[Template:For](/wiki/Template:For" \o "Template:For) [Template:Redirect-distinguish](/wiki/Template:Redirect-distinguish) [Template:Pp-move-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-move-indef) [Template:Use dmy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_dmy_dates) [Template:Infobox language](/wiki/Template:Infobox_language)

**Latin** (Latin: [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang), [Template:IPA-la](/wiki/Template:IPA-la)) is a [classical language](/wiki/Classical_language) belonging to the [Italic branch](/wiki/Italic_languages) of the [Indo-European languages](/wiki/Indo-European_languages). The [Latin alphabet](/wiki/Latin_alphabet) is derived from the [Etruscan](/wiki/Old_Italic_script#Etruscan_alphabet) and [Greek alphabets](/wiki/Greek_alphabet).

Latin was originally spoken in [Latium](/wiki/Latium), [Italy](/wiki/Italian_Peninsula).[[1]](#cite_note-1) Through the power of the [Roman Republic](/wiki/Roman_Republic), it became the dominant language, initially in Italy and subsequently throughout the [Roman Empire](/wiki/Roman_Empire). [Vulgar Latin](/wiki/Vulgar_Latin) developed into the [Romance languages](/wiki/Romance_languages), such as [Italian](/wiki/Italian_language), [Portuguese](/wiki/Portuguese_language), [Spanish](/wiki/Spanish_language), [French](/wiki/French_language), and [Romanian](/wiki/Romanian_language). [Latin](/wiki/List_of_Latin_words_with_English_derivatives), [Italian](/wiki/List_of_English_words_of_Italian_origin) and [French](/wiki/List_of_English_words_of_French_origin) have contributed many words to the [English language](/wiki/English_language). Latin and [Ancient Greek](/wiki/Ancient_Greek) roots are used in [theology](/wiki/Theology), [biology](/wiki/List_of_Latin_and_Greek_words_commonly_used_in_systematic_names), and [medicine](/wiki/List_of_medical_roots,_suffixes_and_prefixes).

By the late Roman Republic (75 BC), [Old Latin](/wiki/Old_Latin) had been [standardised](/wiki/Standard_language) into [Classical Latin](/wiki/Classical_Latin). [Vulgar Latin](/wiki/Vulgar_Latin) was the colloquial form spoken during the same time and attested in [inscriptions](/wiki/Epigraphy) and the works of comic playwrights like [Plautus](/wiki/Plautus) and [Terence](/wiki/Terence).[[2]](#cite_note-2) [Late Latin](/wiki/Late_Latin) is the written language from the 3rd century, and [Medieval Latin](/wiki/Medieval_Latin) the language used from the 9th century to the [Renaissance](/wiki/The_Renaissance) which used [Renaissance Latin](/wiki/Renaissance_Latin). Later, Early Modern Latin and [Modern Latin](/wiki/New_Latin) evolved. Latin was used as the language of international communication, scholarship, and science until well into the 18th century, when it began to be supplanted by [vernaculars](/wiki/Vernacular). [Ecclesiastical Latin](/wiki/Ecclesiastical_Latin) remains the official language of the [Holy See](/wiki/Holy_See) and the [Roman Rite](/wiki/Roman_Rite) of the [Catholic Church](/wiki/Catholic_Church).

Today, many students, scholars and members of the [Catholic clergy](/wiki/Holy_orders_(Catholic_Church)) speak Latin fluently. It is taught in primary, secondary and postsecondary educational institutions around the world.[[3]](#cite_note-3)[[4]](#cite_note-4) Latin is a highly [inflected language](/wiki/Fusional_language), with three distinct [genders](/wiki/Grammatical_gender), seven [noun cases](/wiki/Grammatical_case), four [verb conjugations](/wiki/Grammatical_conjugation), four verb principle parts, six [tenses](/wiki/Grammatical_tense), three [persons](/wiki/Grammatical_person), three [moods](/wiki/Grammatical_mood), two [voices](/wiki/Voice_(grammar)), two [aspects](/wiki/Grammatical_aspect) and two [numbers](/wiki/Grammatical_number).

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## Legacy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

The language has been passed down through various forms.

### Inscriptions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

Some inscriptions have been published in an internationally agreed, monumental, multivolume series, the "[*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*](/wiki/Corpus_Inscriptionum_Latinarum) (CIL)". Authors and publishers vary, but the format is about the same: volumes detailing inscriptions with a critical apparatus stating the [provenance](/wiki/Provenance) and relevant information. The reading and interpretation of these inscriptions is the subject matter of the field of [epigraphy](/wiki/Epigraphy). About 270,000 inscriptions are known.

### Literature[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[thumb|300px|](/wiki/File:Commentarii_de_Bello_Gallico.jpg)[Julius Caesar's](/wiki/Julius_Caesar) [*Commentarii de Bello Gallico*](/wiki/Commentarii_de_Bello_Gallico) is one of the most famous classical Latin texts of the Golden Age of Latin. The unvarnished, journalistic style of this [patrician](/wiki/Patrician_(ancient_Rome)) general has long been taught as a model of the urbane Latin officially spoken and written in the floruit of the [Roman Republic](/wiki/Roman_Republic). The works of several hundred ancient authors who wrote in Latin have survived in whole or in part, in substantial works or in fragments to be analyzed in [philology](/wiki/Philology). They are in part the subject matter of the field of [classics](/wiki/Classics). Their works were published in [manuscript](/wiki/Manuscript) form before the invention of printing and are now published in carefully-annotated printed editions, such as the [Loeb Classical Library](/wiki/Loeb_Classical_Library), published by [Harvard University Press](/wiki/Harvard_University_Press), or the [Oxford Classical Texts](/wiki/Oxford_Classical_Texts), published by [Oxford University Press](/wiki/Oxford_University_Press).

[Latin translations of modern literature](/wiki/Latin_translations_of_modern_literature) such as [*The Hobbit*](/wiki/The_Hobbit), [*Treasure Island*](/wiki/Treasure_Island), [*Robinson Crusoe*](/wiki/Robinson_Crusoe), [*Paddington Bear*](/wiki/Paddington_Bear), [*Winnie the Pooh*](/wiki/Winnie_the_Pooh), [*The Adventures of Tintin*](/wiki/The_Adventures_of_Tintin), [*Asterix*](/wiki/Asterix), [*Harry Potter*](/wiki/Harry_Potter), [*Walter the Farting Dog*](/wiki/Walter_the_Farting_Dog), [*Le Petit Prince*](/wiki/The_Little_Prince), [*Max and Moritz*](/wiki/Max_and_Moritz), [*How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*](/wiki/How_the_Grinch_Stole_Christmas!), [*The Cat in the Hat*](/wiki/The_Cat_in_the_Hat), and a book of fairy tales, "fabulae mirabiles," are intended to garner popular interest in the language. Additional resources include phrasebooks and resources for rendering everyday phrases and concepts into Latin, such as [Meissner's Latin Phrasebook](/wiki/Meissner's_Latin_Phrasebook).

### Linguistics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

The [Latin influence in English](/wiki/Latin_influence_in_English) has been significant at all stages of its insular development. In the Middle Ages, borrowing from Latin occurred from ecclesiastical usage established by Saint [Augustine of Canterbury](/wiki/Augustine_of_Canterbury) in the 6th century or indirectly after the [Norman Conquest](/wiki/Norman_Conquest), through the [Anglo-Norman language](/wiki/Anglo-Norman_language). From the 16th to the 18th centuries, English writers cobbled together huge numbers of new words from Latin and Greek words, dubbed "[inkhorn terms](/wiki/Inkhorn_term)", as if they had spilled from a pot of ink. Many of these words were used once by the author and then forgotten, but some useful ones survived, such as 'imbibe' and 'extrapolate'. Many of the most common [polysyllabic](/wiki/Polysyllabic) English words are of Latin origin through the medium of [Old French](/wiki/Old_French).

The influence of Roman governance and [Roman technology](/wiki/Roman_technology) on the less-developed nations under Roman dominion made those nations adopted Latin phraseology in some specialized areas, such as science, technology, medicine, and law. For example, [the Linnaean system](/wiki/Linnaean_taxonomy) of plant and animal classification was heavily influenced by [*Historia Naturalis*](/wiki/Natural_History_(Pliny)), an encyclopedia of people, places, plants, animals, and things published by [Pliny the Elder](/wiki/Pliny_the_Elder). Roman medicine, recorded in the works of such physicians as [Galen](/wiki/Galen), established that today's [medical terminology](/wiki/Medical_terminology) would be primarily derived from Latin and Greek words, the Greek being filtered through the Latin. Roman engineering had the same effect on [scientific terminology](/wiki/Scientific_terminology) as a whole. Latin law principles have survived partly in a long [list of legal Latin terms](/wiki/List_of_legal_Latin_terms).

