. Checking email is a huge temptation for me. I used to check it first thing in the morning. Guess what? No one ever emailed me to say, "Good morning! How are you? I hope you have a great day! Well... see you later!"

No, I always have other people's agendas in my inbox. They have problems they need me to solve. That is fine. I am usually happy to help. The problem was, I would often start working on solving *their* problems. At the end of the day, I would find I had done *nothing* toward my own personal goals. "Maybe tomorrow," I would tell myself.

Then, I began scripting my day.

This radically changed my life. Suddenly, I did not feel the need to respond to other people's emergencies. I no longer check email in the morning. In fact, I refuse to open my inbox until I have completed work toward my major goals for that day. Here is a typical day for me these days:

(**Warning** - this is *extremely* personal. I only put this here to give you some ideas in case you are not sure *how* to script your day. I put this here to help *you*, not to boast.

I hate braggarts, and most especially academic braggarts. Intelligence, like underwear, is great to have. But, please, don't show it off.)

My crazy routine

4am - Wake up, get ready for the day, start drinking water, and start writing. This sentence, for example, showed up at 5:21am. I write from 5:00 to 7:00. I hate writing. I don't feel that I am good at it. For years I waited to write until I had become a better writer. No longer. These days, I don't care. I force myself to write each day, like it or not.

5:30am - Head down to the local coffee shop. I have not fully figured out how to wake up without coffee. I possessed the skill when I was younger. I have lost the skill. Once the coffee wakes me, I begin reading and studying Greek. Just 5 new Greek words a day equals 1,565 new words a year. 5 words times 315 days equals 1,565. Excluding Sunday's leaves me with 315 days a year to work. I never study or work on Sunday.

7:00am - Post the word of the day at the Visual Latin and Visual Greek Facebook pages.

7:30am - Head home to greet my wife and kids, and eat breakfast. Each morning at breakfast, we read a chapter or two from the Bible, sing a few hymns, review a catechism question, and if there is time, I quiz them from [Lingua Latina](#). I speak to them in Latin, and they must respond in Latin. We pray for a bit, and then I am off to school. We tried to do all of this in the evening years ago, but our evenings are not nearly as predictable as our mornings. *Ergo*, we switched to mornings.

8:30 - 3:00pm - I am at school. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, I teach at New Hope Academy in Franklin, TN. New Hope Academy is a school for children whose families are struggling financially. Many of these families would never be able to afford a private education. Stop by if you are ever in Franklin, Tennessee.

I also teach online Latin and Greek classes. All in all, I end up teaching, or working every day until 5pm.

5pm - 9pm is family time. I shut everything down. No phones, no computers. Our evenings are actually too busy for me to work anyway. My children are enrolled in local evening classes. We race around town many evenings. My wife and I have still not decided if this is a good thing, but, there it is.

9pm - After my kids have gone to bed, I start a fairly predictable evening routine. Sleeping in is a *very* bad thing for me. I get so much work done in the morning, I can't afford to sleep in. Laugh if you like, but here is the list of things I do before going to bed.

First, I clean the kitchen, if I need to. I work in the kitchen while answering emails. I stand up, because at this point I am tired. If I sit down, I sleep.

Second, I fill water bottles for the next morning. I then put these in an obvious place so that I will remember to start drinking water first thing in the morning.

Third, I respond to emails, voicemails, forum posts, and Facebook comments. I have a bad habit. I really like to go above and beyond for my students. If I start answering emails first thing in the morning, I will spend too much time on each email. I want to go to bed by 10pm. This forces me to respond succinctly. If the email requires a longer response, I may save it until the morning and turn it into a blog post.

When I finish responding to emails, I will do one of two things. If I am exhausted, I will go straight to bed. This usually sparks a destructive chain of events the next morning. I know it will. Sometimes, I am so tired, I don't care.

If I have the energy, I complete my evening routine.

Fourth, I make sure I know where my car keys are. This keeps me from searching for them in the dark morning. I am no good at searching in the dark. By the way, do you know what a *shin* is? A *shin* is a tool for finding furniture in the dark.

Fifth, I respond to annoying correspondence like bills. I hate paying bills. When it comes to paying bills, I follow the old adage, "Leave them wanting more."

Sixth, I shave. I hate shaving. If I could get away with it, I would look like a Middle Eastern patriarch at this point. I would look like this for no good reason. (Laziness, after all, is *not* a good reason.) To combat my resistance to shaving, I try to make the experience pleasurable. I do this by listening to something I have been looking forward to, usually a favorite podcast. These days I am listening to one to the following:

[the History of English](#),
[the History of Rome](#)
www.slowgerman.com.

Seventh, I plan. When I am on my game, I jot down a few things I am grateful for in my journal, and plan the next day.

10pm - Exhausted, I crash for the night. Sometimes, I fall asleep reading. Usually, I can average two sentences before I'm gone. I've been reading the same book for over six months. Heh.

I've been using this schedule with minor adjustments for a few years now. The effect has been remarkable. I have accomplished more in the past few years than I did in the previous decade. I wish I had discovered the power of scripting my day years before. Oh well. As the Chinese proverb says,

“The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The next best time is now.”

Even better, Mark Twain once said,

“I wish I had all the time I have wasted in my life so that I could waste it all over again.”

What about you?

You now know where to find extra time in your day... a lot of extra time.

You have decided to learn Latin.

To accomplish this, you know you are going to need some specific goals.

It's time to get practical.

What *exactly* should your goal look like?

Vague goals equal vague results. Let's get specific.

There is more than one way to skin Latin. Or... something like that.

First, pace yourself through the Visual Latin series. One lesson a week will take you through the entire series in two years. Follow the recommendations and you will be reading the Gospels in Latin by the end of the course.

Second, If you want to jolt your new goal, read [Lingua Latina](#) as you watch the videos. Visual Latin will teach you roughly 1200 new Latin words. Lingua Latina will teach you another 1800 new words. Together, these two are a *powerful* combination.

Finish both courses and you will be able to read both the Vulgate as well as classical Roman authors.

If you want to completely dominate Latin, add a **third** piece to the equation. In addition to Visual Latin and [Lingua Latina](#), set a goal to read one Latin grammar a month. Does that sound boring? It should. It sounds boring because it *is* boring. Does it work? Yes.

In two years, you will have, watched over one hundred instructional Latin videos, read a novel in Latin ([Lingua Latina](#)), and read 24 Latin grammars.

Will this move you toward your goal of learning Latin? Duh.

According to the Washington Post, one quarter of Americans [will read no books this year](#).

The rest of us will read 5 or 6 books. If you read 1 Latin book this year, you will be ahead of most students. If you read 12 Latin books this year, you will have caught up to most Latin teachers! In fact, if you combine Visual Latin, [Lingua Latina](#) and a Latin grammar a month, you may be qualified to *become* a Latin teacher!

You now have a goal. It is a specific goal. You want to learn Latin in two years. You know exactly what you need to do to reach this goal.

There is, however, a problem. You are going to forget your goal.

Are you really going to forget your goal?

You will. Count on it. Our lives are busy. We get distracted.

You need reminders. Personally, I have to write *everything* down. My memory is getting so bad, I will soon be able to plan my own surprise parties.

Remember Wile E. Coyote? He was hungry. That hunger reminded him of the goal. His stomach kept him going.

You will not get hungry when you skip Latin. You will forget the goal. You need reminders.

Here is what I recommend.

Post your new goal in an obvious place. Post it where you will see it every day.

Write your goal on the bathroom mirror with a dry erase marker. Set an alarm on your phone to remind you. Write a reminder to yourself, then tape the reminder to the top of your desk, the top of your laptop, or the top of your sister's head. Post a note on

the wall next to your bed. Create a bookmark with your goals written on it. Use this bookmark as you read. Change your password to LearnLatin2015, or something like that. Every time you type a password, you will remember your goal.

I start each morning on my computer. As you know, I write for several hours each morning. When I open my computer, my goals pop up first. Without this, I would forget. I would get distracted.

Get creative. Create your own reminders. Just be sure you post your goal. Don't allow yourself to forget. Don't lose sight of the target.

Carry a “vade mecum” at all times.

“*Vade mecum*” is Latin for “*go with me*”. In ancient times, and medieval times, a “*vade mecum*” was a book that students and scholars always carried. If they found themselves with sudden free time, perhaps waiting in line for jousting tickets, they could use that time to study. Imitate them. Always have something with you that you can study.

The smart phone, the iPad, or any tablet, is the new “*vade mecum*”. Using these devices, you can carry Visual Latin with you wherever you go. Carry digital flashcards, [Lingua Latina](#), or the Latin grammar you are reading.

Your *vade mecum* doesn't have to be digital. Carry a physical copy of [Lingua Latina](#) with you. Carry the Latin grammar you are plowing through this month. Carry flash cards. These days, I have Greek flash cards in my car. When I am stuck sitting at yet another traffic light, I learn a few new Greek words.

Stay Hungry!

You now have a specific goal. You have reminders. But, we are not done. You need something else to reach your goal. You need a deadline.

Coyote knew he needed to eat...now! Hunger drove him. Hunger will not drive you, unless it is intellectual hunger. Deadlines give you a sense of urgency. They provide *artificial* hunger. Like your main goals, post your deadlines somewhere obvious. You need reminders. Humans are forgetful. Have I already mentioned that?

A word of caution....

Announce your new goal. Be careful with this one, though. Announce your goal *only* to friends who will support you.

Do *not* announce your goal to everyone.

People will deride you. They will try to pull you back down to their level. You are a threat to them. How? You are doing something they are afraid to do. It is easier for them to drag you down than it is for them to rise with you.

On the other extreme, there are people who will nag you and pester you about your goal. They will bring it up frequently, wondering aloud when you are going to *finally* reach your goal. They will pressure you for results. Of course, they themselves would not *dare* attempt what you have set out to accomplish.

Announce your goals, but, be careful to whom you announce your goals. Be *very* careful.

A you prepared to change your reputation?

Everyone knows what Coyote wants. *Everyone*. No one even bothers asking. He appears on screen, and you know what he is doing. You know what he wants.

He has a reputation.

You need a similar reputation. Become known as the hardest working student in your class. You do not have to be the best and the brightest. I certainly wasn't. Don't let that bother you. Perhaps you are not a language *hare*. Be a language *tortoise*.

"They taught us the fable of the tortoise and the hare so early, most of us dismissed it as a children's tale and ignored the powerful lesson it contains: Others may be brighter. Others may learn quicker and retain more. Yet whosoever keeps on plodding relentlessly toward the goal of mastering another language, though his gifts be dim, stands a better chance than the unmotivated genius whose dazzle ignited so much envy in high-school Spanish class. Harnessing your hidden moments, those otherwise meaningless scraps of time you'd never normally think of putting to any practical use, and using them for language study - even if it's no more than fifteen, ten, or five seconds and at a time - can turn you into a triumphant tortoise."

- Barry Farber in How to Learn Any Language

Don't try to become the *brightest*. Become the *most diligent*.

Do your friends know you as a lazy student? Do they know you as a time waster? Lose that reputation.

You now know what you need to do to learn Latin.

You have set a *specific* goal.

You have *posted* that goal in an obvious place.

You have set a deadline.

You have announced your goals, *carefully*.

You are not going to waste time.

You are going to seize the “hidden” moments.

But, perhaps you are wondering....

What if I don't hit my deadline?

Who cares? Set another deadline. As the Mayans taught us, if you don't finish your work, it's not the end of the world.

You are the one setting the deadlines. If you don't reach them, set another one. Go for progress, not perfection. You will never achieve perfection. Don't even bother. Just keep moving forward.

Need a little motivation? Reward yourself for hitting deadlines. Take one day off each week. Celebrate your success. Go to a new restaurant you have wanted to try. Watch a movie you have been looking forward to. Hang out with good friends. Rest. Relax. Reward yourself.

After a day off, however, get back to work!

But... What if others try to keep me from my goal?

They will. Count on it. Prepare for this. Charles Haddon Spurgeon once said,

“Learn the power of saying ‘no’. It is worth more than learning Latin.”

Let your friends know that your new goal is important to you. Ask them to respect that. If they are true friends, they *will* understand. If they refuse to respect you and choose instead to mock and prod you, perhaps you need new friends.

What if I can't reach my goal?

Unlike Wile E. Coyote, you do not have a scriptwriter, and an animator keeping your goal just out of reach. He will *never* catch the Road Runner. If he ever did, the show would fail.

You, however, *can* reach your goal. The only thing that will truly keep you from your goal is lack of determination. You can do this. Promise yourself that you will cross the finish line. Advance a little bit each day.

Go.

Move.

Do.

Refuse to quit.

Chapter III

“Patience and perseverance have a magical effect before which difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish.”

- John Quincy Adams

You have decided to learn Latin.

You have set a goal to learn Latin within two years.

You have identified extra hours in your day.

You know that you must develop a new, hard working reputation.

It is time to take the most important step.

Determine to finish!

Wile E. Coyote teaches us *determination*. He is absolutely determined. *Nothing* can stop him. He will capture Road Runner, or he will die trying.

Determination, defined by the old master Noah Webster is: Firmness of purpose; Resoluteness.

You have heard other definitions for the word *determination*. You have heard it called *persistence, gumption, tenacity, resolve, or grit*. I even heard one author call it “stick-to-it-iveness”.

It is good to remember what President Calvin Coolidge taught us about determination:

“Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.”

Determination comes from two Latin words, *de*, meaning *from* and *terminus*, meaning *the end, or boundary line*.

In ancient Rome, *Terminus* was the god of boundaries and landmarks.

If you are determined, you have decided, that, no matter what, you will *cross* the finish line. You will *cross* the boundary. You will face *Terminus*.

But, what *exactly* does that look like when you are studying Latin?

You may pick up a book written in Latin and stare at the words. You have no idea what the words mean. You want to change that. You want to understand the words on the page in front of you.

You are excited about the prospect of learning Latin. It can't be all that hard, can it?

In one of his books, Winston Churchill describes one of Britain's last great cavalry charges. He said that it was beautiful. There were banners snapping in the wind as they rode, the thunder of horse hooves beneath them, the excitement of the charge.

Then they hit the enemy. The beauty became a brutal, messy, grueling business.

Learning a new language is a bit like that battle charge. You are excited. The new language has an exotic, evocative appeal. You absolutely cannot wait to begin. You are eager to learn that first word, or that new phrase. Nothing can stop you. Banners in the wind, you are riding toward the enemy.

Then you hit the line. You hit the grammar book. You hit the difficult concept. You hit the myriad of words. You hit the tricky pronunciation.

The beautiful, glorious, fairy tale beginning becomes a brutal, messy, grueling business.

There are *thousands* of new words to learn. There are elusive words that simply refuse to settle into your memory.

There are difficult grammar rules that, hated by everyone, simply *must* be learned.

In Latin, there are an infernal amount of endings that you must master. Fail to learn them and you risk failing to learn the language. In fact, some teachers have a different name for the endings. They call them *terminations*. Like the word *determination*, *termination* comes from the Latin word *terminus*, which, as you know, means: *the end*.

Perhaps *termination* is a better word for the Latin endings. After all, it is usually the confusing Latin *terminations* that *terminates* the Latin student's *determination*.

Facing the terminators.

You have hit the line. You are in the battle. Others around you will fall. Your classmates will grow tired of the work. Soon, they will complain about the teacher, the book, the pronunciation, the endings, or the sheer difficulty of learning Latin. They will complain about any number of things. Perhaps the terminations will terminate them. They will quit.

Don't join them.

I have taught Latin in the classroom for years. My students frequently give up when it gets hard. They may still be in class, but mentally... they check out.

This may also happen in your class. Resist the temptation to join them. Do not quit. Persist. Look at your goals again. Remember your initial excitement. Determine to cross the finish line. The payoff is enormous.

