

Latin A-Level – examination in 2025

Course Outline

The course divides into language & literature, which have equal weight in the final exams.

Language

Building on your knowledge from GCSE, we consolidate the grammar covered so far and cover new grammar, extending your vocabulary and practising translation of unseen Latin texts, as well as translating into Latin. By the end of the course you will be able to translate un-adapted texts independently. Translation into Latin is an option in the exam; we will do a lot of this during the course as a way of consolidating your grasp of the language, but you can choose a comprehension alternative for the exam. We use John Taylor's *Latin Beyond GCSE*, adding other books in Y13 to practise unseen translation & prose composition (i.e. translating a passage of English onto Latin).

Literature

This element requires you to study four set texts (two prose & two verse). You need to be able to translate the texts, understand their social/literary/historical context & analyse their literary qualities.

We will study two texts in Y12 & two in Y13. We can choose whether to stick with the same author for the Y13 texts or change author for variety.

The set texts for this year are:

- An extract from a law-court speech by Cicero **or** imperial history from Tacitus, with the option of some of Pliny's letters in Y13.
- An extract from Virgil's Aeneid, Book 2, about the fall of Troy **or** some of Juvenal's Satires, with the option of some of Ovid's Fasti (about Roman festivals and customs) in Y13.

Course Structure	Language	Prose Literature	Verse Literature
Y12 Autumn	Consolidate language so far & introduce key new grammar: Taylor Chapters 1 & 2		
Y12 Spring	More complex language – Taylor chapter 3	First prose text	First verse text
Y12 Summer	Practice & consolidation Taylor chapter 4		
Y13 Autumn	Practice of prose & verse unseens, plus English-to-Latin or comprehension, Taylor chapter 5 & past papers	Second prose text	Second verse text
Y13 Spring			
Y13 Summer	Exam practice	Exam practice	Exam practice

Exams:

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| 1. Unseen Translation: | 1hr 45 mins | 33% |
| 2. Prose Composition OR Comprehension: | 1hr 15 mins | 17% |
| 3. Prose Literature: | 2 hrs | 25% |
| 4. Verse Literature: | 2 hrs | 25% |

Transition work

Reading List

The most useful thing you can do in preparation for studying Latin at A-level is to read around the subject. Anything that you are interested in will be helpful; aim to broaden your understanding of the historical and cultural context of the texts we read. The literature and history of Greece is also relevant as it had such influence on Rome.

Look for introductions to whatever aspect of the Roman world interests you - art/archaeology/religion/philosophy... Remember that watching/listening to documentaries (especially ones from reputable sources like BBC) is useful too.

Latin literature in translation:

Virgil, Aeneid - try the Penguin Classics prose translation by David West

Livy, Early History of Rome

Historical context:

SPQR, Mary Beard - a bit of a door-stop, but very readable & wide ranging. Excellent at giving you an insight into how we know what we "know".

The End of the Roman Republic 146-44BC, Catherine Steel - intended to give a straightforward narrative introduction to this key period of Roman history.

The Imperium trilogy, Robert Harris – highly readable introduction to the politics of the 1st century BCE.

Wider Classical world:

Homer, Iliad and/or Odyssey - prose translations are often easier to read; Penguin Classics are fine. Emily Wilson's (still quite new) verse translation has had rave reviews.

If you want to venture deeper into Greek literature, *Herodotus' Histories*, *Sophocles' Theban plays* & *Plato's Symposium* are good places to start, but try anything you can find.

Early Greece, Oswyn Murray

Greek History: The Basics, Robin Osborne

Modern literature drawing on Classics:

Country, Michael Hughes

Silence of the Girls, Pat Barker

The Song of Achilles or Circe, Madeline Miller

The Emperor's Babe, Bernardine Evaristo

Tales from Ovid, Ted Hughes

Language Revision

We begin Y12 by going back to the very beginning and revising all the Latin language you have covered for GCSE, so there should be plenty of opportunity to iron out any uncertainties and misunderstandings. However, we will do this fairly rapidly so there is not time for you to learn all the endings at that point.