A few [international auxiliary languages](/wiki/International_auxiliary_language) have been heavily influenced by Latin. [Interlingua](/wiki/Interlingua) is sometimes considered a simplified, modern version of the language. [Latino sine Flexione](/wiki/Latino_sine_Flexione), popular in the early 20th century, is Latin with its inflections stripped away, among other grammatical changes.

### Education[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[thumb|A multivolume Latin dictionary in the](/wiki/File:Latin_dictionary.jpg) [University Library of Graz](/wiki/University_Library_of_Graz).

Throughout European history, an education in the classics was considered crucial for those who wished to join literate circles. [Instruction in Latin](/wiki/Instruction_in_Latin) is an essential aspect. In today's world, a large number of Latin students in the US learn from *Wheelock's Latin: The Classic Introductory Latin Course, Based on Ancient Authors*. This book, first published in 1956,[[5]](#cite_note-5) was written by [Frederic M. Wheelock](/wiki/Frederic_M._Wheelock), who received a PhD from Harvard University. *Wheelock's Latin* has become the standard text for many American introductory Latin courses.

The [Living Latin](/wiki/Living_Latin) movement attempts to teach Latin in the same way that living languages are taught, as a means of both spoken and written communication. It is available at the Vatican and at some institutions in the US, such as the [University of Kentucky](/wiki/University_of_Kentucky) and [Iowa State University](/wiki/Iowa_State_University). The British [Cambridge University Press](/wiki/Cambridge_University_Press) is a major supplier of Latin textbooks for all levels, such as the [Cambridge Latin Course](/wiki/Cambridge_Latin_Course) series. It has also published a subseries of children's texts in Latin by Bell & Forte, which recounts the adventures of a mouse called [Minimus](/wiki/Minimus).

[thumb|200px|Latin and Ancient Greek at](/wiki/File:Latin_and_Ancient_Greek_Language_-_Culture_-_Linguistics_at_Duke_University_in_2014.jpg) [Duke University](/wiki/Duke_University), 2014.

In the [United Kingdom](/wiki/United_Kingdom), the [Classical Association](/wiki/Classical_Association) encourages the study of antiquity through various means, such as publications and grants. The [University of Cambridge](/wiki/University_of_Cambridge),[[6]](#cite_note-6) the [Open University](/wiki/Open_University) (OU),[[7]](#cite_note-7) a number of prestigious independent schools, for example [Eton](/wiki/Eton_College) and [Harrow](/wiki/Harrow_School), and Via Facilis,[[8]](#cite_note-8) a London-based charity, run Latin courses. In the [United States](/wiki/United_States) and in [Canada](/wiki/Canada), the [American Classical League](/wiki/American_Classical_League) supports every effort to further the study of classics. Its subsidiaries include the [National Junior Classical League](/wiki/National_Junior_Classical_League) (with more than 50,000 members), which encourages high school students to pursue the study of Latin, and the [National Senior Classical League](/wiki/National_Senior_Classical_League), which encourages students to continue their study of the classics into college. The league also sponsors the [National Latin Exam](/wiki/National_Latin_Exam). Classicist [Mary Beard](/wiki/Mary_Beard_(classicist)) wrote in [*The Times Literary Supplement*](/wiki/The_Times_Literary_Supplement) in 2006 that the reason for learning Latin is because of what was written in it.[[9]](#cite_note-9)

### Official status[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

Latin was or is the official language of European states:

* [Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) – used in the [diocese](/wiki/Diocese), with [Italian](/wiki/Italian_language) being the official language of [Vatican City](/wiki/Vatican_City)
* [Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) – Latin was the official language of Croatian Parliament (Sabor) from the 13th to the 19th century (1847). The oldest preserved records of the parliamentary sessions (Congregatio Regni totius Sclavonie generalis) – held in Zagreb (Zagabria), Croatia – date from 19 April 1273. An extensive [Croatian Latin literature](/wiki/Croatian_Latin_literature) exists.
* [Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) – officially recognised and widely used[[10]](#cite_note-10)[[11]](#cite_note-11)[[12]](#cite_note-12)[[13]](#cite_note-13) between the 9th and 18th centuries, commonly used in foreign relations and popular as a second language among some of the nobility[[14]](#cite_note-14)

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|350px|The linguistic landscape of Central Italy at the beginning of Roman expansion.](/wiki/File:Linguistic_Landscape_of_Central_Italy.png)

According to [Roman mythology](/wiki/Roman_mythology), Latin was established by a tribal people called the [Latini](/wiki/Latini) before the [Trojan War](/wiki/Trojan_War). [Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) A number of historical phases of the language have been recognised, each distinguished by subtle differences in vocabulary, usage, spelling, morphology and syntax. There are no hard and fast rules of classification; different scholars emphasise different features. As a result, the list has variants, as well as alternative names. In addition to the historical phases, [Ecclesiastical Latin](/wiki/Ecclesiastical_Latin) refers to the styles used by the writers of the [Roman Catholic Church](/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church) as well as by Protestant scholars from [Late Antiquity](/wiki/Late_Antiquity) onward.

After the Western Roman Empire fell in 476, and Germanic kingdoms took its place, the [Germanic people](/wiki/Germanic_people) adopted Latin as a language more suitable for legal and other formal uses.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

### Old Latin[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) The earliest known form of Latin is Old Latin, which was spoken from the [Roman Kingdom](/wiki/Roman_Kingdom) to the middle of the [Roman Republic](/wiki/Roman_Republic) period. It is attested both in inscriptions and in some of the earliest extant Latin literary works, such as the comedies of [Plautus](/wiki/Plautus) and [Terence](/wiki/Terence). The [Latin alphabet](/wiki/Latin_alphabet) was devised from the [Etruscan alphabet](/wiki/Etruscan_alphabet). The writing later changed from an initial right-to-left or [boustrophedon](/wiki/Boustrophedon)[[15]](#cite_note-15)[[16]](#cite_note-16) to a left-to-right script.[[17]](#cite_note-17)

### Classical Latin[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) During the late republic and into the first years of the empire, a new Classical Latin arose, a conscious creation of the orators, poets, historians and other [literate](/wiki/Literate) men, who wrote the great works of [classical literature](/wiki/Classical_literature), which were taught in [grammar](/wiki/Grammar) and [rhetoric](/wiki/Rhetoric) schools. Today's instructional grammars trace their roots to such [schools](/wiki/Roman_school), which served as a sort of informal language academy dedicated to maintaining and perpetuating educated speech.[[18]](#cite_note-18)[[19]](#cite_note-19)

### Vulgar Latin[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Philological analysis of Archaic Latin works, such as those of [Plautus](/wiki/Plautus), which contain snippets of everyday speech, indicates that a spoken language, Vulgar Latin (*sermo vulgi* ("the speech of the masses") by [Cicero](/wiki/Cicero)), existed at the same time as the literate Classical Latin. The informal language was rarely written, so philologists have been left with only individual words and phrases cited by classical authors and those found as graffiti.[[20]](#cite_note-20) As it was free to develop on its own, there is no reason to suppose that the speech was uniform either diachronically or geographically. On the contrary, romanised European populations developed their own dialects of the language.[[21]](#cite_note-21) The [Decline of the Roman Empire](/wiki/Decline_of_the_Roman_Empire) meant a deterioration in educational standards that brought about Late Latin, a postclassical stage of the language seen in Christian writings of the time. It was more in line with the everyday speech not only because of a decline in education but also because of a desire to spread the word to the masses.

Despite the dialect variation (which is found in any widespread language) the languages of Spain, France, Portugal, and Italy retained a remarkable unity in phonological forms and developments, bolstered by the stabilising influence of their common Christian (Roman Catholic) culture. It was not until the [Moorish conquest of Spain](/wiki/Umayyad_conquest_of_Hispania) in 711 cut off communications between the major Romance regions that the languages began to diverge seriously.[[22]](#cite_note-22) The Vulgar Latin dialect that would later become [Romanian](/wiki/Romanian_language) diverged somewhat more from the other varieties, as it was largely cut off from the unifying influences in the western part of the Empire.