Troy was a ten year old boy in one of my classes at New Hope Academy in Franklin, Tennessee. He was no different than the other students. He liked to play, laugh at jokes, and bolt outside the moment the doors opened.

In one respect, though, he was *very* different.

He and his parents were determined. They saw the value of learning Latin. They insisted that he work hard in my classes. He did. *Before* entering the seventh grade, he was able to read the New Testament gospels in Latin. You read that right. By the end of *sixth* grade, this 12 year old *was reading* from the Vulgate.

When he applied to middle school, the teachers and administrators were impressed. They allowed him to test out of two years of high school Latin. At his new school, all students are *required* to take Latin. Not Troy. He will be studying German, Spanish or Chinese.

Troy was not the only student in his elementary class. What about the other twenty-five students? Do they get to skip Latin in their new schools? Unfortunately, the answer is *no*.

Some of them *did* do very well in Latin. Some of them will find Spanish or French much easier because they learned Latin.

Too many of the students, however, quit.

Initially, my students are all excited, just as you are right now. Soon, however, the truth dawns upon them. They hit the battle line. They realize that Latin is difficult. Instead of bracing themselves, and determining to push on... too many choose to complain - and quit.

Not you.

You will have to work *hard* to reach this goal. Remember Wile E. Coyote. He rose early. He got to work. From sunrise to sunset, he pursued his goal. Imitate him.

Pursue your goal. Work *hard*. Work *very hard*. Don't wait for easy. In this life, everything worth accomplishing is hard. You might as well get used to it.

Do not let wild horses drag you away.

When you look closely at the Latin roots of the English word *distraction*, you will notice something interesting.

The word has a stronger meaning than the dictionary definition.

The Latin prefix *dis* means: *away*. The rest of the word, *tract*, comes from the Latin verb *trahere* meaning: *to pull*, or *to drag*.

If you look the word up in any dictionary, you will get a definition like this one: Distraction: the act of diverting someone's attention.

But the Latin etymology shows us a *stronger* side. The word *distract* literally means: *to drag away*.

Distractions *drag* you away.

In life, many forces will *drag* you away from your goals. Unless you stay clearly focused... friends, television, video games, social events, sports, wild horses, or any number of things will drag you away.

Resist the temptation. Remember your goal. Stay on task.

When you feel the tug away from your goals, remember the words of the great Winston Churchill:

“Never give in - never, never, never, never, in nothing great or small, large or petty, never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense. Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy.”

What if I lose my motivation?

Do not wait for motivation. Motivation follows action.

Motivation comes from the Latin verb *movere*, meaning, to move.

If you know anything about basic physics you know that action *precedes* movement. An object at rest tends to stay at rest until acted upon by some outside force.

Action, on the other hand, comes from the latin word *agere*. This verb has multiple meanings: *drive, urge, do, go, or act*.

Look at those words. None of those words are waiting. They are moving. You, too, must take action.

Action *precedes* motivation. Do not wait for motivation! Motivation will come. Go! Start! Motivation *follows* action.

What if I encounter obstacles?

You will. Remember Wile E. Coyote. Did he encounter obstacles? Constantly. Was he deterred by those obstacles? Never. He just kept going. Imitate him. Push through.

When you encounter obstacles, crawl over them. Push through them. Find a way around them. If you cannot find a way, make a way. Do you really expect this path to be easy?

Listen to the foreigners around you who speak English. Was the process of learning English easy for them, or was it hard for them? It was hard. I promise. English is bewildering. Don't believe me? Read this poem to get some idea of just how difficult the English language is:

WHY ENGLISH IS SO HARD

We'll begin with a box, and the plural is boxes,
But the plural of ox becomes oxen, not oxes.
One fowl is a goose, but two are called geese,
Yet the plural of moose should never be meese.
You may find a lone mouse or a nest full of mice,
Yet the plural of house is houses, not hice.

If the plural of man is always called men,
Why shouldn't the plural of pan be called pen?
If I speak of my foot and show you my feet,
And I give you a boot, would a pair be called beet?
If one is a tooth and a whole set are teeth,
Why shouldn't the plural of booth be called beeth?

Then one may be that, and three would be those,
Yet hat in the plural would never be hose,
And the plural of cat is cats, not cose.
We speak of a brother and also of brethren,
But though we say mother, we never say methren.
Then the masculine pronouns are he, his and him,
But imagine the feminine: she, shis and shim!

There is no egg in eggplant nor ham in hamburger;
neither apple nor pine in pineapple.
English muffins weren't invented in England.
Quicksand works slowly, boxing rings are square, and a guinea
pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.

If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught?
If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat?

In what other language do people recite at a play and play at a recital?
We ship by truck but send cargo by ship.
We have noses that run and feet that smell.
We park in a driveway and drive in a parkway.
And how can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise
man and a wise guy are opposites?
You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language in which your
house can burn up as it burns
down, in which you fill in a form by filling it out,
and in which an alarm goes off by going on.

And, in closing, if Father is Pop, how come Mother's not Mop?

English is bewildering. It drives foreigners crazy. Have you met foreigners who speak English? Of course you have. Was it easy for them? No. They pushed on. They learned English in spite of the obstacles.

Like a foreigner who learns English, you *can* learn Latin. It is *not* an impossible task. It is within your reach. You simply must *determine* to learn Latin.

What if my determination offends those around me?

You can't make everyone happy. It's impossible. Don't even try. Be kind. Be happy. But don't try to make everyone around you happy. Be firm. Stick to your goals.

Remember the words of General George Patton:

“You need to overcome the tug of people against you as you reach for high goals.”

If someone is offended because you are taking the time and effort to change your old habits and are trying to improve your life, calmly remind them that this is important to you. Then... proceed. Chances are, they will respect you. You may even inspire them to join you.

Chapter IV

“Inaction breeds doubt and fear. Action breeds confidence and courage. If you want to conquer fear, do not sit home and think about it. Go out and get busy.”

- Dale Carnegie

Wile E. Coyote taught us to take action. He moves. He does not wait until conditions are perfect. In fact, he doesn't seem to care what the conditions are. He wakes up each morning, jumps out of bed, and launches out after the goal.

Imitate him.

The English word *action* comes from the Latin verb *agere*. This verb means: *I do, I drive, I urge, or I go*.

Action is the act of *doing something* to achieve an aim, or a goal.

Action means that you *do* something. You feel the *drive* to *do* something. You feel the *urge* to *do* something. You feel that you absolutely must *go*. You must take *action*.

Wile E. Coyote starts each day with action. No waiting around. Must... eat... that... road runner!

Life rewards action.

There is an old saying, “*Talkers are not good doers*.” You already know this. You have friends who constantly talk about what they are *going* to do. They are *going* to exercise, write a book, make a movie, master a language, or run a marathon. Chances are... a year from now, they will still be talking about what they are *going* to do.

Don't be a talker. Don't stand around talking about what you are going to do. Instead, take action! Just do it! Life really *does* reward action.

All doors are closed to you until you start pushing. So... start pushing! You will soon discover that all doors are *not* closed. On the contrary, you will find many doors open easily.

The Romans phrased it another way:

“Fortes fortuna adiuvat.”
(*Fortune favors the bold.*)

Guess what? On our planet, fortune really *does* favor the bold. Boldly take action toward your goals. Doors will open. Try it. You will see.

Ok. You get it. You are ready to take action. But, when it comes to learning Latin, what *exactly* does action look like?

Glad you asked. Here are three practical actions you can take *right now*.

#1: Up and at ‘em!

Get started first thing in the morning. This starts the night before. Trick yourself into getting up early.

Set your Latin book out the night before. If you are reading [Lingua Latina](#) or a Latin grammar, be sure it is ready to go. Leave it in a conspicuous place. As soon as you see it in the morning you will remember your goal. This will keep you on task.

Make sure that before anyone else is awake you have already moved toward your goal.

Remember, before other people begin scripting your day with their emergencies, you must spend 20% of your working time on your number 1 goal.

One warning. Be patient with yourself. It took years for me to develop the habit of rising early.

#2: Identify your hidden moments.

You have more extra time in your day than you think you have.

You have decided to take action. You have decided to get out of bed early. That habit alone gives you *months* of extra time.

Now it is time to learn to harness your *hidden* moments.

The famous, Napoleon Bonaparte, once said, “The reason I beat the Austrians is, they did not know the value of five minutes.”

Do not despise the power of five minutes. Instead, learn to harness those little 5 minute blocks of time. We all have wasted space in our days. Find a way to mine those wasted minutes.

Do you ever find yourself standing in line at the bank, at the coffee shop, or at the post office? Redeem that time! Carry a stack of flash cards. While waiting, drill yourself with those flash cards! Put the [Quizlet app](#) on your smartphone. Then, quiz yourself with the [Visual Latin flashcards](#). Using primitive technology (flash cards) or cutting edge technology (a smart phone), you can boost your knowledge while standing in line!

#3: Turn your car into a university on wheels.

Instead of listening to the radio while you drive, learn something. Listen to audio books or audio language training programs. According to success guru Brian Tracy, if you have a 20 minute commute, in three years, you can earn the equivalent of a two-year college degree by listening to audio books and training courses... while *sitting* in your car!

Don't do it everyday...

There is one exception. Take a day off. On Sunday, stop taking action. Sleep a bit later, if you can. Don't fill every five minutes with action. Rest. Relax. Ride a bike. Read a favorite book. Play. Meditate. Enjoy yourself. Recharge.

Do not discount this advice. If you are working hard every day, you will need a day of rest.

“But..., how do I change old habits?”

First of all, do not despise small beginnings. Start changing just a little each day.

The Japanese have a word in their language for small, daily, incremental improvements: Kaizen (改善). I like the idea of Kaizen. Kaizen reminds us that we don't have to do it all at once. We can grow.

I hate writing. I could never get going, because I thought I had to sit down and write for an hour, or two. Then, one day, I decided to sit and write for just five minutes each day. I liked that. Five minutes? I could do that!

I started writing every day... for five minutes each day.

Once my five minute writing routine became a habit, I started writing for ten minutes each day, then fifteen minutes, then half an hour. These days, I start each day by writing for two to three hours. It took me over two years to get into the habit of writing several hours a day. These days, I watch the clock restlessly wishing I had more than three hours to write each day.

Build up. Study a little each day. Soon you may find yourself wishing you had more time to study and read Latin.

It takes a long time to develop good habits. Start small. Build up.

“But..., what if I fail?”

Who cares?

When you were learning to ride a bike, you wobbled and fell off. Did you quit? I doubt it. You got back on. You learned.

As kids, we know how to do this. We are not afraid of failure. As adults, we learn to fear what others will think. We don't want to fail publicly, so we refuse to try.

Our educational system, through its system of tests and quizzes teaches us to *fear* failure. In fact, we should *embrace* failure.

You learned to ride a bike, because you were willing to risk failure.

Be willing to risk failure again. Be eager to risk failure! *That* is how you learn!

Go to YouTube. Watch any Visual Latin video. Read the comments. The trolls hate me. They don't like my pronunciation of Latin. They don't like the word order I used in the videos. According to the haters, I failed.

So... Did I quit? No way!

People throw rocks at things that shine.

Will you fail if you try? Possibly. Will you fail if you don't try? Definitely.

“But..., what if I loose my motivation?”

You will. Count on it.

Don't wait around for motivation. Motivation follows action.

Motivation is from the Latin word *movere*, meaning, *to move*.

Action is from the Latin word *agere*, meaning, among other things, *to go*.

Just go. Move.

The motivation will come. Motivation *follows* action.

Trust me. The motivation will come.

Chapter V

“Do not wait; the time will never be ‘just right.’ Start where you stand, and work with whatever tools you may have at your command, and better tools will be found as you go along.”

- George Herbert

Wile E. Coyote is a fanatic about tools. He orders a lot of tools from the Acme company. Acme loves him.

However, *and this is critically important*, he never allows shiny, new tools to distract him from the goal. His ultimate goal is to *eat that road runner*. He never forgets this. The tools, though helpful, remain *tools*. They are the *means* to the desired *end*.

What can we learn from Coyote about tools?

Simple. Use whatever tool you need to get *to* your goal, but, don’t let the tool distract you *from* your goal.

My students have the latest and greatest tools.

They have iPods, iPads, and idon’t know what else.

For someone who grew up in the 1980s, today’s tools are mind blowing. The kings and queens, presidents and prime ministers of my childhood didn’t have access to the information kids carry in their pockets these days.

And what do the kids do with these tools?

They slice fruit and throw birds at pigs. When I was a kid, fruit was safe and birds were not angry. Times change, I suppose.

I watched my students. I interviewed them. What are they doing with these tools? For starters, they are forgetting that these devices are tools. For many of them, just *getting* the tool has become the *goal*.

All of my students want the latest and greatest devices. When I ask them *why* they want these devices, they rarely provide an answer. They only know that they want the latest and greatest devices.

They are like the dog who chases the fire truck. What *exactly* is he going to do if he catches it?

My students have no real plan for their devices. Once they possess the tool, they use it [to do really dumb things](#).

Immersion is not as easy as you think it is.

When I was learning German in the 1980s I had a major advantage, I lived in Germany. I was surrounded by the German language. Immersion was going to be easy.

Or, so I thought.

I was surprised to learn that immersion was *not* easy. I had to work at it. Even though we were *in Germany*, I had to seek out opportunities to practice. My German friends were learning English, and their English was far better than my German. They wanted to practice English with me. I wanted to be a German student. My German friends wanted me to be an English teacher.

Clearly, immersion was not going to be as easy as I thought.

In Germany, I had several American friends who never learned a word of German. They spent time with other Americans, shopped with other Americans, played with other Americans, and went to church with other Americans. They spoke only English.

Unfortunately, it is *easy* to live in another country, and yet never learn the language.

This is especially true if you speak English.

Most of the world is trying to learn English. If you are an English speaker and you are trying to learn another language, you face a distinct disadvantage.

It is difficult to practice your target language when the natives refuse to help. My mother once attempted to speak Dutch in a grocery store in Holland. The cashier looked right at her and said, in perfect English, "Miss, let's speak English. After all, my English is far better than your Dutch."

I realized quickly that if I wanted to learn German, I would have to do most of the work myself.

Shortly after we arrived in Germany, someone (I no longer remember who) gave my family an audio German series. I wore the series out.

These were the days before the internet. Language learners basically had four tools:

books

cassette tapes

classes

travel

For most people, travel was out. It was, and still is, expensive. This left three tools:

books

cassette tapes

classes

travel

Back then, classes were usually expensive. Actually, they still are. This left most language learners with two tools.

books

cassette tapes

classes

travel

That was about it.

Things have changed. You kids have got it so easy these days. Just look at the tools you have now.

Tool # 1: Internet

When Johann Gutenberg invented his printing press in 1453, the world changed. Books, once the treasures of kings and queens, are now available to everyone. The

rapid spread of information shattered old strangle holds. Information flowed to the masses.

It has happened again. The internet revolution could easily be called the “Second Gutenberg Revolution”. Thanks to the internet, we now have more information at our fingertips than any civilization in history.

We are no longer in a quest for information. The information is there. There is an abundance. In fact, there is an over abundance.

Instead of *searching* for information, chances are, you are *sorting* through too much information. Instead of looking for teachers, you now look for *interesting* teachers. Instead of looking for material, you look for *good* material.

Tool # 2: YouTube

Sometime during high school it hit me that I could learn almost anything if I put my mind to it. I would go to the library and check out any instructional videos I could find. Usually, the selection was small. In one library, after watching almost every instructional video in their collection, I watched a series of instructional videos on the art of making pizzas.

The spirit was willing, but the content was weak.

This changed with the invention of YouTube.

