

The Benefits of Latin in the 21st Century
in the words of those who studied it

I'm Manager of Internal Audit for Yum! Brands (KFC/Pizza Hut/Taco Bell). Latin helped me prepare academically for college and beyond - expanding my understanding of etymology and the English lexicon - for the SATs all the way through medical school. It has facilitated my uptake of the Spanish language and has eased communication during travels to not only Latin America and Spain, but also Portugal, Brazil, France, Italy, and Romania. **(Doug S.)**

Latin not only helps me academically as a tool to define words I'm not familiar with, but it provides me history I actually know, and like. As someone not enamored with the American educational obsession of date memorization, the seamless transition between ancient history and ancient myth gave history some ... context to grip to.

I'm a bank manager working my way through a clinical psychology degree. I wouldn't be as well read...if it weren't for my Latin tutelage. **(Diana D.)**

I work as a software engineer for SAIC, Science Applications International Corporation, ...Crane naval base.

Obviously Latin helped prepare me for college and various standardized tests, through learning the roots and structures of many words. This proved itself to be invaluable throughout my life.

As someone who struggled with English growing up, being formally taught conjugation was very important in my understanding of language, and has certainly been beneficial [to] my understanding of communication in general.

I cannot overstate how important Latin and the Classics were to my development. **(Jay C.)**

As someone pursuing forensic science, I have been able to understand both scientific terms and legal terms due to Latin. It also came in handy when I took the GRE, but the main benefit for me was the legal terms I've had to learn. **(Hannah C.)**

Of all of the subjects I learned in high school, Latin (and Classics in general) have proven to be the most commonly used. My study of Latin has influenced more areas of my life than I can count. **As a teacher in a low-income community [IPS],** I have found that the basics of the English language are pushed aside in favor of memorization. I believe that putting off a deeper understand of WHY words are written as they are has left a huge hole in students' education. I have had great success teaching my 6th grade students how to conjugate verbs (in English) using the same methods used to learn Latin. Even the native English speakers prefer this method to rote memorization because it actually explains how and why we add an -ed and other endings to a word and what it means when we do. In addition, my knowledge of Greek and Latin roots is being passed down to these 12 year old students. These roots play an integral role in my students' ability to determine meaning of unknown words and even bleeds into their studies of Geometry and Science. This has increased their independence and self-confidence, as well as their readiness for the great number of standardized tests that they have, and will take in their academic lives.

In March, 2016, I asked former students to share with me how Latin had helped them in either college or career or both. This is a sample of their responses..

Furthermore, my knowledge of ancient Greek and Roman cultures has allowed me to help my students dive deeper into the bases and workings of our own government. This not only helps them pass tests, but more importantly, it makes them better citizens. Citizens that are better educated are less likely to commit crimes and more likely to be productive members of society. The expansive and diverse variety of literature that we read and translated in Latin has also helped me be a better teacher. In addition to learning various Greek and Roman myths, my class actually dove fairly deeply into a few sections of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The fact that my students were able to pull significant meaning out of such an ancient text and connect it to themselves and their lives, is wonderful. For example, one of my more challenging students stated in his apology letter that he "flew too close to the sun" and got caught passing out candy during class. If the studies of Latin and the Classics can help a 12 year-old boy from a high-poverty, high-crime, and under-educated area communicate his awareness of his wrongdoing, I think they are worth studying. **(Lauren H.)**

I definitely think studying Latin positively influenced my skills as an **attorney**. Learning the language at an early age led me to have a more sophisticated vocabulary, which helped me succeed in college, law school, and my career. The analytical skills I developed learning to translate Latin – particularly gaining an understanding that words can have different meanings in different contexts – was great practice for analyzing and interpreting court opinions and statutes. More broadly, I think having exposure to the culture, the mythology, the history, and the literature made me a more well-rounded and intellectually curious person. **(Emma G.)**

While it certainly helped me understand unfamiliar vocabulary, it really gave me so much more. I understood my English literature classes on a different level than others because of what Latin literature had taught me. I learned military history, culture, the arts, poetry, debate and even mathematical patterns with the grammatical analysis.

I studied painting and American culture studies in college veering away from that dream of medicine. I think my love for the arts and humanities started in Latin class. We were learning so many subjects but all rooted in a deep appreciation for the cultural work of the Romans. **Now I work in interpretation in an art museum**, so my job is to help others understand various cultures past and present through their artworks. I know part of why I'm successful at my job is because Latin taught me how to do that and instilled in me an appreciation for communication, history, language, and the arts.

