

Welcome to 'Beginners' Latin'!

This document is a guide to the module 'Beginners' Latin', as well as a databank of resources and tools which will be useful to you in 'Beginners' Latin' and onwards into your further journeys with Latin. 'Beginners' Latin' is group title given to the combination of two consecutive 15-CAT modules: Latin I (CX115/CX215/CX315), which takes place in Term 1, and Latin II (CX110/CX210/CX310), which takes place across Terms 2 and 3.

The idea of these modules is to cover all the fundamentals of Latin grammar so that, by the end of the year, you will be able to tackle real Latin texts on your own. Crucially, we will also be learning about tools and resources which will make it much easier to read Latin. Towards the end of Latin II, we will read some real Latin (excerpts from Hyginus' *Fabulae*).

Loosely, Latin I is concerned with accidence (the forms of Latin words) and Latin II is concerned with syntax (the structures of Latin sentences), although there is some crossover.

Classes

We have 4 hours of classes per week; in three of these, we will learn grammar and syntax and, in the fourth, we will do practice exercises and work on Latin vocabulary. The full timetable will be available on Moodle when the course starts.

Assessment

Across both 15-credit modules which make up Beginners' Latin, there are several staggered summative in-class tests and two final examinations. The dates of these assessments will be confirmed closer to the start of the module.

Textbook

The textbook we will be using is:

J. C. McKeown, *Classical Latin: An Introductory Course*. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2010).

All students should have access to a copy of the textbook.¹ McKeown's website (www.jcmckeown.com) has some materials which are supplementary to the textbook. I will also produce PowerPoint slides, based on McKeown's textbook which will be available on Moodle ahead of our lessons.

¹ McKeown (and many of the other books mentioned on this document) are, currently, available freely through archive.org (pending the outcoming of ongoing legal proceedings against the website). These books are also available through Warwick University Library.

Further reading²

No one has to purchase anything mentioned in this section. If you continue Latin study beyond Latin I and II, it will be useful to know how to use a grammar. The most accessible grammar is:

J. Morwood, *A Latin Grammar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999),

and this is what I would recommend you begin with. More detailed grammars, which are good for exceptions or unusual points of grammar are:

B. H. Kennedy, *Kennedy's Revised Latin Primer*. (London: Longman, 1965);

which is very detailed and clear, but can sometimes be a little old-fashioned; and

B. L. Gildersleeve & G. Lodge, *Latin Grammar*. (various publishers)

which is extremely detailed, but was first published in the 1860s, and this shows in its language and style.³ All three of these grammars are usually available inexpensively online or at second-hand bookstores / book-sales.

One of the greatest challenges in learning Latin is getting to grips with technical grammar, as most native speakers do not learn English grammar from a technical perspective (if English is your second language, it is possible that you actually have a bonus here!). If you want to brush up on your English grammar as a means to improving your Latin grammar, I recommend:

N. Goldman & L. Szymanski, *English Grammar for Students of Latin: The Study Guide for Those Learning Latin*. 3rd ed. (Ann Arbor, MI: Olivia & Hill, 2004).

Dictionaries

In Latin I and II, all the vocabulary we will use will be from McKeown, or will be given to you. However, it is important for a Latinist to be able to use dictionaries, and these will be extremely useful to you in your future careers.

In the modern world, most people use online dictionaries, and it is silly to pretend otherwise. The best online dictionary, which I strongly recommend you use, is:

<https://logeion.uchicago.edu>

This is a helpful interface which gives you access to a range of Latin (and ancient Greek) dictionaries, most importantly for Latin, C. T. Lewis & C. Short, *A Latin Dictionary*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879), commonly known as Lewis & Short (or L&S).

If you prefer paper dictionaries, probably the most accessible is:

² The following is an adapted version of a similar document produced by J.T. Wolfenden, to whom I am grateful.

³ Gildersleeve and Lodge (as it is colloquially called) comes with with a content warning. Basil Gildersleeve was a committed Confederate and espoused racist views which were considered unusually extreme, even in his day. His is one of the most detailed Latin grammars, but it is impossible to recommend without being very clear about the things he believed. If you would like to read more, I recommend the following article: Patrice D. Rankine, 'The Classics, Race, and Community-Engaged or Public Scholarship', *American Journal of Philology* 140, no. 2 (2019): 345–59.

D. P. Simpson, *Cassell's Latin Dictionary: Latin/English, English/Latin*. (various publishers)

which is also, importantly, inexpensive. It is important to note, however, that dictionary preference is very personal. Other, equally good and detailed dictionaries include:

C. T. Lewis, *Elementary Latin Dictionary*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963)

J. Morwood, *Oxford Latin Desk Dictionary*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)

W. Smith & J. Lockwood, *Chambers Murray Latin-English Dictionary*. (London: John Murray Press, 1933).

The most influential Latin dictionaries, which are extremely expensive and infinitely more comprehensive than is needed at Beginners' (or, indeed, undergraduate study generally, unless you are doing a lot of linguistic work):

P. G. W. Glare, *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)

[Various] *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*. (ongoing).

The first of these, often known as the *OLD*, is written in English and covers the vast majority of meanings for the vast majority of Latin words. The second (the *TLL*), begun in 1894 and ongoing (current completion plans are for 2050), is composed of dozens of volumes which explain every possible meaning of a Latin word (in Latin) and, in most cases, every place in extant Latin literature that the word can be found. Both are available through the library and the PDFs of the available volumes of the *TLL* (up to *regnum*) are available online at <https://thesaurus.badw.de/tll-digital/tll-open-access.html>.

Bookshops

If you choose to buy any grammars or dictionaries (and, again, I stress that no one needs to have access to a book that is not the textbook), some useful places to find second-hand books online are:

www.bookfinder.com

www.abebooks.co.uk

www.oxfam.org.uk/shop

www.blackwells.co.uk

www.waterstones.com

www.alibris.co.uk

www.hellenicbookservice.com