One way to determine whether a Romance language feature was in Vulgar Latin is to compare it with its parallel in Classical Latin. If it was not preferred in Classical Latin, then it most likely came from the invisible contemporaneous Vulgar Latin. For example, Romance "horse" (cavallo/cheval/caballo/cavalo) came from Latin *caballus*. However, Classical Latin used *equus*. *Caballus* therefore was most likely the spoken form ([slang](/wiki/Slang)).[[23]](#cite_note-23) Vulgar Latin began to diverge into distinct languages by the 9th century at the latest, when the earliest extant Romance writings begin to appear. They were, throughout the period, confined to everyday speech, as Medieval Latin was used for writing.

### Medieval Latin[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|250px|The Latin Malmesbury](/wiki/File:Calligraphy.malmesbury.bible.arp.jpg) [Bible](/wiki/Bible) from 1407. Medieval Latin is the written Latin in use during that portion of the postclassical period when no corresponding Latin vernacular existed. The spoken language had developed into the various incipient Romance languages; however, in the educated and official world Latin continued without its natural spoken base. Moreover, this Latin spread into lands that had never spoken Latin, such as the Germanic and Slavic nations. It became useful for international communication between the member states of the [Holy Roman Empire](/wiki/Holy_Roman_Empire) and its allies.

Without the institutions of the Roman empire that had supported its uniformity, medieval Latin lost its linguistic cohesion: for example, in classical Latin *sum* and *eram* are used as auxiliary verbs in the perfect and pluperfect passive, which are compound tenses. Medieval Latin might use *fui* and *fueram* instead.<ref name=thorley13-15>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> Furthermore, the meanings of many words have been changed and new vocabularies have been introduced from the vernacular. Identifiable individual styles of classically-incorrect Latin prevail.<ref name=thorley13-15/>

### Renaissance Latin[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|Most 15th century printed books (](/wiki/File:Incunabula_distribution_by_language.png)[incunabula](/wiki/Incunabula)) were in Latin, with the [vernacular languages](/wiki/Vernacular_language) playing only a secondary role.[[24]](#cite_note-24)

The [Renaissance](/wiki/Renaissance) briefly reinforced the position of Latin as a spoken language by its adoption by the Renaissance [Humanists](/wiki/Humanists). Often led by members of the clergy, they were shocked by the accelerated dismantling of the vestiges of the classical world and the rapid loss of its literature. They strove to preserve what they could and restore Latin to what it had been and introduced the practice of producing revised editions of the literary works that remained by comparing surviving manuscripts. They corrected Medieval Latin out of existence no later than the 15th century and replaced it with more correct versions supported by the scholars of the rising universities, who attempted, by scholarship, to discover what the classical language had been.

### New Latin[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) During the Early Modern Age, Latin still was the most important language of culture in Europe. Therefore, until the end of the 17th century the majority of books and almost all diplomatic documents were written in Latin. Afterwards, most diplomatic documents were written in [French](/wiki/French_language) and later just native or other languages.

### Contemporary Latin[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

[thumb|The signs at](/wiki/File:Wallsend_platfom_2_02.jpg) [Wallsend Metro station](/wiki/Wallsend_Metro_station) are in [English](/wiki/English_language) and Latin as a tribute to Wallsend's role as one of the outposts of the [Roman Empire](/wiki/Roman_Empire).

The largest organisation that retains Latin in official and quasi-official contexts is the [Catholic Church](/wiki/Catholic_Church). Latin remains the language of the [Roman Rite](/wiki/Roman_Rite); the [Tridentine Mass](/wiki/Tridentine_Mass) is celebrated in Latin. Although the [Mass of Paul VI](/wiki/Mass_of_Paul_VI) is usually celebrated in the local [vernacular language](/wiki/Vernacular_language), it can be and often is said in Latin, in part or whole, especially at multilingual gatherings. It is the official language of the [Holy See](/wiki/Holy_See), the primary language of its [public journal](/wiki/Public_journal), the [*Acta Apostolicae Sedis*](/wiki/Acta_Apostolicae_Sedis), and the working language of the [Roman Rota](/wiki/Roman_Rota). [Vatican City](/wiki/Vatican_City) is also home to the world's only [automatic teller machine](/wiki/Automatic_teller_machine) that gives instructions in Latin.[[25]](#cite_note-25) In the [pontifical universities](/wiki/Pontifical_university) postgraduate courses of [Canon law](/wiki/Canon_law) are taught in Latin, and papers are written in the same language.

In the [Anglican Church](/wiki/Anglican_Church), after the publication of the [*Book of Common Prayer*](/wiki/Book_of_Common_Prayer) of 1559, a Latin edition was published in 1560 for use at universities such as [Oxford](/wiki/Oxford_University) and the leading "public schools" ([English](/wiki/United_Kingdom) private academies), where the liturgy was still permitted to be conducted in Latin[[26]](#cite_note-26) and there have been several Latin translations since. Most recently, a Latin edition of the 1979 USA Anglican Book of Common Prayer has appeared.[[27]](#cite_note-27) Some films of ancient settings, such as [*Sebastiane*](/wiki/Sebastiane) and [*The Passion of the Christ*](/wiki/The_Passion_of_the_Christ), have been made with dialogue in Latin for the sake of realism. Occasionally, Latin dialogue is used because of its association with religion or philosophy, in such film/[television](/wiki/Television) series as [*The Exorcist*](/wiki/The_Exorcist_(film)) and [*Lost*](/wiki/Lost_(2004_TV_series)) ("[Jughead](/wiki/Jughead_(Lost))"). Subtitles are usually shown for the benefit of those who do not understand Latin. There are also [songs written with Latin lyrics](/wiki/List_of_songs_with_Latin_lyrics). The libretto for the opera-oratorio [*Oedipus rex* (opera)](/wiki/Oedipus_rex_(opera)) by [Igor Stravinsky](/wiki/Igor_Stravinsky) is in Latin.

[Switzerland](/wiki/Switzerland) adopts the country's Latin short name *Helvetia* on coins and stamps since there is no room to use all of the nation's four official languages. For a similar reason, it adopted the international vehicle and internet code *CH*, which stands for *Confoederatio Helvetica*, the country's full Latin name.

[thumb|right|The polyglot](/wiki/File:Council_of_the_EU_logo.svg) [European Union](/wiki/European_Union) has adopted Latin names in the logos of some of its institutions for the sake of linguistic compromise, an "ecumenical nationalism" common to most of the continent and as a sign of the continent's heritage (such as the [EU Council](/wiki/Council_of_the_European_Union): *Consilium*)

Many organizations today have Latin mottos, such as "[Semper paratus](/wiki/Semper_Paratus)" (always ready), the motto of the [United States Coast Guard](/wiki/United_States_Coast_Guard), and "[Semper fidelis](/wiki/Semper_Fidelis)" (always faithful), the motto of the [United States Marine Corps](/wiki/United_States_Marine_Corps). Several of the states of the United States also have Latin mottos, such as "Qui transtulit sustinet" ("He who transplanted still sustains"), the state motto of [Connecticut](/wiki/Connecticut); "[Ad astra per aspera](/wiki/Per_aspera_ad_astra)" ("To the stars through hardships"), that of [Kansas](/wiki/Kansas); "Si quaeris peninsulam amoenam, circumspice" ("If you seek a pleasant peninsula, look about you"), that of [Michigan](/wiki/Michigan); "[Salus populi suprema lex esto](/wiki/Salus_populi_suprema_lex_esto)" ("The health of the people should be the highest law"), that of [Missouri](/wiki/Missouri); "[Esse quam videri](/wiki/Esse_Quam_Videri)" (To be rather than to seem), that of [North Carolina](/wiki/North_Carolina); "[Sic semper tyrannis](/wiki/Sic_semper_tyrannis)" (Thus always for tyrants), that of [Virginia](/wiki/Virginia); and "[Montani semper liberi](/wiki/Montani_Semper_Liberi)" (Mountaineers are always free), that of [West Virginia](/wiki/West_Virginia). Another Latin motto is "[Per ardua ad astra](/wiki/Per_ardua_ad_astra)" (Through adversity/struggle to the stars), the motto of the [Royal Air Force (RAF)](/wiki/Royal_Air_Force). Some schools adopt Latin mottos, for example [Harvard University's](/wiki/Harvard_University) motto is "[Veritas](/wiki/Veritas)" meaning (truth). Veritas was the goddess of truth, a daughter of Saturn, and the mother of Virtue.