You have more instructional videos than you could ever watch. Whatever your field of study, you have access to videos... for free!

When I decided to learn Greek, I knew I would need to start with the alphabet. I simply went to You Tube, and entered, “Greek alphabet”. Instantly I had a dozen or so videos at my fingertips. The adventure had begun.

Of course, many of the videos are poorly produced and the quality is low, but... who cares? After all, the videos are free. You can’t really expect Parisian quality when you are shopping at Wal-Mart. Besides, I was after content, not beautiful production.

Tool # 3: The Library

You may be surprised by how much is available for free from your local library. I was member of a library, that, for a while, had an agreement with Rosetta Stone Language systems. For a year, I had access to all of the Rosetta Stone Online Systems for free!

Your library will have books, audio programs, and even access to downloadable materials. If they do not have what you are looking for, you will likely be able to order it through inter-library loan.

Tool # 4: Google Books

Google is busily scanning the world's public domain books for the rest of us to read, absolutely free. Google books is a treasure. Search here before searching anywhere. If you have an internet connection, the libraries of the world have come to you.

Tool # 5: Amazon

Can't find it at the library? Can't find it on YouTube? Can't find it in Google Books? Find it cheap on Amazon. I have many hard to find Latin books that I was able to find cheap on Amazon. In fact, I have *too many* Latin books from Amazon, but that's another story.

Tool # 6: iTunes, iPods, iPads & i am not going to list them all...

Remember that German audio series someone gifted my family? That was an expensive set of cassettes. I am glad I did not have to pay for them. As I recall, it cost several hundred dollars. I was a kid. There is no way I could afford the series. This was typical of most language learning systems at the time. They were expensive.

When I was learning German, I could carry one tape in a bulky portable cassette player. If I was on a trip, listening in the car, for example, and I forgot the rest of the series, I was limited to about an hour of German instruction. If I decided to bring the entire series along, we had to rent a trailer. Ok. It wasn't *that* large, but it was large. The entire course was the size of a large briefcase. If I brought the "briefcase" course along, I would have, at best, 20 or 30 hours of content with me.

Late in 2001, everything changed. Apple computers publicly announced their portable music digital player, the iPod.

A 16GB iPod can hold roughly 4000 songs. To anyone who lived before the invention of the iPod, that number is staggering. Remember, we were carrying bulky cassette players with *one hour* of audio content.

For language learners, there is more here than meets the ear. After all, an iPod that can hold 4000 songs can also hold hundreds of hours of language training.

You may remember that it takes roughly 1000 hours to achieve proficiency in a language. You could become proficient in a language using only an iPod. You could easily carry an immersion course in your pocket.

Tool # 7: Podcasts

Podcasts are free audio programs. There are thousands of podcasts covering thousands of subjects. And, get this... all podcasts are free!

There are scores of language learning podcasts. You could learn a language for free! Podcasts are by far my favorite ways to study these days. Almost everything I know about Spanish and Greek has come directly from podcasts.

Use podcasts to turn dead drive time into learning time. Remember this chart?

Cut	Day	Week	Month	Year
<i>Television</i>	<i>3 hours</i>	<i>18 hours</i>	<i>72 hours</i>	<i>900 hours</i>
<i>Internet</i>	<i>1.6 hours</i>	<i>10 hours</i>	<i>40 hours</i>	<i>500 hours</i>
<i>Drive Time</i>	<i>2 hours</i>	<i>12 hours</i>	<i>48 hours</i>	<i>600 hours</i>
<i>Sleeping in</i>	<i>2 hours</i>	<i>12 hours</i>	<i>48 hours</i>	<i>600 hours</i>
Total	8.6 hours	52 hours	208 hours	2,600 hours!

Fill drive time with language podcasts and you could be proficient in a language a year from now!

Do you have chores around the house? Are they quiet chores like cleaning, sweeping, weeding, or folding laundry? Put a podcast in your head! Time to rearrange your closet again? Don't do it without learning! Mowing the yard? Don't do it with out a podcast!

Tool #8: Local Classes

Chances are, someone in town teaches Latin. Sign up. Learning from an expert has its advantages.

Be careful with this one though. Find out the style of teaching the teacher is using. Interview former students. Can they read in Latin? Can they speak Latin? Do they still love Latin?

In his autobiography, Surprised by Joy, C. S. Lewis mentions a few of his language teachers. One teacher drilled him and his fellow students constantly with Latin endings, but, he says, they never got within sight of a Roman author.

His Greek teacher, on the other hand, thrust a copy of Homer into his hands the first day and told him to start reading. It was hard, he says, but years later he looked back on the Latin teacher with disdain, and on the Greek teacher with respect and honor.

Inspired by this incident in Lewis's life, I completely restructured my local classes some years ago. Instead of memorizing all the Latin endings, we simply start reading. We read from day one, slowly working our way through Lingua Latina, by Hans Orberg. We do learn all the endings and all the grammar, but we learn it *as* we read, not *before* we read.

Tool # 9: Online classes

Perhaps no one in town teaches Latin, or perhaps no one in town teaches Latin the way you want to learn it. You could always sign up for online classes. I teach live online Latin classes every week, and there are plenty of other teachers out there who do the same. Scroll down a bit on this page and you will find my classes: <http://www.dwanethomas.com/>

Once more, just so you guys don't forget how lucky you are....

What I had back then...	What you have now...
books	books
classes	classes
travel	travel
cassette tapes	the internet
	YouTube
	Google Books
	Amazon
	iTunes, iPods, iPads, etc.
	podcasts
	online classes

I list these tools here, in no particular order, simply to show you what is available. You have far more available than I did when I first started learning languages. We will look at *how* to use each of them to learn Latin in the next few chapters.

“What if I can’t afford to learn a new language?”

When I started this journey years ago, that was a viable question. The question makes no sense anymore. There is now more available than ever, and much of it is free.

Start with free language podcasts. Read everything your library has on the subject. After that, read a book or two on Google books. Once you have mastered free materials, move on to paid materials.

Buy an entry level book, an entry level CD course, or an entry level DVD course. Master those before moving on to higher priced options like a class, or a private tutor.

Before you sign up for a class, or a private tutor, you will know you are committed.

“Can’t I just use books?”

You are trying to learn a language. You are going to need some audio content. If possible, you need a native to imitate. While you can learn to *read* the language, you simply cannot learn to *speak* the language without someone to imitate.

In the case of Latin, there are no natives, so perhaps this is not so important. You could learn to read the language using only books.

“Should I make purchases or just use free material?”

Always use free material until you know for sure you are dedicated. After you have proven your dedication, move on to paid materials. Unfortunately, you can waste a lot of money on language courses.

Chapter VI

“Learning how to learn is life’s most important skill.”

- Jim Rohn

You have already completed one language program.

You spent the first few years of your life listening to your parents. Whether you knew it or not, you were enrolled in a language immersion school.

For the first few years of your life you slept - *a lot*. You sleep as much as 16 hours out of every 24 hours. This left with you with roughly 8 hours a day for language school.

Assuming you were awake for 8 hours out of every 24 hours, you were in language school almost 3,000 hours during your first year on the planet.

You slept less in your second year of life. By the end of your second year of life, you had spent well over 6,000 hours in language school.

Before your third year was complete, you had crossed the legendary [10,000](#) hour threshold.

At age one and a half, you began talking, much to the amusement of your parents.

From age two to age five, you worked out many of the intricacies of your first language. You continued to listen, and you practiced speaking. By 6 years old, you had it. You had become a successful native speaker.

Remember, you spent most of your time in language school *listening*. You did not drill with flash cards. You did not read grammar books. You did not diagram sentences. You learned audibly. You *listened*.

Do it again.

Whenever I begin a new language, I try to carve three hours out of my day. For perhaps an hour a day, I sit and study. For two hours each day, I listen passively. Three hours a day of study (mostly listening) ensures that by year’s end, I will have spent

almost 1,000 hours in the language. The bulk of my time is spent *listening*. To learn Latin well, you must do the same.

Listen to Latin while doing other things.

When will you find time to listen to Latin for two hours?

Easy. Listen while you perform other tasks.

Listen to Latin in the morning, as you are waking up. Listen in the morning as you make the bed, get dressed, and clean your room. (Your parents will love you for this!)

If you have a long car ride to school or to work, listen while you ride.

Listen while doing quiet jobs, like washing the dishes, cleaning the kitchen, or sweeping the floor.

Listen while exercising, working out, walking, or running.

Listen while raking leaves, weeding the garden, or watering the plants.

Listen while walking the dog. Listen while washing the cat. On second thought... perhaps it's best not to listen while washing the cat.

At night, turn on an audio recording of the language. Fall asleep listening to Latin.

By the way... this lesson applies to more than Latin. You could use these techniques to learn *anything*.

Years ago, I would listen to dramatized Shakespeare plays while washing dishes. One day my four year old walked thorough the kitchen, looked at the cassette player and said, "Daddy, those little people in your tape are funny!"

The dwarves were wrong. Don't *whistle* while you work. Listen while you work...

This simple act will radically *propel* your knowledge.

What do I listen to?

This is an easy question to answer for modern languages. There is more than enough available. In fact, so much is available, it's easy to become overwhelmed.

Check out language tapes, CDs or DVDs from the library. Your local library should have enough to get you started. They will at least have the basics.

Download podcasts in your target language. For modern languages, you will never run out of listening material. Thanks to podcasts, you can actually imitate immersion these days. In some languages, like French and Spanish, you could study without spending a dime.

This is *not* the case for Latin. An abundance of *written* Latin is available, more than you could ever read in fact, but until recently, there was almost no audio content available.

This changed in 2011.

In 2011, [Faith Comes By Hearing.com](http://FaithComesByHearing.com) released Biblium.is.

Here you will find the entire New Testament, fully dramatized as an audio book, in Latin, for *free*! Thanks to Biblium.is, you now have access to a *massive* Latin audio book. This is significant. Such an audio book has *never* been available in Latin before.

For Christian students, this is fantastic news. You should be reading the Bible daily anyway. Now you are able to read the Bible *and* learn Latin at the same time.

But, what if you are not a Christian?

You should listen to the New Testament anyway.

Why?

The New Testament has influenced our world profoundly. It is impossible to estimate the impact this book has had in our world. To be ignorant of the New Testament is to be ignorant of [the most influential book on the planet](#).

Just as you cannot fully understand the history of the Middle East without reading the Koran, you simply cannot fully understand the history of our world without some knowledge of the New Testament. Its impact is undeniable.

There are other practical reasons to listen to the New Testament in Latin.

First of all, the free audio version is the *most audio content you will find in Latin*. I have personally scoured the internet looking for audio content in Latin. Until the release of Biblium.is, I was only able to find snippets. Nothing comprehensive was available.

Second, the New Testament is written at, roughly, a 6th grade reading level. This makes it a perfect first book in Latin.

Finally, the New Testament is easily comparable to so many other languages. Do you already speak French? Read the New Testament in Latin and French simultaneously. You will improve your understanding of French *and* learn Latin.

How exactly do I do this?

Simple. Spend an hour or two just listening to one of the four gospels every day. You may understand nothing in the beginning. It doesn't matter. Do it anyway.

In time, you will understand.

By the end of the year, if you do what I recommend in the rest of this book, you will understand *most* of what you hear.

These hours and hours of listening will become the foundation on which you build your knowledge. Remember, as a child you listened to your parents speak your native language for hours. This audio training became the foundation of your native language.

Do it again.

Like the foundation of a building, your knowledge of Latin will lie buried, hidden from view. Upon this foundation, you will build your understanding of the language.

Are there other books I could use?

There are a *few* other audio books I can recommend. None of them are as comprehensive as what you will find at Biblium.is.

My students know that my favorite Latin book is [Lingua Latina](#) by Hans Ørberg. I will discuss this book more in the next chapter. For now, though, you should know that there are several audio versions of the book:

Lingua Latina Per Se Illustrata by Hans Ørberg

[Lingua Latina](#) read by the author himself (Restored Classical pronunciation):
<http://focusbookstore.com/audiofiles.aspx>

[Lingua Latina](#) chapters 1 - 10 (Restored Classical pronunciation):
<http://www.amazon.com/Lingua-Latina-Latine-Chapters-Familia/dp/1585101923>

[Lingua Latina](#): A free reading of the first 8 chapters

<http://commons.wvc.edu/sberard/Lingua%20Latina%20Recordings/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

A partial reading of Lingua Latina (using Ecclesiastical pronunciation):

http://www.johnpiazza.net/svlatin_audio

Cornelia by Mima Maxey

I personally recorded a short graded reader some time ago. Cornelia is the story of a little American girl from the early 1900s. The book, about 80 pages long is free:

https://archive.org/details/MN40039ucmf_6

The audio version of Cornelia, read by me, in Ecclesiastical Latin, is available here:

[http://store.compasscinema.com/products.php?product=Latin-I-Cornelia-%252d-Read-by-Dwane-Thomas-\[Audio\]](http://store.compasscinema.com/products.php?product=Latin-I-Cornelia-%252d-Read-by-Dwane-Thomas-[Audio])

More Books you could *read* in Latin...

Naturally, there are *other* books you could *read* to learn Latin. Unfortunately, only a few of them are audio books.

Here are some of my favorites:

For **Beginners**:

1. [Cornelia](#) by Mima Maxey
2. [Carolus et Maria](#) by Marjorie Fay
3. [Julia](#) by Maud Reed
4. [Lingua Latina](#) by Hans Ørberg

For **Intermediates**:

1. [Ora Maritima](#) by E. A. Sonnenschein
2. [Fabilae Faciles](#) by Francis Ritchie
3. [De America](#), by Herbert Nutting

4. [Lingua Latina](#) by Hans Ørberg
5. [Viri Romae](#) by Charles Llomond

For more **advanced** students:

1. [Gospel of Matthew](#) by St. Matthew
2. [Roma Aeterna](#) by Hans Orberg

When you have finished this list, visit [the Latin Library.com](http://theLatinLibrary.com). There you will find more Latin than you will ever read... and it's all free.

How much time should I spend listening each day?

Personally, I try to spend two hours a day listening to the language I am learning. These days, it's Greek.

If you study three hours a day, by year's end you will have spent almost 1,000 hours in the language. You will be well on your way to proficiency in Latin.

To achieve high fluency levels in Latin you will need to spend 10,000 hours in the language. That amounts to three hours a day for seven years. Of course, you don't have to commit to that number unless you intend to become a Latin teacher, or a time traveller. (There is no reason, by the way, to return to Rome as a time traveller. Chocolate was unknown to the Romans.)

All you need is a high level of proficiency. This requires at minimum 1,000 hours. You could do it all in one year. That would mean three hours a day for one year, two hours a day for two years, or one hour a day for three years. Personally, I like to get things moving by committing to three hours a day.

Can I learn Latin simply by listening?

Honestly, no, you will not learn Latin by simply listening to Latin. I recommend you attack Latin with as many of your five senses as you are able.

You must *hear* Latin, by *listening*.

You must *see* Latin, by *reading*.

You must *feel* Latin, by *speaking* and *writing*.

I have not figured out a way to taste and smell the language.

You need to speak Latin, read Latin, and ultimately, master the grammar of Latin. To do this, you will read books about Latin, you will practice pronouncing Latin, and you will write in Latin. This is all *active* learning.

Listening is *passive* learning. Passive learning is often overlooked by language teachers. Yet, when you were a young child, you listened twice as much as you spoke. You need to do it again. Listen to Latin. Put some earphones in and let the language seep into your head.

As a child, you were a committed passive language learner.

Become a passive learner again. *Listen* to Latin.

Chapter VII

“I find television very educating. Every time somebody turns on the set, I go into the other room and read a book.”

- Groucho Marx

To learn Latin, you must begin reading in Latin.

