I Speak Latin

A Conversational Latin Course for Young Beginners

Ecclesiastical Pronunciation

Drew Campbell

Stone Soup Press
stonesouppress.com

Stone Soup Press
stonesouppress.com

I offer my heartfelt thanks to Michelle Graves and to the teachers and families of Trinity Classical School of Houston for their assistance in the preparation of this edition.

How to Use *I Speak Latin*

This book provides everything a teacher needs to create an engaging and enjoyable Latin learning experience, whether at home or in a traditional classroom. There are no student textbooks to purchase, and all of the activities can be done with a few basic materials, such as index cards, colored pencils, old magazines, and family photographs.

Each lesson plan covers one topic and takes 15-30 minutes to teach, depending on the size of the group. Teaching notes (*Quid Novi?* [kwihd NAW-veee], What's New) explain the objectives for the lesson and provide simple grammar explanations. This preparatory material gives you, the teacher, the information you need to present the lesson, even if you have little or no background in Latin yourself.

Vocabulary Cards

At the end of most lessons, students create flashcards. These cards contain no English, only a picture on one side of the card and the appropriate Latin word or phrase on the other. The cards are a key part of the program and are used for a variety of different activities.

It is very important that the students make the connection between an object or action and the corresponding Latin word without the intermediary of their native language. There may be instances where translation is necessary, but it should play a very small role in the lessons. (Grammar explanations take place in English.)

Scheduling

I Speak Latin includes a total of 64 lessons. The pacing is flexible. Assuming a 36-week school year with four weeks of catch up or review time built in, suggested completion times are as follows:

Students who begin in…	**Can complete the program in…**
Grades 3-4	Two years (=1 lesson per week)
Grades 5-6	One year (=2 lessons per week)

All students should also allot at least one 20-minute lesson period a week for vocabulary review.

How to Pronounce Latin… Like a Barbarian

New Latin teachers, particularly homeschooling parents, often worry about how to pronounce Latin. Should they use the Restored Classical pronunciation preferred by university teachers and classics scholars? Or should they teach Ecclesiastical (Church) Latin for its relevance to religion and music? What about regional accents coming through in Latin? Is it all right to speak Latin with a twang?

Today most scholars model their Latin pronunciation on that of the educated class during the reign of Augustus, but this is a convention based on a number of factors, not least an academic bias toward the high literary culture of that time. But Latin was spoken long before the Augustan Age and continued to be used as a spoken language into the Middle Ages and beyond. At its height, the Roman Empire stretched from Hadrian's Wall at the Scottish border to North Africa and the Middle East. Regional accents in Latin were at least as varied as those of countries where English is spoken today.

The accents of almost all contemporary Latin speakers reflect their respective mother tongues; Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, for example, speaks Latin with a German accent. All modern speakers of Latin are "barbarians"– foreigners – by birth, and all have learned Latin as a foreign language. As with any language, the bottom line is that we are able to understand each other well enough to communicate.

So please do not worry about the "correct" accent. Speak Latin like a barbarian, and speak it proudly!

The good news is that, whatever your background, Latin is easy to pronounce. It is phonetically regular, and most of the letters sound like they do in English. This edition of *I Speak Latin* uses ecclesiastical pronunciation, which is similar to modern Italian. The pronunciation guides that follow mostly reflect standard ecclesiastical usage.

Latin has five main vowel sounds:

A (as in father)
E (as in grey)
I (as in Igor)
O (as in open)
U (as in super)

These are pure vowel sounds, not diphthongs. For example, *cur* – why – is pronounced like "koor," not the English word "cure."

Some vowels appear with a long mark (macron) over them. Ideally this does not change the quality of the vowel, but indicates that it is to be held longer than the unmarked version. The difference is subtle and sometimes difficult for beginners to hear. Do have your students write the macrons, but don't worry too much about the subtleties of their pronunciation at this stage.[1]

Latin also has the following diphthongs (vowel blends):

ae (like the English word eight)
au (to rhyme with the English word how)
ei (as in the English word eight)
ui (like the English word we)

[1] The pronunciation guides in this edition differentiate between long and short vowels. Often in ecclesiastical practice all vowels are treated as long. For budding scholars, however, hearing the different sounds from the start can help in ways that will matter later.

The consonants are mostly pronounced as in English with a few exceptions:

C, G, and SC are "soft" before e, i, y, ae, oe (as in **ch**in, **g**ym, and **sh**ell)
C, G, and SC are "hard" before a, o, u, and consonants (as in **c**at, **g**ot, and **sc**um)
TI before a vowel (as in tse**tse** fly)
GN (as in the word lasa**gn**e or the Ñ in pi**ñ**ata)

The letter J does not appear in the classical Latin alphabet, but it features regularly in Christian Latin texts. It is pronounced like the English letter Y. Similarly, W appears in medieval Latin in names of Germanic origin; as our name for the letter indicates, it is pronounced like a long or "double" U. The last two letters of the alphabet, Y and Z, appear rarely in Latin and then only in words of Greek origin. The Y is pronounced like the U in the French word *tu,* or the German word *über,* though if you pronounce it like the Latin U, no one will look askance! The Z is as in English.

I have tried to make the phonetic pronunciation guides reflect North American English as much as possible. Syllables that appear in capital letters receive the accent.