Similarly [Canada's](/wiki/Canada) motto "A mari usque ad mare" (from sea to sea) and most provincial mottos are also in Latin ([British Columbia's](/wiki/British_Columbia) is Splendor Sine Occasu (splendor without diminishment)).

Occasionally, some media outlets broadcast in Latin, which is targeted at enthusiasts. Notable examples include [Radio Bremen](/wiki/Radio_Bremen) in [Germany](/wiki/Germany), [YLE](/wiki/YLE) radio in [Finland](/wiki/Finland), and Vatican Radio & Television, all of which broadcast news segments and other material in Latin.[[28]](#cite_note-28) There are many websites and forums maintained in Latin by enthusiasts. The [Latin Wikipedia](/wiki/Latin_Wikipedia) has more than 100,000 articles written in Latin.

Latin is taught in many high schools, especially in Europe and the Americas. It is most common in British [public schools](/wiki/Public_school_(United_Kingdom)) and [grammar schools](/wiki/Grammar_school), the Italian [liceo classico](/wiki/Liceo_classico) and [liceo scientifico](/wiki/Liceo_scientifico), the German Humanistisches [Gymnasium](/wiki/Gymnasium_(Germany)) and the Dutch [gymnasium](/wiki/Gymnasium_(school)). In the [United States](/wiki/United_States), it is taught in [Boston Latin School](/wiki/Boston_Latin_School), [English High School of Boston](/wiki/English_High_School_of_Boston), [Boston Latin Academy](/wiki/Boston_Latin_Academy), [Central High School of Philadelphia](/wiki/Central_High_School_of_Philadelphia), and [Baltimore City College](/wiki/Baltimore_City_College).

## Phonology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) No inherited verbal knowledge of the ancient pronunciation of Latin exists so it must be reconstructed. Among the data used for reconstruction are explicit statements about pronunciation by ancient authors, misspellings, puns, ancient etymologies, and the spelling of Latin loanwords in other languages.[[29]](#cite_note-29)

### Consonants[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

The consonant [phonemes](/wiki/Phoneme) of Classical Latin are shown in the following table:[[30]](#cite_note-30) {| class="wikitable IPA" style="text-align: center;" |- ! colspan="2" rowspan="2" | ! rowspan="2" | [Labial](/wiki/Labial_consonant) ! rowspan="2" | [Dental](/wiki/Dental_consonant) ! rowspan="2" | [Palatal](/wiki/Palatal_consonant) ! colspan="2" | [Velar](/wiki/Velar_consonant) ! rowspan="2" | [Glottal](/wiki/Glottal_consonant) |- ! plain ! [labial](/wiki/Labialisation) |- ! rowspan=2| [Plosive](/wiki/Plosive_consonant) ! [voiced](/wiki/Voice_(phonetics)) | b | d | | ɡ | | |- ! [voiceless](/wiki/Voicelessness) | p | t | | k | kʷ | |- ! rowspan=2| [Fricative](/wiki/Fricative_consonant) ! [voiced](/wiki/Voice_(phonetics)) | | z | | | | |- ! [voiceless](/wiki/Voicelessness) | f | s | | | | h |- ! colspan=2| [Nasal](/wiki/Nasal_consonant) | m | n | | | | |- ! colspan=2| [Rhotic](/wiki/Rhotic_consonant) | | r | | | | |- ! colspan=2| [Approximant](/wiki/Approximant_consonant) | | l | j | | w | |}

In Old and Classical Latin, the Latin alphabet had no distinction between [uppercase and lowercase](/wiki/Letter_case), and the letters [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) did not exist. In place of [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr), [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) were used. [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) represented both vowels and consonants. Most of the letterforms were similar to modern uppercase, as can be seen in the inscription from the Colosseum shown at the top of the article.

The spelling systems used in Latin dictionaries and modern editions of Latin texts, however, normally use [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) in place of Classical-era [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr). Some systems use [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) for the consonant sounds [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA) except in the combinations [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) for which [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) is never used.

Some notes concerning the mapping of Latin phonemes to English graphemes are given below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Notes | | |
| **Latin grapheme** | **Latin phone** | **English examples** |
| [**Template:Angbr**](/wiki/Template:Angbr)**,** [**Template:Angbr**](/wiki/Template:Angbr) | [**Template:IPA**](/wiki/Template:IPA) | Always hard as *k* in *sky*, never [soft](/wiki/Hard_and_soft_C) as in *central*, *cello*, or *social* |
| [**Template:Angbr**](/wiki/Template:Angbr) | [**Template:IPA**](/wiki/Template:IPA) | As *t* in *stay*, never as *t* in *nation* |
| [**Template:Angbr**](/wiki/Template:Angbr) | [**Template:IPA**](/wiki/Template:IPA) | As *s* in *say*, never as *s* in *rise* or *issue* |
| [**Template:Angbr**](/wiki/Template:Angbr) | [**Template:IPA**](/wiki/Template:IPA) | Always hard as *g* in *good*, never [soft](/wiki/Hard_and_soft_G) as *g* in *gem* |
| [**Template:IPA**](/wiki/Template:IPA) | Before [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr), as *ng* in *sing* |
| [**Template:Angbr**](/wiki/Template:Angbr) | [**Template:IPA**](/wiki/Template:IPA) | As *n* in *man* |
| [**Template:IPA**](/wiki/Template:IPA) | Before [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr), [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr), and [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr), as *ng* in *sing* |
| [**Template:Angbr**](/wiki/Template:Angbr) | [**Template:IPA**](/wiki/Template:IPA) | When doubled [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) and before [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr), as clear *l* in *link* (*l exilis*)[[31]](#cite_note-31)[[32]](#cite_note-32) |
| [**Template:IPA**](/wiki/Template:IPA) | In all other positions, as dark *l* in *bowl* (*l pinguis*) |
| [**Template:Angbr**](/wiki/Template:Angbr) | [**Template:IPA**](/wiki/Template:IPA) | Similar to *qu* in *quick*, never as *qu* in *antique* |
| [**Template:Angbr**](/wiki/Template:Angbr) | [**Template:IPA**](/wiki/Template:IPA) | Sometimes at the beginning of a syllable, or after [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) and [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr), as *w* in *wine*, never as *v* in *vine* |
| [**Template:Angbr**](/wiki/Template:Angbr) | [**Template:IPA**](/wiki/Template:IPA) | Sometimes at the beginning of a syllable, as *y* in *yard*, never as *j* in *just* |
| [**Template:IPA**](/wiki/Template:IPA) | Doubled between vowels, as *y y* in *toy yacht* |
| [**Template:Angbr**](/wiki/Template:Angbr) | [**Template:IPA**](/wiki/Template:IPA) | A letter representing [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) + [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr): as *x* in English *axe*, never as *x* in *example* |

[Doubled](/wiki/Gemination) consonants in Latin are pronounced long. In English, consonants are pronounced double only between two words or [morphemes](/wiki/Morpheme), as in *unnamed*, which has a doubled [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA) like the *nn* in Latin *annus*.

### Vowels[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

#### Simple vowels[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Front** | **Central** | **Back** |
| **Close** | [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA) |  | [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA) |
| **Mid** | [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA) |  | [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA) |
| **Open** |  | [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA) |  |

In Classical Latin, the letter [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) was written as [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) even if it was used as a vowel. [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) was adopted to represent [upsilon](/wiki/Upsilon) in loanwords from Greek, but it was pronounced like [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) and [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) by some speakers. It was also used in native Latin words by confusion with Greek words of similar meaning, such as sylva and ὕλη.

Classical Latin distinguished between [long and short vowels](/wiki/Vowel_length). Then, long vowels, except for [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr), were frequently marked using the [apex](/wiki/Apex_(diacritic)), which was sometimes similar to an [acute accent](/wiki/Acute_accent) [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr). Long [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA) was written using a taller version of [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr), called *i longa* "long I": [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr). In modern texts, long vowels are often indicated by a [macron](/wiki/Macron) [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr), and short vowels are usually unmarked except when it is necessary to distinguish between words, when they are marked with a [breve](/wiki/Breve): [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr).