In order to master Latin you must begin reading. Even a small amount of daily reading makes a huge difference. Don't believe me? Take a look at this famous [poster](#):

Why Can't I Skip My 20 Minutes of Reading Tonight?

Student "A" reads 20 minutes each day	Student "B" reads 5 minutes each day	Student "C" reads 1 minute each day
3600 minutes in a school year	900 minutes in a school year	180 minutes in a school year

1,800,000 words



90th percentile

282,000 words



50th percentile

8,000 words



10th percentile

By the end of 6th grade Student "A" will have read the equivalent of 60 whole school days. Student "B" will have read only 12 school days. Which student would you expect to have a better vocabulary? Which student would you expect to be more successful in school...and in life?

(Nagy & Herman, 1987)

Start reading. Every language curriculum you chose will have reading material for you.

You will begin with simple sentences. *The dog sees the cat. The farmer sees a fox. The cat steals the motorcycle.* Don't let that bother you. You have to start somewhere.

Read every exercise in your textbook. Particularly hard will be the English to Latin sentences, but you must read them. I recommend you read every Latin grammar at least twice.

The first time you read the book, read all the exercises *from* Latin *into* English. Then go back. Read the book again. This time read all the exercises from English *into* Latin.

As you read from English *into* Latin, you will make more mistakes that you could possibly imagine. Who cares? Develop the courage you possessed when you were a child. You made hilarious mistakes when you were little, and your parents loved you for it. Develop that courage once again. Be fearless. Make mistakes. You learn by failing. Embrace failure.

When you learned your native language, you were learning your native grammar as well. If your parents had good grammar, you probably possess good grammar. Unfortunately, especially in the United States, the days of good grammar has went. This means you may have some work to do in you own language as you advance.

Get a copy of the New Testament in Latin.

After you complete Visual Latin, read one of the New Testament gospels in Latin.

I recommend that you do this for multiple reasons.

First, the Bible is available in Latin. Here it is again, in case you missed it in the last chapter: <http://www.bible.is/LTNNVV/Matt/1>

Second, the writing of the New Testament is clear, simple, and direct. Written on a sixth grade level, it is a perfect starting place.

Third, this should be familiar ground for you. Chances are, you know much of the story already. This familiarity will help you as you read.

Fourth, this is the most famous book in the world. Whether you believe the teachings of Jesus or not, to be ignorant of the Bible is to be, well, ignorant.

What exactly should you read?

Latin is an interesting language. Since it is ancient, the available reading material is quite a bit different than the reading material for a modern language.

After you have completed Visual Latin, after you have read one or two of the gospels, what should you read?

If you haven't read it yet, read [Lingua Latina](#) by Hans Ørberg. The beauty of this book is that it takes students from very simple Latin all the way to the very difficult Latin poetry used by the Classical authors. Along the way, students follow the interesting story of a large Roman family, in the first century.

I must warn you, however. It is a tough book. The author adds thirty to sixty words in each chapter. By the end of the book, you will know almost two thousand words in Latin.

As if that were not enough, there are no English instructions in the book. Students are expected to pick the language up naturally.

I believe this can be done using [Lingua Latina](#), but It will take a long time. If you want to speed the process, you will need to learn Latin grammar *in English*. You can do this using any free Latin grammar text on Google books. If you prefer a teacher, use the [Visual Latin video series](#). I have created a checklist to follow if you are using the Visual Latin videos with Lingua Latina. It is available [here](#) for free.

Not sure what to read in Latin? Here is a recommended reading list:

Title	Author	Difficulty	Price
1. Lingua Latina	Hans Ørberg	Easy - Difficult	\$21
2. Cornelia	Mima Maxey	Easy	Free
3. Ora Maritima	Mima Maxey	Intermediate	Free
4. Gospel of John	St. John	Intermediate	Free
5. Fabilae Faciles	Francis Ritchie	Intermediate	Free
6. Viri Romae	Charles Llomond	Intermediate - Adv	Free
7. Roma Aeterna	Hans Ørberg	Advanced	\$21

When you have finished this list, visit the Latin Library.com. There you will find more Latin than you will ever read... and it's all free.

While you read, make sure you have [Whitaker's Words](#) open on a computer nearby. Whitaker's words is the fastest, most user friendly online Latin dictionary available. You will love it.

Also helpful is the site [The Latin Dictionary](#). This site is a little like the old 501 verbs series for languages. Type in a verb and vocare will conjugate it for you. This will help you as you read. Sometimes a verb in the future tense will look so different from the basic form in the present tense that you will not recognize it.

Another useful conjugation site is [verbix](#).

Read your favorite books in Latin.

Once you have completed the list above, you may want to read something more fun. One of my favorite things to do is read pleasure books in other languages. I have read [Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone](#) in Spanish, and [The Hobbit](#) in German.

Often it is this kind of book that I will read as I fall asleep. This is the fun stuff. The material is light. It's a great way to fall asleep.

Unfortunately, there are not many popular books in Latin. There are a few options.

Latin Title	English Title	Difficulty	Price
Harrius Potter	Harry Potter	Difficult	\$20
Hobbitus Ille	The Hobbit	Difficult	\$18
Winnie Ille Pu	Winnie the Pooh	Difficult	\$15
Alice in Terra Mirabili	Alice in Wonderland	Difficult	\$15
Tela Charlottae	Charlotte's Web	Difficult	\$20

WARNING: These are tough books to read. This list is presented simply to demonstrate what is available. Attempt this list only after you have read all of the books on the previous list.

Newspapers

You kids have it so easy these days. Newspapers are usually written at a 6th, 7th or 8th grade level. There are plenty of new words for you to learn, at a somewhat

relaxed pace. Best of all, they are free. While learning German in years ago, I had to subscribe to newspapers and magazines. I had to *pay* for reading material. Not you guys. Lucky. Here are several newspapers in Latin:

[Ephemeris](#)

[Nuntii Latini](#)

[Radio Bremen](#)

Wikipedia

More free content for you guys. Wikipedia is available in almost any language. Researching a topic? Visit Wikipedia. While you are there, attempt to read the article in another language. Simply go to the top/sidebar to switch languages.

Want to read in Latin? Just visit: [Vicapaedeia](#).

Facebook

I cautiously recommend Facebook. I hesitate, because Facebook is such a time waster. Actually, the *user* is the one wasting time. Facebook simply responds to your interaction.

If you are going to use it, learn to use Facebook wisely. Set a timer for yourself. When the timer goes off, walk away. Don't waste time. Only if you are *disciplined*, can you use Facebook to learn another language.

I have several Facebook rules I will not break when I am in that world.

First, I refuse to read political rants. My friends, and I love them, are the biggest distractions for me on Facebook. If they post political rants, I remove them from my newsfeed. That eliminates almost everyone.

Second, I refuse to look at what you are about to eat for lunch. If friends post pictures of their lunches, I remove them from my newsfeed. This eliminates almost everyone else.

My life, and your life, is an hour glass glued to the table. The sand never stops. Our lives are ending. I do not have the time to look at what you ate for lunch. I barely care what I ate for lunch. I have *zero* interest in your lunch. If you post pictures of your

lunch, I will remove you from my newsfeed. If you post politically I will remove you from my newsfeed.

If you post pictures of your food holding up political banners at a re-election rally, I will un-friend you completely.

These days, when I am on Facebook, I see updates from

[Slow German.com](#)

[Coffee Break Spanish](#)

[Coffee Break French](#)

[Coffee Break German](#)

[Jojo Sucht den Gluck](#)

[Early to Rise](#)

Unfortunately, there is very little on Facebook that will help you with Latin. You can practice Latin with me and with other Visual Latin students, but there is not much else.

[Visual Latin on Facebook](#)

Where do I find the Bible in Latin?

Good news! For those of you on tight budgets (I have lived on one for years...) the Vulgate is readily available online for free.

The Bible in Greek, Latin & Hebrew <http://www.sacred-texts.com/bib/poly/>

The Vulgate <http://www.latinvulgate.com/>

International Bibles BibleGateway.com

International Bibles for your devices <http://www.theholybibleapp.com/>

When do I start reading newspapers and novels?

Begin with newspapers. They are free online. You will be exposed to many new words that you will not encounter in the New Testament.

Novels are generally written at a higher grade level than the Bible and the newspapers. Avoid novels until you can handle the New Testament and the newspapers.

How do I do this without a large vocabulary in the language?

You have to start somewhere. Acquire vocabulary as you go. Stop to look up each and every word you do not understand. Do not skip unknown words!

If you learn just three new words a day, by the end of the year, you will know 1,000 new words!

Chapter VIII

“Qui scribit bis legit. - He who writes, reads twice”

- Ancient Roman proverb

Start writing in Latin.

Writings drastically accelerates your knowledge of Latin. How? How does Latin drastically accelerate your knowledge of Latin?

When you write in Latin, you will immediately encounter a problem.

You will realize that you know much *less* vocabulary than you thought you knew. To this point, you have been reading simple sentences. You may know how to say, “*The farmer sees the cat,*” but you probably do not know how to say, “*We are going to the beach this Saturday.*” In almost no standard Latin textbook will you find *beach* and *Saturday* included in the vocabulary. To write the sentence, you will need to go to a dictionary to find the Latin words for *beach* and *Saturday*.

OK, so, you do not know as many words as you thought you did. Don't let that discourage you. This is good. Why is it good? It is good, because *you are about to learn a lot of new words!*

There are many great ways to write in Latin.

Write stories in Latin.

If you are not sure what to write about, start by copying simple stories. Re-write the Three Little Pigs. Re-write the story of Little Red Riding Hood and the Big Bad Wolf. Re-write famous Bible stories. Write short biographical sketches of famous figures in history.

If you are having a hard time starting, write the stories in English, substituting Latin words here and there. Keep doing this week after week. In the beginning, you will write English stories with a few Latin words thrown in. As your skill improves, add more Latin words. Slowly, the stories will transition from mostly English to mostly Latin.

Develop your own secret language.

Are your brothers and sisters studying Latin with you? Do you have friends at school, or at church who are also studying Latin? Write notes and messages to each other in Latin. You will have your own secret language. Of course, Latin is not really a secret language, but, since so few people know it these days, Latin *feels* like a secret language!

Protect your journal from snoops!

Journal in Latin. At the end of each day, record what you learned that day. Record the names of people you met. Write about what you saw, or about what you experienced. Write it in Latin. If your journal falls into the wrong hands (your nosy little brother, for example) it will still be safe. He will not be able to read it!

Naturally you will find it necessary to look up many words as you journal, but that is a good thing! You will learn many new fascinating words, you would not learn if you only used a textbook. In any standard Latin textbook, you will learn to translate *The farmer is in the field*. By looking up words to include in your journal you will learn to translate sentences far more interesting. For starters, you may learn to translate, “*Oh man, I hope I passed Latin this year!*”

Go international!

What if you are not able to find any friends around town learning Latin? Go international. Find Facebook friends who speak Latin. As usual, this is easier if you are learning a modern language like German, Spanish, Arabic, or Chinese.

There are plenty of pages you can “like” if you are studying a modern language. I use this trick everyday. Here are some of my current favorites:

- [Slow German](#)
- [Deutsche Welle](#)
- [Spanish Dict](#)
- [Coffee Break French](#)

If you are studying French, Spanish, or German, these sites will help you, too! Once you have “liked” these pages they will begin to show up in your Facebook news feed. When articles or pictures show up, you will find comments by other users. Join the conversation. Interact with other speakers of the language.

These speakers, like you, will be *learners* of the language. They will range from beginner to advanced. I am always surprised by how helpful other language learners

are. They are willing to help you advance by gently correcting your mistakes. Now and then you will meet some pushy jerk who has no patience. Ignore those people. They are sad people. Pity them.

If you want to practice writing *in Latin*, join the Visual Latin Facebook page. I am there everyday (except Sundays) posting about Latin, Greek, and English. I am also happy to converse there *in Latin* when I find others who are willing to try.

Write your autobiography in Latin!

This is a fun one. When you write about yourself in another language, the language training sticks. This is because you are writing about your favorite subject... *you!* Write about your hometown. Write about your birthplace. Write about your friends, your skills, your education, your family, and your travels. Write about your likes and dislikes. Write about anything you find interesting!

Start a Latin blog!

There are now millions of blogs online. These days, you can start a blog in a just minutes. Blogging about Latin, or even, in Latin is a great way to practice in the language. When you get home at night, instead of turning on the television, turn on your computer. Tell us what you learned that day. Did you learn a new Latin word? A dozen new Latin words? Did you learn a new English word that came into our language from Latin? Did you write a short story, or re-write a fable in Latin?

Tell the rest of us about it! Post the word. Post the story. Post the interesting connection you made between Latin and English.

Determine to spend an hour writing on your blog each day. Over time, the posts will add up. One day, you will look back and realize that you now have a fascinating record of your education. Even better, you will be able to look back and see your progress.

The best Latin dictionary

As you write, you will encounter many words you do not know in Latin. You could always purchase a dictionary to keep by your side as you write. Any used Latin dictionary will do. However, if you are writing from your computer, or if you are near an internet connection, use [Whitaker's Words](#). It's fast and it's comprehensive. You will get addicted.

Forget grammar.

Do not worry about grammar as you write. The grammar will come as you listen to the Latin New Testament, read *Lingua Latina*, and watch the Visual Latin videos. Just write. Practice. Learn as you go. Improve incrementally.

I have seen so many students become discouraged, and worse... quit, because they were under the influence of a perfectionistic grammar maven.

Please, don't quit. Write for fun. Write with feeling. Write with a spirit of adventure. As you write, you will learn. Correct grammar will come.

If I do what you say, won't I make many mistakes?

Yes. You will make many mistakes. Count on it.

Embrace the mistakes. The truth is, you will make a ridiculous amount of mistakes. This is how you learn. This is how you advance.

School teaches us to fear mistakes. School teaches us to fear anything lower than a perfect grade. But, remember, school is artificial.

Where else in life are we herded into rooms with people exactly the same age as us, forced to sit in rows, lectured to, and finally, tested?

Where?

No where, that's where.

Develop an entrepreneurial mentality while learning Latin. Do not fear mistakes. Instead, determine to *make* mistakes. Make a lot of mistakes. Learn from your mistakes. But, never, ever allow fear of mistakes to stop you.

Imitate Thomas Edison. According to the popular stories, he tried, and failed, in over 10,000 attempts to create the light bulb. Had Edison been afraid to make mistakes, we would not have light bulbs. I am glad *he* was not afraid to fail.

What if no one ever reads my blog?

Who cares? You are practicing. In truth, the blog is for *you*. You are creating a trail of your progress.

Honestly, there is a very good chance no one will ever read your blog. There are so many out there now. The typical person only visit 12 websites a day. That is the average.

To start visiting your blog on a regular basis, they are going to have to stop visiting one of their favorite sites. The chances of that happening are actually pretty slim.

No matter. Blog anyway. Blog for your self. Commit to writing in public. Even if no one ever looks at what you are doing, you are improving. Your writing will improve because you are practicing. There is another benefit, though.

You are developing courage. It takes courage to walk up to the stage, look at the world, and start talking. For all the millions of blogs online, there are billions of people who are afraid. They are afraid to step up. They are afraid to take a risk. They are afraid to stand out. If you start writing publicly, you are demonstrating more than new Latin skills. You are demonstrating courage.

Chapter IX

“Fake it ‘till you make it.”

- Anonymous

Is it possible to learn to sing... without singing? Is it possible to learn to drive... without driving? Is it possible to learn to swim... without getting wet?

Of course not. It is impossible to learn to do anything, without experiencing it for yourself. I would be willing to bet that most of you know how to ride a bicycle. I am also willing to bet that most of you have fallen off a bicycle.

We learn by doing.

When it comes to learning a new language, we learn by speaking. Learning Latin is no different.

