

Latin

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Contents

I	Getting Started with Latin	2
1	You Already Know a Little Latin	3
1.1	The Latin Alphabet	3
1.2	Pronunciation	3
1.2.1	Classical Pronunciation	3
1.2.2	Ecclesiastical Pronunciation	5

Part I

Getting Started with Latin

Chapter 1

You Already Know a Little Latin

1.1 The Latin Alphabet

One feature that makes Latin easy to learn is its alphabet. They have the same alphabet as the English alphabet, but with a few modifications:

- Latin never uses the letter *W*.
- Few Latin words use *K*, they use *C* instead.
- Latin used *I* and *V* as both consonants and vowels until much later, when someone thought to bend the *I* into a *J* and round the *V* into a *U*.

1.2 Pronunciation

1.2.1 Classical Pronunciation

The big advantage for you is Latin doesn't have any silent letters.

Vowel Sounds

Long Vowel	Pronunciation	Short Vowel	Pronunciation
a	ah (f <u>a</u> ther)	a	uh (ide <u>a</u>)
e	ay (m <u>a</u> te)	e	eh (b <u>e</u> d)
i	ee (s <u>ee</u> d)	i	ih (p <u>i</u> t)
o	o (n <u>o</u> te)	o	oh (p <u>o</u> t)
u	oo (m <u>oo</u> n)	u	u (p <u>u</u> t)
y	uw/umlaut (German <u>u</u> ber)	y	oh (German H <u>u</u> tte)

Table 1.1: Vowel Soundings

Diphthong Sounds

Definition 1 (Diphthongs). The combinations of vowel sounds.

Diphthongs are extremely common, I've merged them in Table 1.2.

Diphthong	Pronunciation	As in English
ae	igh	<u>fi</u> ght
au	ow	h <u>ow</u>
ei	ey	th <u>ey</u>
eu	eyoo	th <u>ey</u> <u>too</u>
oe	oi	<u>toi</u> l
ui	uey	chew

Table 1.2: Diphthong Sounds in Classical Latin

Consonant Sounds

Most Latin consonants have the same sound as English consonants, except the following exceptions.

Latin Consonant	Pronunciation
c	k (<u>c</u> an; never as in "cereal")
g	g (<u>g</u> ood; never as in "genuine")
j	y (<u>y</u> outh)
r	r (always trilled)
s	s (<u>s</u> oft; never as in "fans")
v	w (<u>w</u> oman)
x	ks (wa <u>x</u> ; never as in "xenophobic")
z	dz (a <u>d</u> ze)
bs	ps (la <u>p</u> se)
bt	pt (exce <u>p</u> t)
ch	kh (<u>ch</u> aos; never as in "cheer")
gn	ngn (ha <u>ng</u> nail)
ph	p-h (to <u>p</u> -heavy)
th	t (<u>t</u> ourist)
ti	ti (pa <u>t</u> io; never as in "nation")

Table 1.3: Consonant Sounds in Classical Latin

1.2.2 Ecclesiastical Pronunciation

Later Latin pronunciation is similar in the vowel pronunciation, but the diphthongs and consonants are pronounced differently.

Diphthong	Pronunciation	As in English
ae	ay	<u>m</u> ate
au	ow	<u>h</u> ow
ei	ey	<u>th</u> ey
eu	eyoo	<u>th</u> ey <u>too</u>
oe	ay	<u>m</u> ate
ui	uey	<u>ch</u> ewy

Table 1.4: Diphthong Sounds in Ecclesiastical Latin