Long vowels in Classical Latin were pronounced with a different quality from short vowels and also were longer. The difference is described in table below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Pronunciation of Latin vowels | | |
| **Latin grapheme** | **Latin phone** | **modern examples** |
| [**Template:Angbr**](/wiki/Template:Angbr) | [**Template:IPA**](/wiki/Template:IPA) | similar to *u* in *cut* when short |
| [**Template:IPA**](/wiki/Template:IPA) | similar to *a* in *father* when long |
| [**Template:Angbr**](/wiki/Template:Angbr) | [**Template:IPA**](/wiki/Template:IPA) | as *e* in *pet* when short |
| [**Template:IPA**](/wiki/Template:IPA) | similar to *ey* in *they* when long |
| [**Template:Angbr**](/wiki/Template:Angbr) | [**Template:IPA**](/wiki/Template:IPA) | as *i* in *sit* when short |
| [**Template:IPA**](/wiki/Template:IPA) | similar to *i* in *machine* when long |
| [**Template:Angbr**](/wiki/Template:Angbr) | [**Template:IPA**](/wiki/Template:IPA) | as *o* in *sort* when short |
| [**Template:IPA**](/wiki/Template:IPA) | similar to *o* in *holy* when long |
| [**Template:Angbr**](/wiki/Template:Angbr) | [**Template:IPA**](/wiki/Template:IPA) | similar to *u* in *put* when short |
| [**Template:IPA**](/wiki/Template:IPA) | similar to *u* in *true* when long |
| [**Template:Angbr**](/wiki/Template:Angbr) | [**Template:IPA**](/wiki/Template:IPA) | as in German *Stück* when short (or as short *u* or *i*) |
| [**Template:IPA**](/wiki/Template:IPA) | as in German *früh* when long (or as long *u* or *i*) |

A vowel and [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) at the end of a word, or a vowel and [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) before [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) or [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr), was long and [nasal](/wiki/Nasal_vowel), as in *monstrum* [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA).

#### Diphthongs[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

Classical Latin had several [diphthongs](/wiki/Diphthong). The two most common were [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr). [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) was fairly rare, and [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) were very rare, at least in native Latin words.[[33]](#cite_note-33) The sequences sometimes did not represent diphthongs. [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) and [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) also represented a sequence of two vowels in different syllables in *aēnus* [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA) "of bronze" and *coēpit* [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA) "began", and [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) represented sequences of two vowels or of a vowel and one of the semivowels [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA), in *cauē* [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA) "beware!", *cuius* [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA) "whose", *monuī* [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA) "I warned", *soluī* [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA) "I released", *dēlēuī* [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA) "I destroyed", *eius* [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA) "his", and *nouus* [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA) "new".

Old Latin had more diphthongs, but most of them changed into long vowels in Classical Latin. The Old Latin diphthong [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) and the sequence [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) became Classical [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr). Old Latin [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) and [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) changed to Classical [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr), except in a few words whose [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) became Classical [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr). These two developments sometimes occurred in different words from the same root: for instance, Classical *poena* "punishment" and *pūnīre* "to punish".[[33]](#cite_note-33) Early Old Latin [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) usually changed to Classical [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr).[[34]](#cite_note-34) In Vulgar Latin and the Romance languages, [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) merged with [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr). A similar pronunciation also existed during the Classical Latin period for less-educated speakers.[[33]](#cite_note-33)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Diphthongs classified by beginning sound | | |
|  | **Front** | **Back** |
| **Close** |  | ui [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA) |
| **Mid** | ei [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA) eu[Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA) | oe [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA) ou [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA) |
| **Open** | ae [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA) au [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA) | |

## Orthography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:Duenos_inscription.jpg) [Duenos Inscription](/wiki/Duenos_Inscription), from the 6th century BC, is one of the earliest known [Old Latin](/wiki/Old_Latin) texts.

Latin was written in the Latin alphabet, derived from the [Old Italic script](/wiki/Old_Italic_script), which was in turn drawn from the [Greek alphabet](/wiki/Greek_alphabet) and ultimately the [Phoenician alphabet](/wiki/Phoenician_alphabet).[[35]](#cite_note-35) This alphabet has continued to be used over the centuries as the script for the Romance, Celtic, Germanic, Baltic, Finnic.and many Slavic languages ([Polish](/wiki/Polish_language), [Slovak](/wiki/Slovak_language), [Slovene](/wiki/Slovene_language), [Croatian](/wiki/Croatian_language) and [Czech](/wiki/Czech_language)), and it has been adopted by many languages around the world, including [Vietnamese](/wiki/Vietnamese_language), the [Austronesian languages](/wiki/Austronesian_languages), many [Turkic languages](/wiki/Turkic_languages), and most languages in [sub-Saharan Africa](/wiki/Sub-Saharan_Africa), the [Americas](/wiki/Americas), and [Oceania](/wiki/Oceania), making it by far the world's single most widely used writing system.

The number of letters in the Latin alphabet has varied. When it was first derived from the Etruscan alphabet, it contained only 21 letters.[[36]](#cite_note-36) Later, *G* was added to represent [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA), which had previously been spelled *C*, and *Z* ceased to be included in the alphabet, as the language then had no [voiced alveolar fricative](/wiki/Voiced_alveolar_fricative).<ref name=D538>[Template:Harvnb](/wiki/Template:Harvnb)</ref> The letters *Y* and *Z* were later added to represent Greek letters, [upsilon](/wiki/Upsilon) and [zeta](/wiki/Zeta) respectively, in Greek loanwords.<ref name=D538/>

*W* was created in the 11th century from *VV*. It represented [Template:IPA](/wiki/Template:IPA) in Germanic languages, not Latin, which still uses *V* for the purpose. *J* was distinguished from the original *I* only during the late Middle Ages, as was the letter *U* from *V*.<ref name=D538/> Although some Latin dictionaries use *J*, it is for rarely used for Latin text, as it was not used in classical times, but many other languages use it.

Classical Latin did not contain sentence [punctuation](/wiki/Punctuation), letter case,[[37]](#cite_note-37) or [interword spacing](/wiki/Interword_spacing), but [apices](/wiki/Apex_(diacritic)) were sometimes used to distinguish length in vowels and the [interpunct](/wiki/Interpunct) was used at times to separate words. The first line of Catullus 3, originally written as

LV́GÉTEÓVENERÉSCVPÍDINÉSQVE ("Mourn, O [Venuses](/wiki/Venus_(mythology)) and [Cupids](/wiki/Cupid)")

or with interpunct as

LV́GÉTE·Ó·VENERÉS·CVPÍDINÉSQVE

would be rendered in a modern edition as

Lugete, o Veneres Cupidinesque

or with macrons

Lūgēte, ō Venerēs Cupīdinēsque.

[thumb|250px|A replica of the Old Roman Cursive inspired by the](/wiki/File:Hocgracili.jpg) [Vindolanda tablets](/wiki/Vindolanda_tablets), the oldest surviving handwritten documents in Britain.

The [Roman cursive](/wiki/Roman_cursive) script is commonly found on the many [wax tablets](/wiki/Wax_tablet) excavated at sites such as forts, an especially extensive set having been discovered at Vindolanda on [Hadrian's Wall](/wiki/Hadrian's_Wall) in [Britain](/wiki/Great_Britain). Curiously enough, most of the [Vindolanda tablets](/wiki/Vindolanda_tablets) show spaces between words, but spaces were avoided in monumental inscriptions from that era.

### Alternate scripts[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

Occasionally, Latin has been written in other scripts:

* The disputed [Praeneste fibula](/wiki/Praeneste_fibula) is a 7th-century BC pin with an Old Latin inscription written using the Etruscan script.
* The rear panel of the early 8th-century [Franks Casket](/wiki/Franks_Casket) has an inscription that switches from [Old English](/wiki/Old_English) in [Anglo-Saxon runes](/wiki/Anglo-Saxon_runes) to Latin in Latin script and to Latin in runes.

## Grammar[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

Latin is a [synthetic](/wiki/Synthetic_language), [fusional language](/wiki/Fusional_language) in the terminology of linguistic typology. In more traditional terminology, it is an inflected language, but typologists are apt to say "inflecting". Words include an objective semantic element and markers specifying the grammatical use of the word. The fusion of root meaning and markers produces very compact sentence elements: *amō*, "I love," is produced from a semantic element, *ama-*, "love," to which *-ō*, a first person singular marker, is suffixed.

The grammatical function can be changed by changing the markers: the word is "inflected" to express different grammatical functions, but the semantic element does not change. (Inflection uses affixing and infixing. Affixing is prefixing and suffixing. Latin inflections are never prefixed.)