To learn Latin, you must speak Latin!

There's only one problem. Actually... there are two problems. There are *two* ways to pronounce Latin!

Before you can *speak* Latin, you must make a choice. Which pronunciation will you use?

Perhaps you are wondering something else...

“Why are there two ways to pronounce the same language?”

“Why not pronounce Latin the way the ancient Romans pronounced Latin?”

There's the trouble. *No one* knows for certain *how* the ancient Romans pronounced Latin. Why not?

No one knows because the Romans left *not one* audio recording! Not one!

The Romans left their language. They left their roads. They left their buildings, their legends and legal system. They even left their most famous resort town, Pompeii.

The Roman Empire lasted over 1,000 years. And yet, over the span of 1,000 years, not one Roman found the time to sit down with a tape recorder to capture the pronunciation of Latin!

Personally, I find that hard to believe.

(By the way... if you are reading this, and you are less than thirty years old, [this](#) is a tape recorder.)

Since the Romans left no audio recordings, we don't know for certain *how* Latin was pronounced. We can *guess*. We can make very educated, well researched, historically documented guesses, but, in the end... *no one knows for sure how Latin was pronounced*.

We simply do not have an audio recording from the past to guide us.

I do know one thing. I have personally *wasted too much time* looking for the original pronunciation. I have also wasted too much time telling people again and again that...

No one knows for sure how ancient Latin sounded.

More students will come. More students will ask. I am ready. I will throw fruit at them. My desk is full of bananas. Bring it on.

But, ***you*** still have a problem. Which pronunciation will *you* chose?

This is sort of a funny question.

No one ever asks when you are studying German, "Which pronunciation will you use?"

I suppose the question could come up in a Spanish course. "Will you use continental Spanish pronunciation, or South American pronunciation?"

That is a justified question.

Yet, I rarely hear it in Spanish classes. I rarely hear it mentioned in Spanish podcasts, or in Spanish conversations. In fact, to Spanish speakers, it doesn't seem to matter much. Spanish speakers seem perfectly capable of understanding each other regardless of the pronunciation they choose.

What about English?

English pronunciation, like Spanish pronunciation, varies.

The English spoken in England is different from the English spoken in America. I lived in England for a long time, but, you do not have to live in England, America, or Australia to realize there are different English pronunciations.

Even so, the English understand the Americans. The Americans understand the English. The Americans and The Australians understand each other, and vice versa.

Well, we *usually* understand each other.

Okay. You get it. Modern languages may vary in pronunciation. Spanish varies. English varies. And yet, no one panics about it. On the contrary, people seem to *enjoy* pronunciation differences.

“I like your accent”, is far more common than, “You have a lousy accent. You need to do something about that.”

And then, we come to Latin.

Latin is a language which is mostly read, and is rarely spoken. And yet, when we get to Latin pronunciation, people freak the freak out.

There are, as I said, two major pronunciations from which to choose.

“Restored Classical Pronunciation,” and “Ecclesiastical Pronunciation.”

We will look first at the The “Restored Classical Latin pronunciation”, which we shorten to the “Restored pronunciation”. This is the most popular version of Latin spoken in America. It is the preferred pronunciation of high schools, universities and colleges.

First, let’s define the “Restored Pronunciation”.

In the introduction to his book, [A New Latin Grammar](#), (which is now an old Latin grammar), Charles Bennet defines the Restored pronunciation.

“The following pronunciation (often called Roman) is substantially that employed by the Romans at the height of their civilization; i.e., roughly, from 50 B.C. to 50 A.D.”

Okay. Got that? The “Restored pronunciation” is a *restoration* of Latin spoken for a period of about one hundred years. Most academics would readily agree with Bennet. The Restored pronunciation is based on the Latin writings of a small period of time within the Roman empire.

We have a problem.

The Latin language goes back a long way. The earliest inscriptions date from the 7th and 6th centuries B.C. Just to be safe, let's say *some form* of Latin was spoken in Italy by 700 B.C. Fair enough?

Latin, as a spoken, academic language slowly died out in the modern age. To be safe again, we will assume Latin fell from grace by the late 1700's. (For a moment, we are ignoring the fact that Latin is *still* spoken in the Roman Catholic Church).

From 700 B.C. to 1800 A.D. is a span of 2,500 years. Latin is old. Latin has a *long* history.

Compare the life of Latin to the life of English.

It's probably safe to say that the history of English begins with the Germanic invasions of England around 450 A.D. Just to be careful, though, let's say English begins around 500 A.D. From 500 A.D. to today is a bit more than 1,500 years.

English is a much younger language. And, English has changed. A lot.

Were you to go back to the year 500 A.D. you would not understand a word of English. Here are some lines from the epic poem Beowulf. Some scholars believe these lines were written sometime in the 700s.

Remember, *this is English*.

*Gewat ða neosian, syþðan niht becom,
hean huses, hu hit Hring-Dene
æfter beorþege gebun hæfdon.
Fand þa ðær inne æpelinga gedriht
swefan æfter symble; sorge ne cuðon,
wonsceaft wera. Wiht unhælo,*

Few of us can read that. Let's move forward 500 years. Now we are in the year 1000 A.D. Chances are, we still would not understand a word of English. Don't believe me? Here are the first lines of the Lord's Prayer in Old English:

*Fæder ure þu þe eart on heofonum;
Si þin nama gehalgod
to becume þin rice
gewurpe ðin willa
on eorðan swa swa on heofonum.*

Let's move forward another 500 years. Now we are in the year 1500 A.D. You should understand English now. It may sound old to you, but you understand it. Shakespeare wrote in the 1500's. You have likely read *Romeo and Juliet*. Here are the opening lines:

*"Two households, both alike in dignity
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life
Whose mis-adventured piteous overthrows
Do with their death bury their parents' strife."*

A little more than one hundred years later, we find some of the first English spoken on American shores. The Mayflower Compact, was written in 1620 A.D.

In ye name of God, Amen. We, whose names are underwritten, the Loyal Subjects of our dread Sovereign Lord King James, by ye Grace of God, of great Britaine, Franc, & Yreland, King, defender of ye Faith, &c.

Haveing undertaken, for ye Glorie of God, and advancements of ye Christian faith, and the honour of our King & countrie, a voyage to plant ye first colonie in ye Northern parts of Virginia; Doe by these presents, solemnly & mutually, in ye presence of God, and one of another; covenant & combine ourselves together into a Civill body politick; for our better ordering, & preservation & furtherance of ye ends aforesaid; and by vertue hereof to enact, constitute, and frame, such just & equal Lawes, ordinances, Acts, constitutions, & offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meete and convenient for ye generall good of ye Colonie; unto which we promise all due submission and obedience.

In witnes wherof we have hereunto subscribed our names at Cap-Codd ye 11 of November, in ye year of ye raigne of our soveraigne Lord King James, of England, France, & Yreland, ye eighteenth, and of Scotland ye fiftie fourth, Ano: Dom. 1620.

What would you think of me if I insisted that the English from William Shakespeare to the time of the Mayflower Compact was the *only correct English*?

What if I further insisted that *all* English speakers should pronounce English as English was pronounced during those one hundred years?

You would think I was strange. You would think I was a grammar maven, a perfectionist, or a purist. You would be correct.

Latin teachers and scholars who *insist* that we pronounce Latin only as it was pronounced from the years 50 B.C. to 50 A.D. are doing exactly that.

Yes, yes. I know the objections. Put your hands down.

I know the arguments for the “Restored pronunciation.” I have read them, and for the record, I think the arguments are impressive. Clearly, scholars of the past worked hard to restore the old Roman pronunciation.

But, So what? What if the “Restored” pronunciation is based on impressive research? That doesn’t mean we have to use it.

Famous English author and Latin scholar, Dorothy Sayers agrees:

“Antiquarian research is useful and enlightening; but for the general use and enjoyment of literature we adopt other standards. And if we have succeeded (*which is not certain*) in discovering the pronunciation used in the Augustan age, it is probable that that pronunciation did not endure very long. No pronunciation does. It had certainly gone by the time that the Romance languages began to issue out of the Latin matrix.” (*emphasis mine*)

Keep this in mind as we look at the arguments for the “Restored” pronunciation.

First, *The Romans wrote about their own language.*

In 1859, Heinrich Keil, a German scholar, published multiple volumes of the *Grammatici Latini*. In his multi-volume series, Keil collected the writings of grammarians *about* Latin. The writings range from the first century A.D. to the eighth century A.D. Much of what we surmise about ancient Latin pronunciation derives from Keil’s work.

Second, *Latin inscriptions leave clues.*

Another series of books, the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, published in 1863 includes many clues about pronunciation. Drawing from Latin inscriptions on stones, monuments, and buildings, scholars attempt to restore the old Latin pronunciation. For example, sometimes the Romans would inscribe *urps* for city, instead of the correct spelling, *urbs*. This may indicate that Latin makes a *ps* when *b* joins an *s*.

Third, *Scholars find clues from Latin words in Greek writings.*

For example, the Greeks wrote *Cicero* with a *K* sound, *Κικέρων* (Kikeron). Scholars take this to mean that the Latin letter *c* always made the *hard k* sound.

Fourth, *other languages are clues to pronunciation.*

We know that Latin became modern Romance languages. Scholars find clues about Latin pronunciation in the various Romance languages.

The Romans also interacted with northern European tribes. Clues pop up in Germanic languages. The Germans once called their leader *Kaiser*. This word, based on the old Latin *Caesar*, also seems to indicate that the Romans pronounced the letter with the hard sound *c* as in the English word *cart*.

Fifth, *Etymology provides clues to Latin pronunciation.*

The English word *wine* comes from the Latin word, *vinum*. The English word *wall* comes from the Latin *vallum*. These words demonstrate clearly that the Latin *v* always makes an English *w* sound.

Thus far, the arguments *for* the Restored pronunciation.

But, what of it?

“I will say here and now that I have never discovered, nor can I see, any reasonable use or excuse for the "waynee, weedee, weekee" convention. It is not merely that I have a profound sympathy with one of my friends who says he just cannot believe that Caesar was the kind of man to talk in that kind of way. Caesar may, indeed, have done so, but what then? *We do not insist on pronouncing the English of Shakespeare and Chaucer as Shakespeare and Chaucer pronounced it.*” (emphasis mine)

- Dorothy Sayers

Sayers asks a powerful question. Maybe we have discovered the “correct” ancient pronunciation. That doesn’t necessarily mean we should use it.

In the [Teaching of Latin and Greek in the Secondary School](#), Charles Bennett, a famous Latin teacher from Cornell University, argued that Restored Classical pronunciation was too difficult, and had produced nothing but frustrated students. In his own words,

“I wish at the outset to declare frankly my conviction that the introduction of the Roman pronunciation was a fundamental blunder, and that its retention is likewise a serious mistake.”

By the way, Bennett was not always opposed to the “Restored” pronunciation. On the contrary. He supported it. In the same essay, he declares:

“Fifteen years ago, my zeal for the Roman pronunciation was unbounded.”

However, after years of attempting to teach Latin in the classroom using the “Restored” pronunciation, he was “*compelled to believe that the retention of our present unmethodical method of pronouncing Latin has proved itself a serious mistake.*”

Over 100 years ago, in 1911, Bennett called for the complete and immediate abandonment of the “Restored” pronunciation.

“I would urge the immediate abandonment of the Roman pronunciation. We are not just to ourselves, we are not just to our students, so long as we encourage the present hypocritical practice.” (emphasis mine)

Latin teachers across the world didn’t listen.

Today, we have the same problem. We have frustrated students. We have teachers who are afraid to mispronounce Latin (and therefore avoid pronouncing it *at all*). And, we have a beautiful, dying language.

Does it have to be this way? Is there an alternative?

There is another way.

What if I told you that there was a group of Latin speakers who have been speaking Latin in a long unbroken stream since the days of the Roman Empire? Would you be interested in what *they* have to say about Latin pronunciation?

Let me ask another way.

What if I told you that I could teach you Swedish? Now, understand, I have never been to Sweden. I don’t speak the language. In fact, I am afraid to speak the language, because I might make a mistake. I have no friends from Sweden to help me, and I don’t know how to find any audio recordings of spoken Swedish. Don’t panic, though. I have read some books about Swedish, and I once got lost in an Ikea store. I can teach you Swedish.

Would you hire me?

Now, let’s imagine a native of Sweden has just moved into town. She is about your age, speaks English and Swedish, and wants to make some friends. She is happy to teach you Swedish.

Who would you hire? Would you hire me? Would you hire her?

Well, guess what?

The Roman Catholic Church has been speaking Latin since the days of the Caesars.

Oh! But, it's the Roman Catholic Church! They have done some bad things! We should not listen to *any* thing they say!

True. The Roman Catholic Church has some black marks on its record. I can't deny it. The Church periodically launched witch hunts, inquisitions, and wars. Dark ages, for sure.

Fortunately, since the 1600s or so, the modern secular state has risen to liberate us from religious bigots. No more dark ages. Instead of isolated witch hunts and periodical inquisitions, we have holocausts, nuclear annihilations of entire Japanese cities, fire bombings of non military targets in German cities, and mass genocides in Russia and China. And, I am just getting started.

Whew. What a relief. Ah. The age of Light and Beauty. Good thing those nasty old Christians are out of the way.

Look. I am not a Roman Catholic, and likely never will be. I have my reasons.

But, why in the world, would I ignore the Roman Catholic Church on the subject of Latin?

Let me say it again... THEY HAVE BEEN SPEAKING LATIN SINCE THE DAYS OF THE CAESARS!

The Roman Catholic Church believes the exact phonetics of Latin are lost, and unknown. It makes more sense, the Church believes, to use the *known* pronunciation of modern Rome, rather than the *unknown* pronunciation of ancient Rome.

This pronunciation has several names. You will hear it called, "Church Latin", "Italianate Latin", or "Ecclesiastical Latin."

From this point forward, we will call *this* pronunciation "Ecclesiastical Latin".

Classical Latin fell before the Fall of the Roman Empire. Latin was already changing into the modern Romance languages. Ecclesiastical Latin grew out of Classical Latin at the dawn of the Medieval ages. It became the language of the Church during the early Medieval ages. It still is today.

Classical Latin, on the other hand, is dead. Dead, dead, dead. Latin really is a dead language... if you are referring to Classical Latin. No one but a handful of academics spoke it for 2,000 years. The Romans themselves barely used it. Remember, it was a language for the elite, and only thrived for one hundred years or so.

In his book, The Loom of Language, former Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor and linguist, Frederick Bodmer, takes it further.

“It (Classical Latin) was always, and is now, a dead language because it was never the language of daily intercourse.”

- Frederick Bodmer, The Loom of Language, page 310

Then, later in the book, he makes an interesting point about Italian.

“Italian pronunciation and grammar have changed little since Dante’s time.”

- Frederick Bodmer, The Loom of Language, page 313

Wait... why am I suddenly talking about Italian pronunciation? Here is why: Ecclesiastical pronunciation is *based on Italian pronunciation*.

Dante was born sometime around 1265. If Italian pronunciation has changed little since his time, then the Ecclesiastical pronunciation is at least 700 years old.

In fact, Ecclesiastical Latin is the ***only surviving spoken dialect*** of Latin in modern times. To ignore what the Roman Catholic Church and the Italians say about Latin pronunciation is as foolish as hiring *me* to teach *you* Swedish.

So... How different are the two pronunciations?