Make sure that you are 100% confident with the following by September:

- *noun endings for all five declensions*
- *verb endings (indicative, active – present, imperfect, perfect & future) for all four conjugations*

It will be helpful if you can revise all the grammar required for GCSE, but getting the essentials really secure is more useful than skimming over everything.

Your vocabulary knowledge will also slip if you go for three months without reading any Latin. Aim to make time to revise the GCSE defined vocab list during the summer and just before we start in September. Use online tools to help – quizlet, memrise, CLC resources: <https://www.exams.cambridgescp.com/files/cscp/wjec18vocab/index.html>

Finally, two passages for translation that you can have a go at during the summer – to keep your Latin brain ticking over. Have a go & bring your versions to your first Latin lesson in September!

Translation 1: Perverse Pigs

dum laetus ad summum **collem** ambulo, subito agricolae, qui **sues pingues** agebat, **occurri**. tum ego, “salve!” inquam, “quo hos sues agis?” ille respondit se Thebas ire. at ego, incredibilem **stultitiam** hominis **miratus**, clamavi, “haec via ad Thebas non fert, sed ad Plataeas.” tum agricola, verbis meis **turbatus**, “st! tace!” inquit. “Plataeas **re vera** eo, sed **simulo** me urbem alteram petere; nam hi sues tam obstinati sunt ut, **quamvis** magno cum labore **acti sint**, **nolint** ire quo **velim**; nunc tamen, **rati** me Thebas petere, **prompti** Plataeas currunt.”

collis, collis m = hill

sus, suis m = pig

pinguis, -is, -e = fat

occurro, occurrere, occurri (+ dat.) = to meet

stultitia, -ae f = stupidity

miratus (+ acc.) = amazed at ...

turbatus = upset, disturbed, annoyed

re vera = in truth, actually, really

simulo, -are, -avi, -atus = to pretend

quamvis = although

acti sint = passive subjunctive of ago =>
“they are driven”

nolint = subjunctive of nolo =>

“they do not want/they refuse”

velim = subjunctive of volo => “I want”

reor, reri, ratus sum = to think (dep)

promptus, -a, -um = ready, eager

Translation 2: The Vampires (adapted from Petronius, Satyricon 63)

cum adhuc servus essem, domini nostri **delicatus** decessit. cum ergo eum mater **misella** defleret et nos omnes tristissimi essemus, subito **strigae** ululare coeperunt; putares canem **leporem** persequi! habebamus tunc hominem Cappadocem longum, audacissimum et validissimum: poterat **bovem** iratum tollere. hic audacter **stricto** gladio extra **ostium** procucurrit et mulierem **traiecit**. audivimus gemitum et - **plane** non **mentiar** - ipsas non vidimus! homo autem noster **introrsus** se proiecit in lectum, et corpus totum **lividum** habebat quasi **flagellis caesis**, quia **scilicet** eum tetigerat mala manus. nos clauso ostio redimus iterum ad **officium**, sed dum mater corpus filii sui **amplectitur**, tangit et videt **manipulum** de **stramentis** factum. non **cor** habebat, non intestina, non quicquam: scilicet iam puerum strigae abstulerant et **fascem** stramentorum supposuerant. ceterum Cappadox ille longus post hoc factum numquam coloris sui fuit; immo post paucos dies **phreneticus** periit.

delicatus = *favourite*

misella (diminutive of miser) = *poor little*

striga = *vampire/evil spirit/witch*

lepus, leporis = *hare*

Cappadox = *a Cappadocian (ie person from Cappadocia)*

bos, bovis = *ox*

stringo, stringere, strinxi, strictum = *to draw (a sword)*

ostium, -i = *door*

traicio, traicere, traieci, traiectum = *to pierce, transfix, stab*

gemitus = *a groan*

plane = *clearly, obviously*

mentior (deponent) = *I lie (tell lies)*

introrsus = *inside*

lividus = *bruised*

flagellum = *a whip*

caedo = *beat (often = "to kill")*

scilicet = *presumably, of course*

officium = *duty*

amplector (deponent) = *to embrace*

manipulum = *handful, bundle*

stramentum = *straw*

cor, cordis (n) = *heart*

fascis, -is = *bundle*

phreneticus = *in a frenzy, delirious*