For example, *amābit*, "he or she or it will love", is formed from the same stem, *amā-*, to which a future tense marker, *-bi-*, is suffixed, and a third person singular marker, *-t*, is suffixed. There is an inherent ambiguity: *-t* may denote more than one grammatical category: masculine, feminine, or neuter gender. A major task in understanding Latin phrases and clauses is to clarify such ambiguities by an analysis of context. All natural languages contain ambiguities of one sort or another.

The inflections express [gender](/wiki/Grammatical_gender), [number](/wiki/Grammatical_number), and [case](/wiki/Grammatical_case) in [adjectives](/wiki/Adjective), [nouns](/wiki/Noun), and [pronouns](/wiki/Pronoun), a process called [*declension*](/wiki/Declension). Markers are also attached to fixed stems of verbs, to denote [person](/wiki/Grammatical_person), number, [tense](/wiki/Grammatical_tense), [voice](/wiki/Grammatical_voice), [mood](/wiki/Grammatical_mood), and [aspect](/wiki/Grammatical_aspect), a process called [*conjugation*](/wiki/Grammatical_conjugation). Some words are uninflected and undergo neither process, such as adverbs, prepositions, and interjections.

### Nouns[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

A regular Latin noun belongs to one of five main declensions, a group of nouns with similar inflected forms. The declensions are identified by the genitive singular form of the noun. The first declension, with a predominant ending letter of *a*, is signified by the genitive singular ending of *-ae*. The second declension, with a predominant ending letter of *o*, is signified by the genitive singular ending of *-i*. The third declension, with a predominant ending letter of *i*, is signified by the genitive singular ending of *-is*. The fourth declension, with a predominant ending letter of *u*, is signified by the genitive singular ending of *-ūs*. The fifth declension, with a predominant ending letter of *e*, is signified by the genitive singular ending of *-ei*.

There are seven Latin noun cases, which also apply to adjectives and pronouns and mark a noun's syntactic role in the sentence by means of inflections. Thus, [word order](/wiki/Word_order) is not as important in Latin as it is in English, which is less inflected. The general structure and word order of a Latin sentence can therefore vary. The cases are as follows:

1. [**Nominative**](/wiki/Nominative_case) – used when the noun is the [subject](/wiki/Subject_(grammar)) or a [predicate nominative](/wiki/Predicate_nominative). The thing or person acting: the **girl** ran: ***puella*** *cucurrit,* or *cucurrit* ***puella***
2. [**Genitive**](/wiki/Genitive_case) – used when the noun is the possessor of or connected with an object: "the horse of the man", or "the man's horse"; in both instances, the word *man* would be in the [genitive case](/wiki/Genitive_case) when it is translated into Latin). It also indicates the [partitive](/wiki/Partitive), in which the material is quantified: "a group of people"; "a number of gifts": *people* and *gifts* would be in the genitive case). Some nouns are genitive with special verbs and adjectives: The cup is full of **wine**. *Poculum plēnum* ***vīnī*** *est.* The master of the **slave** had beaten him. *Dominus* ***servī*** *eum verberāverat.*
3. [**Dative**](/wiki/Dative_case) – used when the noun is the indirect object of the sentence, with special verbs, with certain prepositions, and if it is used as agent, reference, or even possessor: The merchant hands the [stola](/wiki/Stola) **to the woman**. *Mercātor* ***fēminae*** *stolam trādit.*)
4. [**Accusative**](/wiki/Accusative_case) – used when the noun is the direct object of the subject and as the object of a preposition demonstrating place to which.: The man killed **the boy**. *Vir necāvit* ***puerum****.*
5. [**Ablative**](/wiki/Ablative_case) – used when the noun demonstrates separation or movement from a source, cause, [agent](/wiki/Agent_(grammar)) or [instrument](/wiki/Instrumental_case) or when the noun is used as the object of certain prepositions; adverbial: You walked **with the boy**. *cum* ***puerō*** *ambulāvistī.*
6. [**Vocative**](/wiki/Vocative_case) – used when the noun is used in a direct address. The vocative form of a noun is often the same as the nominative, but exceptions include second-declension nouns ending in *-us*. The *-us* becomes an *-e* in the vocative singular. If it ends in *-ius* (such as *fīlius*), the ending is just *-ī* (*filī*), as distinct from the nominative plural (*filiī*) in the vocative singular: "**Master**!" shouted the slave. *"****Domine****!" clāmāvit servus.*
7. [**Locative**](/wiki/Locative_case) – used to indicate a location (corresponding to the English "in" or "at"). It is far less common than the other six cases of Latin nouns and usually applies to cities and small towns and islands along with a few common nouns, such as the word *domus*, house. In the singular of the first and second declensions, its form coincides with the genitive (*Roma* becomes *Romae*, "in Rome"). In the plural of all declensions and the singular of the other declensions, it coincides with the ablative (*Athēnae* becomes *Athēnīs*, "at Athens"). In the fourth-declension word *domus*, the locative form, *domī* ("at home") differs from the standard form of all other cases.

Latin lacks both definite and indefinite [articles](/wiki/Article_(grammar)) so *puer currit* can mean either "the boy is running" or "a boy is running".

### Adjectives[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

There are two types of regular Latin adjectives: first- and second- declension and third-declension. They are so-called because their forms are similar or identical to first- and second-declension and third-declension nouns, respectively. Latin adjectives also have comparative (more --, *-er*) and superlative (most --, *est*) forms. There are also a number of Latin participles.

Latin numbers are sometimes declined. See *Numbers* below.

#### First- and second-declension adjectives[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

First- and second-declension adjectives are declined like first-declension nouns for the feminine forms and like second-declension nouns for the masculine and neuter forms. For example, for *mortuus, mortua, mortuum* (dead), *mortua* is declined like a regular first-declension noun (such as *puella* (girl)), *mortuus* is declined like a regular second-declension masculine noun (such as *dominus* (lord, master)), and *mortuum* is declined like a regular second-declension neuter noun (such as *auxilium* (help)).

**First- and second-declension *-er* adjectives**

Some first- and second-declension adjectives have an *-er* as the masculine nominative singular form and are declined like regular first- and second-declension adjectives. Some but not all adjectives keep the *e* for all of the forms.

#### Third-declension adjectives[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

Third-declension adjectives are mostly declined like normal third-declension nouns, with a few exceptions. In the plural nominative neuter, for example, the ending is *-ia* (*omnia* (all, everything)), and for third-declension nouns, the plural nominative neuter ending is *-a* or *-ia* (*capita* (heads), *animalia* (animals)) They can have one, two or three forms for the masculine, feminine, and neuter nominative singular.

#### Participles[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

Latin participles, like English participles, are formed from a verb. There are a few main types of participles:

### Prepositions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

Latin sometimes uses prepositions, depending on the type of prepositional phrase being used. Prepositions can take two cases for their object: the accusative ("apud puerum" (with the boy), with "puerum" being the accusative form of "puer", boy) and the ablative ("sine puero" (without the boy), "puero" being the ablative form of "puer", boy).

### Verbs[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

A regular verb in Latin belongs to one of four main [conjugations](/wiki/Latin_conjugation). A conjugation is "a class of verbs with similar inflected forms."[[38]](#cite_note-38) The conjugations are identified by the last letter of the verb's present stem. The present stem can be found by omitting the -*re* (-*rī* in deponent verbs) ending from the present infinitive form. The infinitive of the first conjugation ends in *-ā-re* or *-ā-ri* (active and passive respectively): *amāre*, "to love," *hortārī*, "to exhort"; of the second conjugation by *-ē-re* or *-ē-rī*: *monēre*, "to warn", *verērī*, "to fear;" of the third conjugation by *-ere*, *-ī*: *dūcere*, "to lead," *ūtī*, "to use"; of the fourth by *-ī-re*, *-ī-rī*: *audīre*, "to hear," *experīrī*, "to attempt".[[39]](#cite_note-39) Irregular verbs may not follow the types or may be marked in a different way. The "endings" presented above are not the suffixed infinitive markers. The first letter in each case is the last of the stem so the conjugations are also called a-conjugation, e-conjugation and i-conjugation. The fused infinitive ending is -*re* or -*rī*. Third-conjugation stems end in a consonant: the consonant conjugation. Further, there is a subset of the thid conjugation, the i-stems, which behave somewhat like the fourth conjugation, as they are both i-stems, one short and the other long.[[40]](#cite_note-40) The stem categories descend from [Indo-European](/wiki/Proto-Indo-European_language) and can therefore be compared to similar conjugations in other Indo-European languages.