That’s the funny part. They are not all that different. It shouldn’t be such a big deal. Take a look at the following comparison:

	Classical	Ecclesiastical
A	<i>ā</i> in <i>father</i> ; <i>ǣ</i> as in <i>Dinah</i>	<i>a</i> in <i>father</i>
AE	<i>ae</i> like <i>ai</i> in <i>aisle</i>	<i>ae</i> is <i>ay</i> in <i>say</i>
AU	<i>au</i> like <i>ou</i> in <i>house</i>	<i>same</i>
B	<i>b</i> in <i>boat</i>	<i>same</i>
BS	<i>ps</i>	<i>same</i>
BT	<i>pt</i>	<i>same</i>
C	<i>k</i> in <i>kite</i>	<i>c</i> before <i>e, ae, oe, i, y</i> = <i>ch</i> in <i>Church</i>
C		<i>c</i> everywhere else = <i>k</i> in <i>kite</i>
CC		<i>CC</i> before <i>e, ae, oe, i, y</i> = <i>tch</i> in <i>catch</i>
CH		<i>k</i> in <i>kite</i>
D	<i>d</i> in <i>door</i>	<i>same</i>
E	<i>ē</i> as in <i>they</i> ; <i>ě</i> as in <i>met</i>	<i>e</i> as <i>e</i> in <i>met</i>
Ei	<i>ei</i> as in <i>rein</i>	both letters pronounced as it <i>me-i</i>
F	<i>f</i> in <i>fish</i>	<i>same</i>
G	<i>g</i> in <i>get</i>	<i>g</i> before <i>e, ae, i, y</i> soft as in <i>gender</i>
GN		soft <i>ny</i> as in Spanish <i>señor</i>
H	<i>h</i> in <i>hat</i>	hard <i>k</i> in <i>nihil</i> and <i>mihi</i>
H		otherwise, mute
I	<i>ī</i> in <i>machine</i> ; <i>ȳ</i> in <i>pin</i>	<i>i</i> in <i>machine</i>
J	<i>y</i> in <i>yet</i>	<i>same</i>
K	<i>k</i> in <i>kite</i>	<i>same</i>
L	<i>l</i> in <i>lamb</i>	<i>same</i>
M	<i>m</i> in <i>moon</i>	<i>same</i>
N	<i>n</i> in <i>navy</i>	<i>same</i>

	Classical	Ecclesiastical
O	<i>ō</i> in <i>note</i> ; <i>ō</i> in <i>obey</i>	<i>o</i> in <i>for</i>
OE	<i>oe</i> like <i>oi</i> in <i>oil</i>	<i>oe</i> is <i>ay</i> in <i>say</i>
P	<i>p</i> in <i>promise</i>	<i>same</i>
Q	<i>q</i> in <i>quit</i>	<i>same</i>
R	slightly rolled	<i>same</i>
S	<i>s</i> in <i>sea</i>	<i>same</i>
SC		<i>sc</i> before <i>e, ae, oe, i, y</i> is <i>sh</i> in <i>shed</i>
T	<i>t</i> in <i>time</i>	<i>same</i>
TI		<i>tsee</i> before vowels and after <i>s, x,</i> and <i>t</i>
TH	<i>t</i> in <i>Thames</i>	<i>same</i>
U	<i>ū</i> in <i>rude</i> ; <i>ŭ</i> as in <i>put</i>	<i>u</i> in <i>rude</i>
V	<i>w</i> in <i>water</i>	<i>v</i> in <i>viper</i>
X	<i>ks</i>	<i>same</i>
XC		<i>ksh</i> before <i>e, ae, oe, i, y</i>
Y	<i>y</i> like French <i>u</i> , German <i>ü</i> .	<i>i</i> in <i>machine</i>
Z	uncertain	<i>dz</i>

Did you notice how often the pronunciation is the *same*?

Remember, the “two” Latins are essentially the same language. There are vocabulary differences, but the pronunciations are nearly identical.

Classical Latin, for example generally uses the word *equus* for *horse*. Ecclesiastical Latin tends to use the word *caballus*. But, these are simply variations within the same language. In America, a large vehicle capable of hauling freight is a *truck*. In England, the same vehicle is a *lorry*. Both countries speak English, with variation.

England and America pronounce and spell words with variation, too. Americans spell the word *color* with no *u*. The English spell the word with a *u*, *colour*. Which version of English is the correct version? Both are correct, as it turns out.

Restored pronunciation and Ecclesiastical pronunciation are variations of Latin. Which one is correct? Well, it depends. Maybe both are correct.

Exactly how different are the two pronunciations?

As we saw above, the differences are rather small. There are a few major troublemakers, though.

Let's take a deeper look at the two *biggest* troublemakers, the letters *C* and *V*.

In Restored pronunciation, the consonant *C* is always hard, as in "cat."

Ecclesiastical Latin sometimes uses a soft *C*, sometimes a hard *C*.

I am fully aware that the Germans called their leader Kaiser. This is one of the arguments scholars use to prove the Roman *C* always made the hard *K* sound. The soldiers likely picked up that pronunciation from the Roman military. If the Germans, imitating the Romans, called Caesar something that sounded like Kaiser, then clearly, Latin *C* was always hard.

Maybe.

One summer, while living in Germany, a group of German friends knocked on my front door. They wanted to play volleyball. This happened often, in fact. I am not sure why they suddenly wanted to play volleyball, but that summer, I played a lot of volleyball.

Usually, my mother would answer the door.

I would hear them ask, "Can D-vane (Dwane) come outside to play walleyball (volleyball)?"

This happened, as I said, often. Try as I might, I could never get my friends to flip *v* and *w*. All summer, I was "D-vane" and the ball was a "walleyball."

Could it be that the ancient Germans just had a hard time pronouncing the Latin language? Is it possible that they called their leader "Kaiser," instead of Caesar, because "Kaiser" was easier for them to say?

Thousands of years from now, let us hope the restored pronunciation of English is not based on the scholarship of German academics.

Zee Americans vood sometimes buy zair groceries at zee Val-Mart, ja?
(The Americans would sometimes buy their groceries at the Wal-Mart, right?)

Maybe C always made the hard K sound, maybe it didn't.

In Restored pronunciation, V always makes the W sound. Caesar did not say, "Veni, vidi, vici." Instead, he boldly proclaimed, "weeni, weedi, weeki."

The argument for Restored pronunciation seems weak here. The reasoning often relies on *wine*. (Funny how much in our world relies on wine.)

The modern word for wine is, well, *wine*. We know that the word *wine* comes from the Latin *vinum*. There you have it! History proves that the Latin *v* always made the sound of our letter *w*. Ta Dah!

Not so fast, Restored Classical Pronunciation!

Why do the English words on the next page **not** start with the **w** sound? They, **too**, came from Latin words that begin with **v**?

Latin Root	Translation	English Derivatives
vita	life	vitamin, vital, revitalize
provincia	province	province, provincial
vox	voice	voice, vocal
vocabulum	word	vocabulary
vir	man	virile
vacaciones	leave of absence	vacation
victoria	victory	victory, victorious
vulnerare	to wound	vulnerable, invulnerable
validus	strong	valid, validate
invalidus	weak	invalid, invalidate
videre	to see	evidence, video, visual
verbum	word	verbal, proverb, verb
vorare	to eat	voracious, devour
verberare	to beat	reverberation
vincere	to conquer	invincible, vincible
vestis	clothing	vest, vestments
vestigium	footprint	investigate, investigator
vocare	to call	vocation
vereri	to fear	revere
valere	to be well	valiant
vigilare	to awake	vigilant
vesper	evening	vespers
viscera	insides	eviscerate, evisceral
vivere	to live	vivacious, vivid, viva
vallis	valley	valley, vale

Fine. I'll stop. Let's check the score...

<i>Restored Classical Pronunciation</i>	<i>Ecclesiastical Pronunciation</i>
1	26

Oh, and by the way, from *vinum*, English derives the word, *vineyard*. *Vineyard* is not pronounced *winyard*.

Maybe *V* always made the *w* sound, maybe it didn't.

By now, you have guessed which pronunciation I prefer. But, to be honest, we must ask ourselves some questions.

Why have high schools and colleges abandoned Ecclesiastical Latin? Should we abandon it? Why do they insist on using *only* the Restored pronunciation? Should we use it?

At this point, the pronunciation question takes an interesting turn.

Each pronunciation emphasizes particular literature.

Not long ago, an advertisement popped up while I was working online. It posed a simple question. "Which Latin author do you prefer?" The advertisement was in the form of a survey. I had four choices. Cicero, Caesar, Virgil, or Livy. That was it.

I prefer *none* of those writers. Where were Jerome, Tertullian, Aquinas, Augustine, Bede, Ambrose, Abelard, and Boethius? Or where were Kepler, Descartes, Bacon, and Erasmus?

Restored Latin textbooks emphasize Classical authors. They almost completely ignore the Vulgate (the most famous Latin book of all time), Medieval writers, Christian writers, and Scientific writers. Isaac Newton wrote *Principia* in Latin, but you will not discover that information in a high school or college Latin textbook. You will read, almost exclusively, about Classical authors. Learn Latin from a school textbook and you may end up thinking the *only* people who wrote in Latin were Caesar, Cicero, and Vergil!

Ecclesiastical textbooks emphasize the Vulgate, Christian writers and Medieval writers. Unlike typical high school and college textbooks, however, most Ecclesiastical textbooks also teach the Classical authors. The famous Roman Catholic series, [Henle](#) Latin is a mix of Christian authors and Classical authors. In fact, most of the Henle series focuses on Classical authors.

So, why do high schools and colleges insist that Classical Latin is correct Latin? Why does the famous [Wheelock's](#) Latin quote Cicero, and Caesar ad nauseam, but rarely Christ?

I honestly cannot say.

I suspect there are a myriad of reasons.

Textbooks written for the American public school system are, I am sure, discouraged from quoting the Vulgate. After all, the Vulgate is the Bible, and the Bible is banned from the American Public school system.

With the Vulgate gone, what are the students going to read?

They read the “classics”, of course. This is the Latin of Caesar and Cicero, Tacitus and Livy. If you are busy reading the Classics, you get to skip the Bible. There is just one little detail Latin teachers often fail to mention.

You will never get to the Classics.

Well, almost never.

An insignificant number of students ever make it to the classics. Most students are eager to drop Latin the first chance they get. Those who do make it to the classics eventually become Latin teachers.

Skipping the easier Vulgate Latin is a major mistake. Skipping the easier Latin of the Medieval and Christian era is a major mistake. I am not the only one who believes this. Here is Dorothy Sayer’s again:

“It is being borne in upon me with more and more force and with every year I live that the greatest single defect of my own Latin education, and that (I expect) of many other people, *is the almost total neglect of those fifteen Christian centuries.*

The great reproach cast up against Latin by those who would drive it altogether from the schools is that it is a dead language. But if it is dead today, it is because the Classical Scholars killed it by smothering it with too much love.

And it is my belief that the *classical texts of the Augustan Age are simply far too difficult*. They were difficult even in their own day, in the sense that they were elaborate, literary, and highly artificial. The language of Cicero was not spoken in the streets, nor even, I fancy, in the drawing-rooms, of ancient Rome. The legions did not tramp their way to victory chanting the Hellenic, quantitative measures which delighted the ears of the cognoscenti assembled at poetry-readings or exchanging culture in the baths.

The ordinary educated Roman could appreciate Virgil and Horace or Cicero because he came to them through his own daily speech, as we come through our own modern speech to the elaborations of Joyce and Eliot.

And as time went on and the language changed, they could still go back through their own speech to the writings of the Golden Age, as we, through our

speech, go back to the Metaphysicals and to Euphues, if we ever do go back to Euphues, which is perhaps a little doubtful.

But teachers do not, as a rule, ask foreign children to plunge immediately into the study of English by way of Donne and Euphues without any help at all from the current English, whose syntax and vocabulary are so much nearer to their own. Doubtless, when the time comes, they are put on to Shakespeare; but they are not, from the start, confined exclusively to the highly compressed and elliptical language of the later Shakespeare, on the grounds that this represents the Golden Age of English from which every later development is a debasement and a degeneration of the language.

Yet this is the way in which, for the last four hundred years or so, we have started English boys on the learning of Latin. It can, of course, be done. It was done in a more leisured age, and for one sex only of a privileged professional class, and in schools which concentrated on the teaching of classical languages and on uncommonly little else.

But I doubt if it is the right way of going about it today. And it is not the way in which it was done for the first fifteen centuries of our era.”

- Dorothy Sayers

The common, everyday Roman, spoke a common, everyday Latin, known as Vulgar Latin. In Latin, the word *vulgus* means *common people*, the *multitude*. When Jerome translated the Bible into Latin in the early 400s, he translated it for *everyone*. This is why it is called the Vulgate.

Classical Latin died. Vulgar Latin became Late Latin. Late Latin became Spanish, Italian, French, Portuguese, Romanian, Romansh, Ladin, and a dozen or so other European Languages. Classical Latin is **not** the door to the modern Romance languages.

The Latin of the Vulgate is the door to the modern Romance languages.

*“School-book knowledge of Latin does not always help us to link up a Romance word with its Latin forerunner. As a living language, Latin has a large stock of words which classical authors never used. Where they would write **equus** for horse, iter for journey, os for mouth, ignis for fire, comedere for eat, a citizen of the Empire would say*

- *caballus* (French *cheval*, Spanish *caballo*, Italian *cavallo*);
- *viaticum* (French *voyage*, Spanish *viaje*, Italian *viaggio*);
- *buca* (French *bouche*, Spanish *boca*, Italian *bocca*);
- *focus* (French *feu*, Spanish *fuego*, Italian *fuoco*); and \

- *manudcare* (French *manger*, Italian *mangiare*).

*In the school-books the Latin word for house is **domus**, which was the name for the house of the well-to-do. Beside it Latin had **casa**, which signified the house with which most Romans had to be content."*

- Frederick Bodmer, *The Loom of Language*, pages 341-342

If the Vulgate is the great portal to Medieval Latin, the Romance languages and, even, working backward, the classics, then why the emphasis on the classics alone? Why pretend that the world was silent from the fall of Rome to the Renaissance? Why the bias *against* the easier Christian writers? Why the bias *toward* the painfully difficult classical writers?

In his autobiography, *Surprised by Joy*, C.S. Lewis describes classicism as an error with which "*the humanists have hoodwinked half the world*".

Could it be that the humanists are attempting to resurrect old Rome via the language of old Rome? Could it be that the ultimate goal of an education built on classical Latin, using the Restored classical pronunciation was a resurrected Roman ideal? I hope not.

Let us never forget that the Roman state rested on slavery, supreme state power, emperor worship, persecution of Christians, polytheism, property confiscation, corrupt politics, bribery, imperialism, warfare, and coercive taxation. I could go on, but, the similarities to my own country are beginning to frighten me.

Perhaps *that* is what the Restored Classical pronunciation humanists want. Let's hope not.

The point is this; *each pronunciation emphasizes particular literature*.

Ecclesiastical pronunciation emphasizes the easier Vulgate, and Medieval writers. It opens the door to the Romance languages.

Meanwhile, the Restored Classical pronunciation emphasizes the very difficult classical writers. It opens the door to the minds of men who worshiped the state, its government.

The real reason I abandoned the Restored Classical pronunciation.

My greatest problem with the Restored pronunciation, is that its proponents tend to be pushy. They spend a lot of time emphasizing the "*correct*" pronunciation. They spend a lot of time talking about it, *in English*. They write books about it, reports about

it, journal entries about it, and blog posts about it... all in *English*. They do not, however, produce free audio training in the Restored pronunciation. How are you supposed to learn a language without hearing it?

Meanwhile, the Roman Catholic church produces [this](#). For free.

Here you will find the entire New Testament, fully dramatized as an audio book, in Latin! Thanks to [Biblium.is](#), you now have access to a *massive* Latin audio book. This is significant. Such an audio book has *never* been available in Latin before.

The day I discovered [Biblium.is](#), I abandoned the Restored pronunciation for Ecclesiastical pronunciation. I have never looked back.