...fifteen years after studying the subject, I still think of Latin often whether in my job, my parenting choices (singing Latin nursery rhymes to my son), ...my critique of political oratory, or my confidence in my leadership. **(Emily H.)**

My interdisciplinary major at DePauw consists of Geology/ Anthropology/ and Classics. The majority of my course work has been geology and environmental science classes, but I decided to add Anthropology and Classics in order to continue writing papers and honing that skill. Latin has helped me write clearly and concisely.

My plans for this summer include teaching English at a boarding school in Switzerland. I am convinced I got accepted because of my Latin minor as well as being a Latin tutor here at DePauw. **(Luke L.)**

I'm a double major in Neuroscience & Behavior and the Program of Liberal Studies at Notre Dame.

Every day I think about Latin in some way. Whether it be reading the *Aeneid* or the *Metamorphoses* and purposefully buying a side by side copy with the Latin and bringing up certain translational issues and how they contribute to the understanding of the work, to scientific names of animals, to determining the meanings of words based on their Latin roots, to understanding mythological and historical references in various historical/literary texts etc. **(Amy S.)**

In my career as an **accountant**, I am frequently tasked with reading and interpreting contracts, full of legalese, with roots in Latin. My Latin education has allowed me to easier navigate these contracts, both in understanding English terminology and in understanding the legal terms that are drawn directly from Latin. It's helped me in interpreting accounting records given to me by our company's Costa Rican office, as despite frequent requests they still come to me largely in Spanish. There are also two Latin mottoes ... that have given me strength to persevere as life has taken unexpected turns (*Per aspera ad astra. Dum spiro spero.*) often repeating them in my head like a mantra. **(Kim S.)**

I took four years of Latin in high school. I can easily say that it was the most enjoyable and memorable class of my high school career, but it has also helped me build my real career. I work at a school that focuses on a Classical curriculum, and we start teaching Latin to the students from the very beginning. By the time the students reach Middle School, they're performing fully memorized recitations of Latin passages. Because I am the **external communications director**, my background in Latin has enabled me to not only understand the lessons the students are learning but also help present that information to the public. Because I've had (a portion) of the Latin education that the students have had, I use that education to present why it is so important for students. The school that I work at produced the highest ISTEP+ scores in the state in the past year, which we highly attribute to our Classic curriculum. **(Emma A.)**

As a theatre student, Greece is mentioned often as the birthplace of theatre. With the units we did in Latin, I was able to get a great sense of what the first plays might have looked like. When asked about Greek Theatre in my first semester of college, I was able to whip out more knowledge on the subject than anyone else in my class. Roman mythology stories and Greek tragedy and comedy plays are not only studied, but also still widely adapted today. I find myself using the history I learned in Latin at least on a weekly basis in my theatre classes! **(Katie H.)**

I am currently a deputy prosecutor handling major felony cases for Tippecanoe County.... Latin challenged my way of thinking and forced my brain to operate in a different way. I spent most of high school being bored and frustrated. Latin was one of the few classes that forced me to engage and work hard to train my brain to think about language in a different way. I learned to apply the lessons from my other classes to what I was learning in Latin and bring Latin to my other classes. Most importantly for my adult life, Latin gave me a solid foundation in English language and grammar, more so than any English class that I was required to take. This has served me well in my adult life because I am better able to analyze language and develop arguments based on syntax and word choice - a valuable skill when I'm arguing to a judge how a single word should be interpreted within the context of a multi-page statute! **(Sarah W.)**

Since graduating high school, I've learned a few other languages pretty well. The first is Spanish, which I learned because my boyfriend's family is from Mexico, and the second is Vietnamese, which I learned while living in Ho Chi Minh City for five months. In both cases, I found the languages surprisingly easy to learn. I believe this is because my four years of Latin provided me with an incredible frame of reference for learning new languages, particularly in terms of understanding grammar.

As for literature, culture, and history: my experience as a Latin student made me passionate about the how's and the why's of the world. It would be one thing to just learn Latin, but what really made it such an impactful education was learning the story behind the language. What was happening in the world? Who was speaking it? How was it being used? What stories were being told? This type of critical and inquisitive thinking helped mold the way I see the world today.