There are six general [tenses](/wiki/Grammatical_tense) in Latin (present, imperfect, future, perfect, pluperfect and future perfect), three [moods](/wiki/Grammatical_mood) (indicative, imperative and subjunctive, in addition to the [infinitive](/wiki/Infinitive), [participle](/wiki/Participle), [gerund](/wiki/Gerund), [gerundive](/wiki/Gerundive) and [supine](/wiki/Supine)), three [persons](/wiki/Grammatical_person) (first, second and third), two numbers (singular and plural), two [voices](/wiki/Grammatical_voice) (active and passive) and three [aspects](/wiki/Grammatical_aspect) ([perfective, imperfective](/wiki/Perfective_and_imperfective), and [stative](/wiki/Stative_verb)). Verbs are described by four principal parts:

1. The first principal part is the first-person singular, present tense, indicative mood, active voice form of the verb. If the verb is impersonal, the first principal part will be in the third-person singular.
2. The second principal part is the present infinitive active.
3. The third principal part is the first-person singular, perfect indicative active form. Like the first principal part, if the verb is impersonal, the third principal part will be in the third-person singular.
4. The fourth principal part is the supine form, or alternatively, the nominative singular, perfect passive participle form of the verb. The fourth principal part can show one gender of the participle or all three genders (-*us* for masculine, -*a* for feminine and -*m* for neuter) in the nominative singular. The fourth principal part will be the future participle if the verb cannot be made passive. Most modern Latin dictionaries, if they show only one gender, tend to show the masculine; but many older dictionaries instead show the neuter, as it coincides with the supine. The fourth principal part is sometimes omitted for intransitive verbs, but strictly in Latin, they can be made passive if they are used impersonally, and the supine exists for such verbs.

There are six tenses in the Latin language. These are divided into two tense systems: the present system, which is made up of the present, imperfect and future tenses, and the perfect system, which is made up of the perfect, pluperfect and future perfect tenses. Each tense has a set of endings corresponding to the person and number referred to. Subject (nominative) pronouns are generally omitted for the first (*I, we*) and second (*you*) persons unless emphasis on the subject is desired.

The table below displays the common inflected endings for the indicative mood in the active voice in all six tenses. For the future tense, the first listed endings are for the first and second conjugations, and the second listed endings are for the third and fourth conjugations:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Tense** | **1st-Person Singular** | **2nd-Person Singular** | **3rd-Person Singular** | **1st-Person Plural** | **2nd-Person Plural** | **3rd-Person Plural** |
| Present | -ō/m | -s | -t | -mus | -tis | -nt |
| Future | -bō, -am | -bis, -ēs | -bit, -et | -bimus, -ēmus | -bitis, -ētis | -bunt, -ent |
| Imperfect | -bam | -bās | -bat | -bāmus | -bātis | -bant |
| Perfect | -ī | -istī | -it | -imus | -istis | -ērunt |
| Future Perfect | -erō | -eris | -erit | -erimus | -eritis | -erint |
| Pluperfect | -eram | -erās | -erat | -erāmus | -erātis | -erant |

The future perfect endings are identical to the future forms of *sum* (with the exception of *erint*) and that the pluperfect endings are identical to the imperfect forms of *sum*.

#### Deponent verbs[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]

SomeLatin verbs are [deponent](/wiki/Deponent_verb), causing their forms to be in the passive mood but retain an active meaning: *hortor, hortārī, hortātus sum (to urge).*

## Vocabulary[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]

As Latin is an Italic language, most of its vocabulary is likewise Italic, ultimately from the ancestral [Proto-Indo-European language](/wiki/Proto-Indo-European_language). However, because of close cultural interaction, the Romans not only adapted the Etruscan alphabet to form the Latin alphabet but also borrowed some [Etruscan](/wiki/Etruscan_language) words into their language, including *persona* "mask" and *histrio* "actor".<ref name=H&S13>[Template:Harvnb](/wiki/Template:Harvnb)</ref> Latin also included vocabulary borrowed from [Oscan](/wiki/Oscan_language), another Italic language.

After the [Fall of Tarentum](/wiki/History_of_Taranto) (272 BC), the Romans began hellenizing, or adopting features of Greek culture, including the borrowing of Greek words, such as *camera* (vaulted roof), *sumbolum* (symbol), and *balineum* (bath).<ref name=H&S13/> This hellenization led to the addition of "Y" and "Z" to the alphabet to represent Greek sounds.[[41]](#cite_note-41) Subsequently the Romans transplanted [Greek art](/wiki/Greek_art), [medicine](/wiki/Medicine), [science](/wiki/Science) and [philosophy](/wiki/Philosophy) to Italy, paying almost any price to entice Greek skilled and educated persons to Rome and sending their youth to be educated in Greece. Thus, many Latin scientific and philosophical words were Greek loanwords or had their meanings expanded by association with Greek words, as *ars* (craft) and τέχνη.<ref name=H&S14>[Template:Harvnb](/wiki/Template:Harvnb)</ref>

Because of the Roman Empire's expansion and subsequent trade with outlying European tribes, the Romans borrowed some northern and central European words, such as *beber* (beaver), of Germanic origin, and *bracae* (breeches), of Celtic origin.<ref name=H&S14/> The specific dialects of Latin across Latin-speaking regions of the former Roman Empire after its fall were influenced by languages specific to the regions. The dialects of Latin evolved into different Romance languages.

During and after the adoption of Christianity into Roman society, Christian vocabulary became a part of the language, either from Greek or Hebrew borrowings or as Latin neologisms.[[42]](#cite_note-42) Continuing into the Middle Ages, Latin incorporated many more words from surrounding languages, including [Old English](/wiki/Old_English) and other [Germanic languages](/wiki/Germanic_languages).

Over the ages, Latin-speaking populations produced new adjectives, nouns, and verbs by [affixing](/wiki/Affix) or [compounding](/wiki/Compound_(linguistics)) meaningful [segments](/wiki/Segment_(linguistics)).[[43]](#cite_note-43) For example, the compound adjective, *omnipotens*, "all-powerful," was produced from the adjectives *omnis*, "all", and *potens*, "powerful", by dropping the final *s* of *omnis* and concatenating. Often, the concatenation changed the part of speech, and nouns were produced from verb segments or verbs from nouns and adjectives.[[44]](#cite_note-44)

## Phrases[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=32)]

[Template:Howto](/wiki/Template:Howto) The phrases are mentioned with [accents](/wiki/Pitch_accent) to show where to stress.[[45]](#cite_note-45) In Latin, most words are stressed at the second-last (penultimate) [syllable](/wiki/Syllable), called in Latin *paenultima* or *syllaba paenultima*.<ref name=LKHS>[Tore Janson](/wiki/Tore_Janson) - *Latin - Kulturen, historien, språket* - First edition, 2009.</ref> A few words are stressed at the third-last syllable, called in Latin *antepaenultima* or *syllaba antepaenultima*.<ref name=LKHS/>

**sálve** to one person / **salvéte** to more than one person - hello

**áve** to one person / **avéte** to more than one person - greetings

**vále** to one person / **valéte** to more than one person - goodbye

**cúra ut váleas** - take care

**exoptátus** to male / **exoptáta** to female, **optátus** to male / **optáta** to female, **grátus** to male / **gráta** to female, **accéptus** to male / **accépta** to female - welcome

**quómodo váles?**, **ut váles?** - how are you?

**béne** - good

**amabo te** - please

**béne váleo** - I'm fine

**mále** - bad

**mále váleo** - I'm not good

**quáeso** (['kwajso]/['kwe:so]) - please

**íta**, **íta est**, **íta véro**, **sic**, **sic est**, **étiam** - yes

**non**, **minime** - no

**grátias tíbi**, **grátias tíbi ágo** - thank you

**mágnas grátias**, **mágnas grátias ágo** - many thanks

**máximas grátias**, **máximas grátias ágo**, **ingéntes grátias ágo** - thank you very much

**accípe sis** to one person / **accípite sítis** to more than one person, **libénter** - you're welcome

**qua aetáte es?** - how old are you?

**25 ánnos nátus** to male / **25 ánnos náta** to female - 25 years old

**loquerísne ...** - do you speak ...

* **Latíne?** - Latin?
* **Gráece?** (['grajke]/['gre:ke]) - Greek?
* **Ánglice?** (['aŋlike]) - English?
* **Italiáne?** - Italian?
* **Gallice?** - French?
* **Hispánice?** - Spanish?
* **Lusitánice?** - Portuguese?
* **Theodísce?** ([teo'diske]) - German?
* **Sínice?** - Chinese?
* **Japónice?** ([ja'po:nike]) - Japanese?
* **Coreane?** - Korean?
* **Arábice?** - Arabic?
* **Pérsice?** - Persian?
* **Indice?** - Hindi?
* **Rússice?** - Russian?