I listen almost daily. This is what I use to practice pronunciation.

By the way, I've been told several times that I ought not recommend the Vulgate for learning Latin. The material is too familiar, the detractors point out. Once again, I will let Dorothy Sayers help me with this one.

"Nobody, by the way, need be afraid of setting pupils passages from the Vulgate, on the grounds that it would be over-familiar. In my experience, the Bible is unknown country to most young people nowadays."

- Dorothy Sayers

She's right, you know. I've taught children for nearly 20 years. Believe me. They know almost nothing about the Bible.

Repeat after me

Back to the beginning. To learn to *speak* Latin, you must *speak* Latin.

If you are using Visual Latin, I have provided a space for you in the third video of each lesson. Pause the video and repeat after me. Read what is written on the screen as you repeat. This step is important. By forcing your tongue to repeat the language, you will learn to *speak* Latin. Skip this step, and you will learn to read Latin, but you will never learn to *speak* the Latin.

Do the same thing while listening to the Vulgate. Pause the recording from time to time. Imitate the readers. Do this over and over again. Don't be discouraged. It takes time to force your tongue to speak a new language. Imitate. Soon, you will master Latin pronunciation.

Memorize something in Latin

Memorize verses, famous quotes, list of nouns, whatever.... To do this you will need an audio version of the verse, or quote.

Listen to it over and over. Listen to it every day for a month. Repeat it. Write it down.

There are several benefits to doing this: You will train your tongue to accept Latin pronunciation. You will learn words and grammar. Initially, you will not know the words and grammar, but you will learn as you memorize. Later when you encounter the words and grammar, you will recognize familiar territory. Even better, you will have something to say when your friends ask you to speak in Latin. They will.

Will I ever sound like a native?

You probably never will sound like a native. Think of the foreigners you know. Even if they have been in an English speaking country for years, can you still determine their country of origin by their accent? If not their country, you can identify their home continent. Your South American friends likely sound like they are from South America. There is little they can do about it. It will be the same for you. If you are an American, you are going to sound like an American for the rest of your life. Get used to it. You are not a native of another country, and may never sound like one. Of course, when it comes to Latin, this doesn't really matter at all. Do the best you can with Latin pronunciation.

Am I able to eliminate my thick English, or American accent?

You can work on this, but again, don't expect to get rid of it. That said, you can work very hard to perfect your accent. In Latin, it doesn't matter all that much, since there are no longer native Latin speakers. You don't want to sound like a yokel, but you should not be mocked for mispronouncing Latin. Even Latin teachers argue about Latin pronunciation. As you know, I prefer the Ecclesiastical pronunciation. I try, as best I can, to sound like an Italian. If I make mistakes I don't worry about it. Neither should you.

Chapter X

“Ask and it shall be given you.”

- Jesus

Wile E. Coyote never did catch the Road Runner. In a last ditch effort, Coyote would sometimes hold up a sign requesting help.

Imitate him. Ask for help.

You may not believe it, but many people *want* you to succeed. Your parents want you to succeed. Your brothers and sisters want you to succeed. They may pretend they want you to fail, but, trust me. They want you to succeed. So do your friends, teachers, and and perhaps even your neighbors.

You can find an inspiring example of this spirit in the movie [Akeelah and the Bee](#). Here is your homework for the week: Go to the library. Check the movie out. It is worth your time. Imitate Akeelah. Ask for help. Trust me. People will help.

Of course, some people do *not* want you to succeed. Ignore them. Some people may even try to stop you. Ignore them, too. You have one life to live. Ignore the haters. Move on.

Before asking for help, you must first be humble. Admit that you are struggling. Admit that you are a beginner. Do not pose. Do not act like you are an expert when you are not. Or, as one writer puts it, [“Don’t Wear a Cowboy Hat Unless You are a Cowboy.”](#)

Do you remember the ultimate goal of Wile E. Coyote? He has one, *and only one* goal. He wants a “road runner” dinner! He will never get that dinner, of course. The show’s writers cannot let that happen.

This, however, does *not* apply to you. Remember... there are plenty of others out there who *have* gotten their “road runner dinner”.

Since they have done it, you know it can be done. **You** can learn a foreign language. You can learn Latin!

Learning a foreign language is not as hard as we like to think. Do you know any foreigners who are fluent in English? Are they significantly more intelligent than you? Or, could it be they are more dedicated and determined than you?

“Ok”, you say. “I get it. I am ready. I have set a goal, and am determined to finish the job. I’ve taken action. I have the tools to learn Latin. I am listening, reading, writing, and speaking Latin. But, I still get confused. I admit I need help! So....

“Who do I ask?”

Are you in a Latin class? Start with your teacher.

Your teachers want to help you. Good teachers love eager students.

At some point in the past, your teacher fell in love with the Latin language. Perhaps they have lost some of that love over the years. They lost that love because some of their students (students who despise Latin) wore them down.

Yet, *you* are in their class with a “can do” attitude. *You* are ready to learn Latin. You *want* to learn Latin. Will your teacher help you? Will your attitude refresh and encourage your teacher? No doubt.

Worst case scenario, your teacher is beyond encouragement. He teaches Latin, no longer because he loves Latin, but because teaching pays his bills. He teaches Latin because teaching gives him three months off each year. He teaches Latin because teaching sends him home every afternoon at three o’clock.

In other words, teaching Latin it is a convenient job with plenty of vacation time and no heavy lifting.

If you have a tired, bored, worn out teacher, you may have to look somewhere else for help. Fortunately, you are learning Latin in the “internet age”. There is help online.

You will find help on YouTube.

After filming Visual Latin, I began loading free videos to YouTube. I try to load a video every day of the week, but Sunday. Naturally, I miss a day here and there. Still, the videos are adding up. Currently, there are over 200 videos available.

Use these free videos to learn Latin. Ask for help. If your question is a common one, I will turn it into another video. Subscribe here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/visuallatin>

Naturally, I am not the only Latin teacher on YouTube. A teacher from Maine creates high quality Latin videos. He also uploads new videos frequently. His channel, “The Latin Tutorial” is here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/latintutorial>

No one is quite as prolific as a teacher from the land of my birth, England. Evan Del Milner has produced a mind numbing amount of videos for his YouTube channel. His channel, “Latinum” is here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/evan1965>

One word of warning about YouTube. Watch for “trolls”. In case you do not know what I am talking about, “trolls” are people who post negative, hateful, vile, or nasty comments to each and every video they find. The “trolls” are nasty. They are negative. They are bored. Ignore them.

You will find help on Facebook.

There is help on Facebook, but, honestly, there is *not much help* on Facebook. I have looked... and looked. I am surprised how little help there is. Oh, well. I suppose everyone is busy posting pictures of what they are about to eat for breakfast.

No matter. I am available to help you on Facebook. Since 2010, I have posted a “Word a Day” to the Visual Latin Facebook page. I have done this, not just because I love words (I do), but to remind students that I am here to help.

Are you stuck in Latin? Are you failing a tough Latin course at your school? Ask for help here: <https://www.facebook.com/laughatlatin>.

Just ask.

What if you don’t use Facebook? What if you don’t use YouTube? No worries. You still have options. In 2014, I launched a website dedicated to Latin, Greek, and the other languages behind the English language.

Simply visit, [Think Outside the Border](#), or dwanethomas.com. There you will find multiple ways to contact me with the toughest questions you have. Tough questions about Latin, that is. If you ask me what the cute girl at school thinks about you... I can’t help.

Who should I avoid asking for help?

Many people are happy to help you. However, you should avoid asking some people for help.

Who should you avoid?

Let me tell you a short story.

At one point in my life, I attempted to learn piano. I asked a friend for a little help with a concept I was struggling with. She promptly sat down at the piano, and without a word, began playing song after song.

She showed me nothing. She showed off.

I asked again for help. She continued playing. She taught me nothing.

I walked away. I did not ask her for help again.

She played very well. That's great. But, what of it? I needed help. She did not know how to offer it.

In your quest to learn Latin, you will meet these types.

There are many people much further down the "Latin road" than you. When you ask for help, some will help. Some will show off.

Avoid the show-offs. Don't be afraid to walk away from the show offs. They will waste your time. You are busy. You have no time to waste.

Keep searching. Find the teachers.

One more thing...

Someday, you will be able to read in Latin. This is an extremely rare skill. When you cross that line, don't become a show off.

Chapter XI

“We learn by teaching”

- Marcus Tullus Cicero

Do you *really* want to learn Latin?

Then teach Latin.

Hear me out.

A few years before the turn of the 21st Century, I decided that I was going to learn Latin. At a student conference in Virginia, a speaker spoke of the benefits of learning Latin. He rattled off the names of famous writers, authors, and statesmen that had learned Latin as children. According to the speaker, many of them attributed their abilities in the English language, not to their training in English grammar. Instead, they would frequently point out that it was their early training in Latin that gave them their power in English.

I had never thought of learning Latin before. Growing up in Europe, my family often lived inside the boundaries of the ancient Roman empire. I have played more than one game of tag inside old Roman amphitheaters. All that time, it had never occurred to me that I should learn Latin.

And, now, here I was, back in America, listening to a speaker talk about the benefits of learning the language.

After talking a bit about famous students of Latin, he spoke about the many benefits of Latin. Latin improves your vocabulary. This makes sense. After all, ninety percent of the multi-syllable words in English derive from Latin. Latin improves your understanding of etymology. It improves your ability to understand words since you learn the source of the words. Latin improves your understanding of spelling, grammar, and writing.

Naturally, all of these benefits increase your skill in the English language, which is, as it turns out, is the most powerful language on the planet.

With a more powerful vocabulary, and a more powerful command of English comes the power to think well.

In his book, The Pledge, Michael Masterson shows the progression.

“Words matter. They help us define meaning. We think with words. We learn with words. Words are the fundamental tools we use for communicating. If we use them well, we can cut, and shape, and polish our ideas precisely, and beautifully. If we use them sloppily, we put ourselves at an intellectual disadvantage. Words can help you think well. If you think well, you can plan well. If you plan well, you can work well. If you work well, you can accomplish almost anything.”

It’s true. If you know words, you will think better.

There is no better way to learn words than to learn the roots of the words. The history of words provides an insight into language that you will not find elsewhere.

Back to the story. The teacher gave other benefits to study Latin. Years later, a few of them have stuck with me.

Latin is the mother of half the languages in Europe. Why can those European kids speak five languages? At least one of the reasons is that their languages are all cousins. The languages of Europe basically come from German or Latin. If you know German, or any of the Latin derived languages, you have access to the rest of the European languages.

In fact, The Loom of Language, written by an M.I.T. professor in the mid Twentieth Century, is dedicated to this idea. If you know German and Latin, he says, you get at least 8 other languages thrown in for free.

The conference speaker went on. He mentioned the fact that so many of America’s founding fathers spoke Latin. Many of them could read in Latin, and quite a few of them could read in Greek. As a result, they were masters of the English language. Just read the American Declaration of Independence. It was written by Thomas Jefferson, who read in Greek and Latin, and in a half dozen other European languages.

He himself said:

“To read Latin and Greek authors in their original, is a sublime luxury. I thank on my knees him who directed my early education for having put into my possession this rich source of delight; and I would not exchange it for anything which I could then have acquired, and have not since acquired.”

Before the end of the talk, the speaker had won me over. I wanted to learn Latin. I went forward to ask a question. Was it possible for me to learn Latin? I was 22 years old. I had one year of college left. Studying Latin formally in school was not an option for me. To learn it, I would be on my own. I would need to teach myself. Could I do it?

He considered for a moment. “Latin is a tough language. You could do it; but,” he added, “only if you are tremendously self-disciplined.”

“No problem,” I thought. “I am self-disciplined.”

Nice thought. It turns out, however, I am not as self-disciplined as I would like to think I am.

I had one more year at college, a full time job, a car that kept breaking down (I hate cars... but, that’s another story), and, bills to pay. I was busy. It didn’t matter. I would begin teaching myself Latin anyway.

The speaker was right. Latin was hard. Actually, it still is. I studied for a while. I tried. Then, I failed. I dropped Latin for a while.

I finished college, moved to a new town, got married, found a place to live, and started a family. But, I still wanted to learn Latin.

Now, more than ever, I was too busy.

This is when I discovered the greatest way to teach yourself a language.

The greatest way to learn something (including Latin) is to teach it to others.

Something magical happens when you decide to teach a subject. You find yourself with a tremendous dose of motivation.

You are about to step out in front of the crowd. You might want to have something to say.

I don’t want to stand in front of anyone with nothing to say. When I walk to the front of the room, I want to have something to say. I want the audience to think, “This guy knows what he is talking about.”

If you decide to teach something, and you gather students around, you too will want people to think this about you. You will want people to say that you are a good teacher. Knowing that you will soon step in front of a room full of students will motivate you on a deep level.

How I began

In 1997, a local private school was looking for a Latin teacher. I volunteered for the position. I had never taught Latin before. I probably knew less than one hundred Latin words.

I didn't *really* know Latin. I had learned a little after the conference, of course. But, the truth is, I was not qualified. I was not certified.

Still, I had a deep desire to learn Latin. Since I was willing and, since no one else was lining up for the job, they hired me. I became a Latin teacher.

Immediately, I realized I was unqualified. I had to do something fast. I started teaching myself Latin again. This time, in earnest. I even found a local high school that taught Latin. I went to the teacher and asked if I could join her class. She consented, and just like that, I was back in high school... at age twenty-three.

The funny thing is, I had never attended an actual high school, because I had been home schooled. My high school Latin class was it for me. From time to time, I still see old friends from high school. They are ten years younger than I am. Heh.

Do you remember the story of Odysseus and the Sirens? The Sirens were bad news. They were beautiful women, with beautiful voices. They would gather on the rocky shores of Greek islands, and lure sailors into the rocks, and into certain death.

Odysseus wanted to listen to them. He wanted to hear their beautiful voices. No one had ever heard them before and lived to tell the story.

So, he ordered His men to tie him to the mast of the ship. He instructed them to put wax into their ears. They were to block out all sounds. He did not want them to hear the voices since he knew that they would turn the ship to the rocks.

As they sailed past the rocks, Odysseus listened to the beautiful singing. He begged his men to release him. He begged them to turn the ship toward the rocks. They refused to do so. They sailed on toward home.

What does this have to do with teaching?

When you become a teacher, you are committed. You are committed for at least a year. You have tied yourself to a mast. You are going to sail toward your goal, whether you like it or not. After all, you have told your students that you will be there. You have told them that you will teach them. You must show up. You cannot untie yourself from the mast, jump ship, and swim to shore. You are committed.

This is my ultimate secret. This is how I learn languages.

In 1997, I wanted to learn Latin. I volunteered to teach Latin before I really knew the language. Within a few years, I could read in Latin with ease.

In 2007, I wanted to learn Spanish. I volunteered to teach Spanish part time at an elementary school. Within a few years, I could read in Spanish.

In 2009, I decided to learn Greek. I volunteered to teach Greek part time at a local college as they continued to hunt for a full time Greek teacher. Two years later, they found someone. I had to leave. I did not feel I had learned Greek as well I as I wanted. So, in 2012, I started teaching Greek online. I still have a long way to go in Greek, and so I continue to teach Greek online. I will teach Greek until I learn it well.

In 2011, I decided that I wanted to learn how deep the Latin and Greek influence really are. I began “teaching” a word a day to the world. Using Facebook, I would post a word a day from Latin or Greek. Currently, there is a 400 page document on my computer. It is filled with thousands of English words that derive from Latin and Greek. I am adding to it daily. This work also launched a new series: [Word Up! The Vocab Show](#). We launched Word Up! in late 2014.

What is the point of all this? Simple. If you really want to learn something well, teach someone else.

How are you going to do this?