Right now, I work as a web content specialist in Chicago. This fall I'll be starting graduate school to get a masters in software engineering. (Learning to code is exactly like learning a language by the way. Just another reason I'm thankful to have been a Latin student!!) **(Allison C.)**

Latin has helped me a lot in college. **I am majoring in Music Ed and English Literature with a minor in TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages).** Latin has helped me with reading comprehension, in that I have a clue about the meanings of certain words. Latin has helped me in music, considering I sing Latin all the time and can appreciate the text because I know it's meaning and context. Latin helped me in Music History because knowledge of the Roman Empire and Classical history helped me contextualize movements and pieces in early sacred music. Latin has also aroused a growing interest and passion for linguistics. I took a course, History of the English Language, for fun, and my knowledge of Latin helped me better understand the development of languages and the important difference between synthetic and analytic languages. **(Rachel W.)**

[I am majoring in] psychology and neuroscience. Having had a Latin background in high school helped me tremendously in my ancient civilizations history course. When discussing Roman history including the order of consuls, historians like Herodotus, influential Roman leaders, and the differences between Athens and Spartan history, I was pleased to discover I remembered much of this history from my time in Latin. Latin helped me to become a more confident public speaker because of the experiences we had presenting/ debating. **(Annie L.)**

I graduated last fall from IU with double honors degrees in economics and history, and I now work full time for a local financial firm called City Securities. My primary responsibility in this job is to analyze financial offering statements and regulatory laws. None of these complexly worded documents are written in Standard English. My ability to quickly sift through and comprehend them is a skill that I first engaged in while translating 2000 year old Latin texts in your class. From studying Latin I gained an appreciation for understanding not only the definitions of words, but the context in which they are used, the audience they are meant for, their many grammatical and literary intricacies, and the multiple references that are implied. I could not do my job if I did not have these valuable skills that I use every day in a professional setting that I learned from taking a high school Latin class. **(Dean S.)**

The ability to spend all four years of my high school years learning Latin was a huge asset to me in university, but also now as a **clinical research coordinator and an ophthalmic technician.** In school, Latin allowed me to succeed in my science and medicine based courses. To be able to go into a course like Human Forensics Osteology, and already have an understanding as to what a foramen is(Latin:

forare - to pierce a hole), typically a hole-like structure in bone that houses nerves or blood vessels, gave me an edge on learning the structures of bone that other people in the class didn't have. I entered ophthalmology knowing very little about eyes, their anatomy, their physiology, and the diseases that affect them. But, again, Latin was there to save the day. I began in retina, running fluorescein angiograms on patients with very little knowledge as to what I was looking at. As the doctors showed the patients what they were seeing, I began to understand the differences between things like choroiditis (Latin suffix -itis for inflammation) and hypopyon (Latin and Greek roots - below and pus). Due to this knowledge, I picked up and excelled quickly in my field.

I spend most of my days now seeing research patients, helping to forward science with new technology, and acting as a certified Scribe for doctors in my clinic. These are all things that have required a working knowledge of Latin, whether other people in my field acknowledge it or not. **(Erin B.)**

Firstly, I'll say that although it may seem odd to connect **social work** and Latin/Classical studies, the two are more closely related than you'd think. Latin taught me to think critically, whether that be parsing a word, or trying to piece together Aeneas' journey (not unlike assessing a client's history). Latin required me to think outside of the box because it was so different from everything I had ever learned before. I'm sure it activated a part of my brain that I hadn't exercised much, but my writing, language, and critical problem-solving skills were developed through the epics, philosophical texts, and poems. Developing creative solutions in Latin is a must in order to make sense of such a foreign language.

In addition, Latin was very challenging to me, which in turn prepared me for college and the social work profession. It helped me feel comfortable in challenging myself to do better, which I believe has helped me remain motivated and graduate with honors from IU. I have accelerated in university studies as a result of the intensity and focus of Latin and Classical Studies. **(Jamie H.)**

I took 3 years of Latin in high school and **I am currently in 4th year Latin in college at Purdue University. I am an Interior Design major pursuing a minor in both Classical Studies and Psychology.**

I could go on for hours of how Classical Studies have impacted my life and opened my eyes in so many things. Currently I am in a hotel room in Athens, Greece, studying abroad for spring break. I would have never heard of or even considered this adventure if it weren't for my studies of Latin. Being exposed to the culture by music, food, art, architecture, and literature has allowed me to think in new ways and given me a new appreciation and respect of other cultures.

