

CLASSICAL COTTAGE SCHOOL'S LATIN METHOD *FOR PARENTS*

PURPOSE

Latin teaches vocabulary using the keys of the English language -- in learning a Latin word, you are often learning multiple English derivatives in a way that will 1) not be forgotten easily and that 2) develops a skill that enables understanding of how words work and how to manipulate them with sophistication.

By learning how language works, Latin students are able to master modern languages in a fraction of the time normally required.

Latin teaches close reading and logical analysis -- a type of thinking that is akin to mathematics in its exercise of logic, yet is applied to language in such a way that the student becomes attuned to subtle distinctions and clarity of thought in English as well as Latin.

Latin students consistently and significantly outdo those taking only modern languages on the SATs.

Advanced Latin study also teaches ancient history (of a civilization that holds the foundations of our own), rhetorical analysis, and essay writing skills -- all of which makes for a superb foundation for studies in any other field.

The Method

As a parent, you DO need to:

Take the Latin studies as seriously as math. Do not allow yourself to get behind. The daily syllabus is there for your wise use. You cannot cram a week's worth of Latin into one day and expect to understand it or retain it.

Work daily (this means 4 days per week) with your child to train his approach to the material. Many children seem to pick up Latin much more quickly than their parents; the problem is that they may simply be getting the gist of the meaning while learning sloppy habits of thinking and analysis. Eventually that child will not be able to handle translation, which increasingly requires keen attention to detail and master of earlier material.

The parent knows (or will learn) how to set up the study session to be successful.

The parent will know how to ask questions that expose a child's lack of understanding so that it can be corrected.

The parent will be able to find out what techniques work best for a particular child.

The child will learn from all of the above and become a superior student in the process.

Ask for help as soon as you see you need it. The Schearers are always generous with their time and there are many Latin mothers who are also happy to help.

There are times when new grammatical concepts seem overwhelming -- you need to persist in studying a new idea and you'll find that you will eventually understand it -- and often wonder why it seemed so tough to begin with.

Virtually ALL of the students studying at the level of Latin II and beyond have parents who have stayed involved daily or have hired a tutor to do so.

As a parent, you DON'T need to:

Take the tests, but you as a parent MUST understand what's on those tests.

Memorize the charts, but as a parent you MUST work to understand the grammatical concepts behind them.

Parents should NOT:

Send the child off to do the work with the answer key.

Do the work for the child -- don't give a correct answer; instead, have the child figure out what the answer is (it may take several sincere tries, but that is how the learning occurs).

Believe the illusion that your child can do it without you, even if the child insists that's the case. You are taking the place of a teacher who would be teaching for an hour daily, and for whom the student would be doing an hour of daily homework. If you learn what works well for your family and are steady in applying it, it should be doable in one hours of CONCENTRATED, daily study, four days per week. For many families, that concentrated time will be a challenge, but it's worth it.

UNEXPECTED BENEFITS OF STUDYING LATIN

Latin students learn how to learn.

Latin students learn how to deal with frustration (for example, when to take a break and come back with a fresh mind and a willing spirit).

Latin students often come to appreciate the tenacity of a parent who is working hard to learn alongside the student. There is much to be said for the parent-child bond that can be fostered through such concentrated study.

Latin students learn how to focus closely and analyze (which is why they stand out in many seemingly unrelated endeavors).

Latin is one of a handful of subjects, such as math, that provides the opportunity to study a single discipline to a mastery level. A student cannot advance in Latin without progressively mastering each level of grammar. This provides the added benefit of character development through perseverance and self-discipline. A student who learns to master Latin has a blueprint for mastering any other challenge in life.

We celebrate that you all have come to these Latin classes, taught by some of the most talented Latin teachers in the nation, but are concerned that you know that the benefits will not be the same if you do not lay a careful foundation. Without that thorough grounding, your child will not be able to progress as far in his Latin studies as you may envision; he will also not develop the skills that make the study of Latin so worthwhile.