I doubt you will be permitted to teach at a local public school. The public schools are operated by bureaucrats. They will want to know where you went to college. What is your degree? Where is your teaching certificate? Where is your teaching license?

You can try the local public school, of course. But, don’t be surprised if they turn you down.

How, then, are you going to do this?

You could teach a class at a local private school. You could offer to tutor kids in the afternoon. You could teach an evening class. You could offer to teach, or tutor, during the Sunday school hour at your church. You could create YouTube videos. You could post your lessons on social media. You could start a blog. You could even just write what you learn in a journal. If you just cannot find anyone to teach, you could, [lecture to the wall](#).

Do you have the mind of a grasshopper? Do you hop from one hobby to the next? Do you have a hard time committing to one important task? Do you have a hard time seeing the task through to completion?

I do.

This is why I volunteered to teach Latin. By offering to teach Latin, I was tying myself to the mast. I wanted to learn Latin, but, I knew that I could not make myself stay on task until the job was complete. So, I told a bunch of students that I would teach them Latin. I told them that I would be there every day, week after week, month after month, until they learned to read in Latin. I tied myself to the mast.

There were many sirens. I received other job offers. Friends offered me jobs in their companies. To this day, the sirens still call. You can't make much money as a teacher, they say. Come sell real estate. Come help me start a construction company. Come help me start a farm. Come invest in my business. Come to our weekly meetings. Come, come, come. The sirens never stop. I've been teaching languages for years. The sirens keep calling.

You will hear the sirens as well.

Your friends will invite you to a party. They will invite you to a movie. They will ask you to "hang out". You will be tempted to watch television, play video games, surf the internet, read mindless novels.

It is easy to listen to the calls. It is tempting to untie yourself from the mast and go. Resist.

Warning!

At this point, I must warn you about something.

I am not saying you need to get a *job* as a teacher. I did. I have done it for years. Unless you work for the government, teaching is a rough way way to make a living in this world. I know.

For seven years, my family of seven lived in a 900 square foot, two bedroom apartment. My wife and I pulled a mattress out every evening and slept in the living room. We drove, and still drive, old beat up cars. We have shopped for clothing at Goodwill stores, clipped coupons, and camped for vacations. During the "summers off", I worked on construction sites. In fact, I *still* have my construction job. If you have a family, teaching in a private school is a tough, tough way to make a living. I do not recommend it.

I am not suggesting that you become a professional teacher. I am simply asking you to teach someone who is interested. Give away a bit of your time. Use it to help someone else. As you lead them, you will learn.

You could start posting your own word a day on social media. Share what you learn with others. Each day, as you learn something new in the language, post it. Use this as a file to hold your discoveries. Have you found a helpful video? Post it on YouTube for the rest of us to see. Are you learning a new word each day in your target language? Post that word on Facebook for the rest of us to learn.

You could start your own blog! As you grow in your knowledge of the language, you will make discoveries. You will want to remember those discoveries. Start your

own blog! Write every day about your discoveries. Share with the rest of us. Even if no one else ever looks at your blog, you will be able to go back and rediscover what you once knew, but later forgot.

Teach your little sister or brother. Tutor Latin students at your school or homeschool group. Volunteer to teach a small Latin class after school or start a Latin club. You will be amazed by how quickly this speeds the process for you.

Now, perhaps you are wondering...

If I teach something I do not know that well,

Won't I be humiliated?

Yep. You will. What of it? Couldn't we all use a little more humility?

Students are going to ask questions you do not know the answers to. It happens to me all the time. In many of my classes, I am often embarrassed by how often I have to say, "I don't know." I learned quickly to say, "I don't know, but I will find out."

And, that is exactly what you do.

Make a note of the question.

As soon as you get home, study. Find the answer and report back to your students. Post the question and the answer on your blog.

You will learn faster because you will be motivated by an external force. That force is called *embarrassment*.

You will be embarrassed that you do not know the answer. Your students, if they are anything like mine, will point this out. "Hey, aren't you the teacher?"

Just smile. Assure them that you will find the answer. Then go look for it. This is how you learn. Your students will motivate you.

You may have students in your class who know more than you. That is a strange feeling. I have been there many times. This too, will motivate you to work harder.

Conclusion

Learning to read and speak in Latin is not an easy thing to do.

It is a hard thing to do. You have chosen one of life's real challenges.

Whenever I meet new people, I face the inevitable question. "So, what do you do for a living?"

When I tell them that I am a Latin teacher, the response is *always* the same. "Oh. I studied Latin in high school. Boy, was it hard!"

In twenty years, I have never met someone who told me Latin was easy for them. And I probably never will meet that person.

Still, its worth it. Push through. Refuse to quit. You can do it.

As you learn Latin, you will stumble. Discouragement will come. To face it, and survive, you must prepare. Knowing what the enemy looks like will help. Here are some of the lies you will face.

Lie # 1: I am not smart enough to learn Latin.

Truth: *You are smart enough.*

They say Chinese is the hardest language in the world to learn. Of course, the Chinese are probably telling their kids that English is the hardest language in the world, but, that is another story.

Think about this. In China, right now, there are hundreds of thousands of little two year olds learning Chinese. If it is so hard to learn, how are these little guys doing it? Are Chinese two year olds smarter than you? Not sure how to answer that? I will help you. They are not smarter than you.

They have a secret weapon. They are learning Chinese because they are full - time "students" in Chinese language schools, their homes.

The same principle applies to Latin. You can learn Latin. You are smart enough. How do I know this?

I know we could both learn Chinese, because thousands of little kids are learning Chinese. If they can do it, we can do it.

I know you can learn Latin, because thousands before you have learned Latin. If they can do it, you can do it.

People think you have to be smart to learn another language. You don't. Even Mark Twain recognized this truth when he said, "By all means, learn another language. It will not make you any smarter, but, everyone will think you are smarter!"

You do not have to be smart to learn Latin. You must be determined. You must be persistent. You must be consistent.

Lie # 2: I have a friend who speaks 17 languages.

Truth: *No he doesn't.*

Don't listen to the stories of friends who speaks 17 languages. He doesn't.

In the land of the blind, the one eyed man is king. Americans are notoriously bad at foreign languages. We are the land of the blind. If someone shows up speaking 3 or 4 languages, he is automatically a mini-legend. If someone claims to speak 17 languages, he is granted demi-god status.

There is a very good chance, however, that your friend is a braggart, not a linguist. After all, if *you* do not speak the languages he claims to speak, you simply have to take his word for it.

I have been in the language business for almost 20 years. I have met many people who speak 15 languages... fluently. Yet, they are only 19 years old. Sure they do. Sure they speak 15 languages. Often, these super linguists will not respond to me when I ask a few questions in German, Spanish, or Greek.

No one else speaks 10 languages, so these braggarts may as well declare themselves linguists. After all, it impresses the ladies.

On the other hand, I have met several missionaries who truly do speak a dozen languages. Interestingly, you would never know. They do not talk about it. They *never* brag about it. If you find someone like this, find out if they offer classes. You will learn more than you could ever imagine.

Lie # 3: I am too old to learn a foreign language.

Truth: *No, you are not.*

At the age of 56, [Dr. Mary Hobson started studying Russian](#). She became an award-winning translator.

The truth is, as we age, we become *too busy* to learn another language.

When we are kids, we are enrolled in school full time. We dedicate hours to study. Kids are “better” at learning languages, because they spend more time doing it.

I have taught foreign languages for years. I have taught children and adults. From experience, I can assure you, the adults are much more motivated. They are easier to teach. They see the value of learning another language. They understand the power that comes with words.

On the other hand, the children I have taught are not motivated. They want to go to the bathroom, go outside to play, eat lunch, sit next to the cute girl, pass notes, throw paper airplanes, create origami, untie their shoes, argue, or whisper. During language class, they tend to have one main goal: Do something else.

In the end, children have an “easier” time learning languages because they spend more time learning languages. It’s simple math. If I spend 5,000 hours practicing golf, and you spend 100 hours practicing golf, I will be better at golf than you.

While children are in school, most adults are working. While children are spending hours reading and learning, adults are busy making sure the bills are paid.

Children are “better” at languages because they are not as busy and burdened as adults.

I remind my students of this constantly. They smile and ignore me. Years later, they return. They tell me they should have listened. They ask me to teach them now, what they refused to listen to then. I smile and ignore them.

Opportunities close.

If you are reading this as an adult, be encouraged. You can learn a foreign language; even Latin. If you are reading this as a student, be warned. Now is your chance. Study hard. Life gets busier. Now is your chance. The door is closing.

The levels of language learning

As you learn Latin, keep this in mind. There are multiple levels of language learning.

You might speak at a beginner level, an intermediate level, or an advanced level. You could be fluent, or you could speak at a near native level.

You will progress through the language much like you have progressed through life. As an infant, you listened. Do it again. Fill your head with audio training. Flood your brain with the language. In the age of the internet, as we have seen, this is easy to do. This is the infancy stage of language learning. Don't skip it.

Next, as a growing baby, you learned to crawl. You were slow. You fell over often. You rolled around the floor. As you learn Latin, you must learn to crawl. Everything is new to you. You are learning new words. You are learning a new pronunciation. You are learning new rules and sounds. You are learning to crawl in Latin. Don't rush. You need this.

As a toddler, you stumbled around the house. You bumped into things. You made messes. You made mistakes. You annoyed your poor mother. You were likely hilarious. You were learning. Do it again. Try to speak in Latin. Make mistakes. Annoy your teacher. Make funny mistakes. Learn.

As a child and youth, things began to fall into place. You could handle yourself in the world. You still had much to learn, of course. For the most part, though, you were ready. The same thing will happen as you learn Latin. By listening, you have learned to pronounce the language. You are now learning the grammar. You now have a basic vocabulary. You are able to read simple stories, simple sentences, and phrases. You have much to learn, but you have learned much. You know how to "walk" in the language.

Many students will stop here. That is fine. You have achieved much. You can "walk" in Latin. Perhaps you are ready to go study another language. If you decide to go on in Latin, you will learn to run.

Like a child, you have learned to crawl and walk. If you have decided to proceed, you are ready to run. Begin reading in Latin. Start reading through the recommended reading list from chapter six.

Title	Author	Difficulty	Price
1. Lingua Latina	Hans Orberg	Easy - Difficult	\$21
2. Cornelia	Mima Maxey	Easy	Free
3. Ora Maritima	E. A. Sonnenschein	Intermediate	Free
4. Gospel of Matthew	St. Matthew	Intermediate	Free
5. Fabilae Faciles	Francis Ritchie	Intermediate	Free
6. Viri Romae	Llomond	Intermediate - Adv	Free
7. Roma Aeterna	Hans Orberg	Advanced	\$21

You have now reached a high level of fluency in Latin. But, if you really want to run, you must practice speaking and reading on a daily basis. You may need to set up a class to do this. Chances are, there are “infants, crawlers, and toddlers” in your town. There are people who want to learn Latin, yet, they do not know where to begin. Teach them. Speak to them in Latin as you teach them. Your progress will skyrocket!

You have learned to crawl, walk, and run in Latin. You have passed through beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels in Latin. Is there another level? Can you become fluent in Latin?

The English word, fluent, comes from the Latin verb *fluere*, meaning: to *flow*. Yes. You can study your way to fluency. You can progress to a flowing level in Latin. Using all the steps in this book, you can do it.

However, will you ever reach native levels in Latin?

You will probably never achieve native levels in Latin. Don't let that get you down. If you are growing up as a missionary or military kid on some foreign field, you may reach native levels in the language of your host nation. In the case of Latin, you are *not* a native speaker, and never will be. That is because Latin is a language that now belongs to everyone. It is the first language, and therefore, the native language of no one.

The bamboo tree.

As you learn Latin, do not be discouraged.

I once read that bamboo trees are difficult to grow. You plant the seed, water and wait for years. Nothing happens. Really. Nothing happens.

Then one day, years later, the bamboo sprouts and grows at an alarming rate. soon there is a tall bamboo plant in the yard.

So it is with languages. You plug along, day after day. You feel like you are going nowhere... absolutely nowhere. It is frustrating. I have experienced this frustration many times. I never get used to it.

You study flash cards, listen to podcasts, attempt to read books in the language, and watch films in the language. Still, you feel you are getting nowhere. Then, suddenly, you overhear a conversation in the language and realize that you understood everything you heard. Or, you read a paragraph and realize you did not have to look up every other word. In fact, you only had to look up a few words, if any.

Reward yourself. Suddenly, almost without warning, you are there. You now speak and understand the language. Smile. It is a very good feeling. It is euphoric.

What do you do when you are done?

Now that the long, tedious process of learning Latin is over, what should you do?

Enjoy the victory!

Read a book in Latin. I always recommend starting with the New Testament in Latin, simply because it is the easiest place to start. From there, go in any direction you like. You could read the classical authors like Caesar and Vergil. You could read Medieval authors, scientific authors, or even some modern authors.

Visit [the Latin Library.com](http://the.Latin.Library.com). There you will find more Latin than you will ever read, and it's all free.

Am I ever truly done?

There are roughly seventy-five thousand words in Latin. No. You are never truly done. There are always more words to learn. I learn new Latin words every day, and I have been at this for almost twenty years. You will discover more. You do not have to stop.

There will always be more to read. There are the classical authors, the medieval authors, the scientific authors, and the philosophical authors. You will never run out of Latin books to read.

Should I go on?

This is a better question. There is always more to learn in Latin. You should not ask yourself if you will ever be done. You should ask yourself these questions:

Should I continue in Latin?

What if I don't go on?

What if I want to learn another language?

You have already done what few people have done. Few people ever learn Latin, and fewer still learn it well. Congratulate yourself.

Just because you learned Latin, however, does not mean you have to stay in Latin. If you decide to move on, that is okay. In fact, I recommend it. Go study other languages. It is a fun, rewarding process.

I'll let you in on a secret. I am ready to move on. I wrote this book because I am tired of saying the same thing every day in countless emails. I don't want to answer emails all day. I want to move on. I have learned Latin well. In the process, however, the German that I once knew well has slipped away from me. I am ready to go back to German. I want to learn Italian. I am still working on Spanish. The point is, I myself am ready to move on. Once you have learned Latin well, move on. You do not have to stay in Latin unless you want to.

What did you learn?

This short book focused on Latin. I have simply taken some of the skills I have picked up as a lifelong student and applied them to learning Latin in particular. I hope you have enjoyed reading this book.

In chapter one you learned the power of setting a clear goal.

In chapter two you learned to harness your time. You can use the skills you learned in chapter two *to learn anything*.

In chapter three you learned to persevere, no matter what.

In chapter four you learned the power of action.

In chapters five, six, seven, eight, nine and ten you learned the various strategies you will need to learn Latin well. You learned to read in Latin, speak in Latin, write in Latin, and study in Latin, and even teach in Latin.

If you follow the steps I laid out in this short book, you will be able to read in Latin one or two years from now, perhaps sooner. You will be in the company of many of the most educated men and women in history.

Once you have achieved this, you will be confident enough to tackle other languages.

Most likely, you will learn more languages than I have learned. You are young. You have time. I am older and *very* busy. I don't know how many more languages I will have time to learn.

I'd love to hear from you. Feel free to contact me. Tell me about your adventures. If you want, write to me in Latin!

The End

How to find me...

I truly hope you were able to pull at least one good, usable idea out of this book. However, I may have created even more questions in your mind. If you have a question, or a comment, you are welcome to contact me.

The easiest way to get in touch is to simply visit: <http://www.dwanethomas.com/>

You can also get in touch by stopping by any of the following locations:

- [The Visual Latin Facebook page](#)
- [The Visual Latin You Tube channel](#)
- [The Compass Classroom](#)
- or, you could just email at: dwane@visuallatin.com