Studying Latin for so long has helped me directly and indirectly. With Latin you get all the subjects - foreign language, religion, English, art, math, science, and history. I don't think you can find that studying any other language. The literature we study is also so fascinating - the skill and thought and character of each ancient writer is so detailed and beautifully executed, we can do nothing but learn all we can from them today. The Romans and Greeks were such innovative thinkers and they liked to create. Being at an engineering school, I can see the importance and skill the first engineers must have had to create and operate their cities. And now for my favorite topic of all - art and architecture. Being an interior design major, art and architecture are obviously my two passions. Visiting Greece for spring break has ignited an even bigger passion in me for art and design. When I return to the states I am so excited to share my ideas and inspiration and tell others how Greek art and architecture, not just of the ruins, but the current interiors of buildings, has inspired me in so many new ways. **(Laura B.)**

I am the Director of Operations for the 434th Communications Squadron and the Deputy Financial Manager for [a branch of the United States intelligence community this person asked me not to name]. I feel like my study of Latin helped me to have a deeper understanding and appreciation for language in general, which ...ultimately led me to study **cognitive science and psycholinguistics in college.** There, I continued my study of Latin and gained a breadth of knowledge and a skillset that has served me well throughout my military and civilian careers: the ability to communicate effectively, an open-minded scientific approach to problems and possible solutions, the ability to effectively research topics, design experiments, lead teams, write papers, analyze data and build reports.

All of these are soft skills that are broadly applicable to almost any career field--skills that are in increasingly high demand given today's workforce. I think that Latin gave me a real appreciation for the liberal arts and the way that you taught us helped us to think critically about a broad array of topics, not just syntax or Classical literature. **(Dustin S.)**

I only took a year of Latin at North Central, which I greatly regret, but due to schedule and health limitations, that is what I could fit in. Still, the impact of that one year of study was greater than I ever could have imagined.

I was always interested in language and words and Latin enhanced this love of language by increasing my knowledge of etymology. I truly believe I am a better writer because of my year in Latin. I must mention the obvious; that Latin helped me score higher on the SAT's. **My undergraduate degree was in Public Affairs with a concentration in nonprofit management.** Latin not only helped me in my human resources and ethics classes (*quid pro quo* anyone?) but helped me to passionately defend opinions on topics that were important to me because I had the words and the fundamentals of both English and Latin etymology to do so.

Furthermore, in my adult life, I find myself still writing each and every day. **I am currently the social media coordinator and fundraising associate for a church in Indianapolis** and I create content for a living. I don't think I would be nearly as an effective content creator, writer, marketer, or fundraiser if it wasn't for Latin.

I think people often forget the importance of humanities in today's world. I work on the computer all day long in a career path that didn't exist ten years ago and I can do this not because I have a background in computer science (which I don't) but because I have a solid background in communication. Latin also gave me a historical, global perspective on the world, which translates into me having a more universal voice in a professional field which is always changing. **(Katie B.)**

I'm working at an environmental nonprofit in Austin. I took 2 years of Latin in high school.... It helped me in my Spanish major in college, as well as my Italian minor and French classes. **(Emma C.)**

All told, I took five years of Latin in junior and senior high school, and another year in college.

In addition to more general uses, it was specifically helpful to me in one case: In seminary, learning the Koine Greek the Christian scriptures were written in was a breeze after so much Latin. **(Christian S. minister)**

Latin has been a really great addition to my life. It has made learning Spanish and all of the anatomical terms in veterinary medicine just a little bit easier. Had I not gotten into **vet school** early I would've completed a minor in Classical Literature and Culture. Latin just opened up my curiosity for all things of the ancient world. **(Brooke F.)**

It instilled the importance of knowing the context of culture when seeking to understand a text, something that came in handy with my concentration of post-colonial literature. So many other disciplines depend upon Latin - history, poetry, philosophy, science, religion - that to translate the language is to receive a sneaky secondary education. And you made it fun and creative!

Finally, in my professional life, Latin gave me a sense of the world and encouraged to me to look beyond U.S. history, which is actually how I ended up taking Japanese in college. Instead of looking deeper into western culture, I wondered what was going on in the east around the same time. After university I taught English in Japan for two years where my firm grasp of the "how's" and "why's" of our grammar were indispensable to me. **I now work in Cultural Affairs at the Consulate-General of Japan in Houston** where I create educational and cultural activities to introduce Japanese cultural to Texans. **(Emily G.)**

...learning Latin gave me a foundation in which to understand other words in English. As a **published writer**, the same applies. Now armed with knowledge of language terms like "syntax" and "inflection", it has affected how I choose my words and structure my sentences. **(Rachelle W.)**