**úbi latrína est?** - where is the toilet?

**ámo te** / **te ámo** - I love you

## Numbers[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]

In ancient times, numbers in Latin were written only with letters. Today, the numbers can be written with the [Arabic numbers](/wiki/Arabic_numerals) as well as with [Roman numerals](/wiki/Roman_numerals). The numbers 1, 2 and 3 and every whole hundred from 200 to 900 are declined as nouns and adjectives, with some differences.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *ūnus, ūna, ūnum* (masculine, feminine, neuter) |  | I |  | one |
| *duo, duae, duo* (m., f., n.) |  | II |  | two |
| *trēs, tria* (m./f., n.) |  | III |  | three |
| *quattuor* |  | IIII or IV |  | four |
| *quīnque* |  | V |  | five |
| *sex* |  | VI |  | six |
| *septem* |  | VII |  | seven |
| *octō* |  | VIII |  | eight |
| *novem* |  | VIIII or IX |  | nine |
| *decem* |  | X |  | ten |
| *quīnquāgintā* |  | L |  | fifty |
| *centum* |  | C |  | one hundred |
| *quīngentī* |  | D |  | five hundred |
| *mīlle* |  | M |  | one thousand |

The numbers from 4 to 100 often do not change their endings.

## Example text[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]

[*Commentarii de Bello Gallico*](/wiki/Commentarii_de_Bello_Gallico), also called *De Bello Gallico* (*The Gallic War*), written by [Gaius Julius Caesar](/wiki/Julius_Caesar), begins with the following passage:

[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=35)]

[Template:Multicol](/wiki/Template:Multicol)

* [Classical compound](/wiki/Classical_compound)
* [Classical education](/wiki/Classical_education)
* [Greek and Latin roots in English](/wiki/Greek_and_Latin_roots_in_English)
* [Hybrid word](/wiki/Hybrid_word)
* [Latin mnemonics](/wiki/Latin_mnemonics)
* [Latin school](/wiki/Latin_school)
* [List of Latin phrases](/wiki/List_of_Latin_phrases)
* [List of Latin translations of modern literature](/wiki/List_of_Latin_translations_of_modern_literature)
* [Lorem ipsum](/wiki/Lorem_ipsum)
* [Magnet school](/wiki/Magnet_school)
* [New Latin](/wiki/New_Latin)
* [Romanization (cultural)](/wiki/Romanization_(cultural))
* [Toponymy](/wiki/Toponymy)
* [Wikipedia:IPA for Latin](/wiki/Wikipedia:IPA_for_Latin)

[Template:Multicol-break](/wiki/Template:Multicol-break) [Template:Portal](/wiki/Template:Portal) [Template:Multicol-break](/wiki/Template:Multicol-break)

Lists

* [List of Greek and Latin roots in English](/wiki/List_of_Greek_and_Latin_roots_in_English)
* [List of Latin and Greek words commonly used in systematic names](/wiki/List_of_Latin_and_Greek_words_commonly_used_in_systematic_names)
* [List of Latin abbreviations](/wiki/List_of_Latin_abbreviations)
* [List of Latin phrases](/wiki/List_of_Latin_phrases)
* [List of Latin words with English derivatives](/wiki/List_of_Latin_words_with_English_derivatives)
* [List of Latinised names](/wiki/List_of_Latinised_names)

[Template:Multicol-end](/wiki/Template:Multicol-end)

## Notes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=36)]

[Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist)

## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=37)]

[Template:Columns-list](/wiki/Template:Columns-list)

* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)

## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=38)]

[Template:WikisourceWiki](/wiki/Template:WikisourceWiki) [Template:InterWiki](/wiki/Template:InterWiki) [Template:Wikiquote](/wiki/Template:Wikiquote) [Template:Wikibooks](/wiki/Template:Wikibooks) [Template:Wiktionary category](/wiki/Template:Wiktionary_category) [Template:Commons](/wiki/Template:Commons)

### Language tools[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=39)]

* [Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web) Searches Lewis & Short's *A Latin Dictionary* and Lewis's *An Elementary Latin Dictionary*. Online results.
* [Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web) Search on line Latin-English and English-Latin dictionary with complete declension or conjugation. Online results.
* [Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web) Identifies the grammatical functions of words entered. Online results.
* [Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web) Identifies the grammatical functions of all the words in sentences entered, using Perseus.
* [Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web) Displays complete conjugations of verbs entered in first-person present singular form.
* [Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web) Displays conjugation of verbs entered in their infinitive form.
* [Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web) Identifies Latin words entered. Translates English words entered.
* [Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web) Combines Whittakers Words, Lewis and Short, Bennett's grammar and inflection tables in a browser addon.
* [Template:Dmoz](/wiki/Template:Dmoz)
* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)
* "[Classical Language Toolkit](http://docs.cltk.org/en/latest/latin.html)" (CLTK). A [Natural Language Processing](/wiki/Natural_language_processing) toolkit for [Python](/wiki/Python_(programming_language)) offering a variety of functionality for Latin and other classical languages.

### Courses[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=40)]

* [Latin Lessons](http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/lrc/eieol/latol-0-X.html) (free online through the [Linguistics Research Center](http://www.utexas.edu/cola/lrctr/) at UT Austin)
* [Free 47-Lesson Online Latin Course](http://learnlangs.com/latin/#Lessons), Learnlangs
* [Learn Latin](http://learn101.org/latin.php) Grammar, vocabulary and audio
* [Latin Links and Resources](http://frcoulter.com/latin/links.html), Compiled by Fr. Gary Coulter
* [Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)
* [Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web) (a course in [ecclesiastical Latin](/wiki/Ecclesiastical_Latin)).
* [Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)
* [Beginners' Latin](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/latin/beginners/default.htm) on [The National Archives (United Kingdom)](/wiki/The_National_Archives_(United_Kingdom))

### Grammar and study[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=41)]

* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)
* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)
* [Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)

### Phonetics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=42)]

* [Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)
* [Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)

### Latin language news and audio[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=43)]

* [Ephemeris](http://ephemeris.alcuinus.net/), online Latin newspaper
* [Nuntii Latini](http://yle.fi/radio1/tiede/nuntii_latini/), from Finnish YLE Radio 1
* [News in Latin](http://www.radiobremen.de/nachrichten/latein/), Radio Bremen
* [Classics Podcasts in Latin and Ancient Greek](https://web.archive.org/web/20150129091342/http://www.haverford.edu/classics/audio/), Haverford College
* [Latinum Latin Language course and Latin Language YouTube Index](https://sites.google.com/site/janualinguae/latin)

### Latin language online communities[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=44)]

* [Grex Latine Loquentium](http://www.alcuinus.net/GLL/) (Flock of those Speaking Latin)
* [Circulus Latinus Interretialis](http://www.circuluslatinusinterretialis.co.uk/) (Internet Latin Circle)
* [Latinitas Foundation, at the Vatican](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/institutions_connected/latinitas/documents/index_en.htm)

[Template:Latin periods](/wiki/Template:Latin_periods) [Template:Ancient Rome topics](/wiki/Template:Ancient_Rome_topics)

[Template:Authority control](/wiki/Template:Authority_control)

[Category:Latin language](/wiki/Category:Latin_language) [Category:Forms of Latin](/wiki/Category:Forms_of_Latin) [Category:Fusional languages](/wiki/Category:Fusional_languages) [Category:Languages of Andorra](/wiki/Category:Languages_of_Andorra) [Category:Languages of France](/wiki/Category:Languages_of_France) [Category:Languages of Italy](/wiki/Category:Languages_of_Italy) [Category:Languages of Portugal](/wiki/Category:Languages_of_Portugal) [Category:Languages of Romania](/wiki/Category:Languages_of_Romania) [Category:Languages of Spain](/wiki/Category:Languages_of_Spain) [Category:Languages of Vatican City](/wiki/Category:Languages_of_Vatican_City) [Category:Subject–object–verb languages](/wiki/Category:Subject–object–verb_languages)