Examples:

Salvē, Magistra! [SAHL-vay, mah-JISS-trah!] = Hello, teacher!
Bene! [BEH-neh!] = OK. Well done!

Audio files for the lessons are available at:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0Bw7XNVTVwp25fjlaNS0wbndiYTlMY0t2cktvYVFOcFByMGVuOWh3Q28tQlVtMVhVTnF3Nmc?usp=sharing

This link can also be found on the I Speak Latin page at stonesouppress.com. Many thanks to Trinity Classical School of Houston for developing and sharing the audio files for this edition of *I Speak Latin.*

Additional Resources

The following titles, although not necessary to teach *I Speak Latin,* may be helpful to you as references.

John C. Traupman, *Conversational Latin for Oral Proficiency,* 4th ed. (ISBN 978-0-86516-622-6).
John C. Traupman, *The Bantam New College Latin & English Dictionary,* 3rd ed. (ISBN 978-0-553-59012-8).
Norma W. Goldman, *English Grammar for Students of Latin,* 3rd ed. (ISBN 978-0-934034-34-0).

Lesson One

Quid Novī?

In this lesson, you will introduce four simple commands in Latin: *surge* – stand up, *consīde* – sit down, *ī* – go, and *venī* – come. You and your students will also decide on a way to indicate the need to switch from Latin to English for a short time to clear up confusion.

The commands are given in the **imperative** form of the verb. The word "imperative" comes from the Latin word *imperō,* which means to command. You will be addressing each student individually during this lesson, using the **singular** form of the imperative.

The teaching technique used in this lesson is called Total Physical Response, or TPR. Students move around and act out the words physically. This is an excellent way to introduce action verbs, and we will be using it often during the course of this program.

To prepare for this lesson, make sure your students have space to move around. Put a piece of paper with a big X on it on the floor at least four or five steps away from the students' seating area. Work with one student at a time, using English names. In the script, I have used the name "Julia" as a model. Students begin the lesson seated.

Lesson Plan

Teacher says…	**Teacher does…**	**Student does…**
Jūlia, surge. [YOOO-lih-ah, SOOR-jeh.] Julia, stand up.	Make rising gesture with hands. If necessary, demonstrate by standing up yourself. When student stands up…	Student stands.
Bene! [BEH-neh!] Good!	Applaud.	
Jūlia, consīde. [YOOO-lih-ah, kawn-SEEE-deh.] Julia, sit down.	Make "down" gesture. Demonstrate sitting, if necessary.	Student sits.
Bene! [BEH-neh!] Good!	Applaud. Repeat the commands several more times. When the student is standing…	
Jūlia, ī! [YOOO-lih-ah, EEE!] Julia, go!	Point to the paper with the X. Make "shooing" motion. Once the student has moved to the spot…	Student moves.
Bene! [BEH-neh!] Good!	Applaud.	
Jūlia, venī! [YOOO-lih-ah, VEH-neee!] Julia, come!	Make beckoning gesture until student returns. Repeat the commands	Student returns.

	several more times. When the student is back at the seating area…	
Bene, consīde. [BEH-neh, kawn-SEEE-deh.] Good. Sit down.	Repeat with remaining students until each has had a turn.	Student sits.

As you can see, TPR lessons can be fun. Spontaneous, humorous moments make lessons all the more enjoyable. Don't be afraid to get silly!

After the TPR activity, you will want to debrief in English with your students. Ask them what they understood. As a class, settle on a method for signaling the need for a time out when the students are confused, or if the teacher needs to stop and regroup. Three possible signals:

- the T-shaped time-out gesture used in sports
- thumbs up for "I understand"/thumbs down for "I'm lost" (Switch back and forth rapidly for "I sorta, kinda get it, but I'm not 100% sure.")
- index cards with green, yellow, and red dots on them

Using one of these signals acts like a "pause button" for the lesson. Everyone can use English until the confusion has been cleared up. To restart the lesson, ask, *Bene?* (OK?) and when you get the go-ahead (thumbs up, green card, etc.), continue with the lesson from where you left off.

To complete today's lesson, distribute index cards to each student, then draw a stick figure for each action on the board. Under each drawing, write the Latin word.

surge: figure rising from chair (up arrow between chair seat and figure)
consīde: same, but with down arrow
ī: Arrow from figure to X
venī: Arrow from X to figure

Students make individual cards for each word, with the stick figure on the unlined side of the card and the Latin word on the other. Have students orient the cards horizontally so they can be filed easily.

Lesson Two

Quid Novī?

In this lesson, we will introduce the greeting words *Salvē* – hello – and *Valē* – goodbye. In addition, you will teach the words for "teacher" and "student," so you and your pupils can address each other more easily.

There are several grammar concepts at work here. First, although it will not become apparent until the next lesson, students are learning the **singular** forms of the greetings. These forms are used when addressing only one person. Next, they will encounter the concept of **grammatical gender.** If you are a woman, you will use the feminine word *Magistra* – teacher – to refer to yourself; if you are a man, use *Magister,* the masculine equivalent. Likewise, a male pupil is *discipulus,* and a female one is *discipula.*

Finally, you will be using the **vocative** form of these nouns to address each other. The term "vocative" comes from the Latin verb that means "call," and is the root of English word vocation ("calling"). The vocative form is used when speaking to a person directly, by name. If you were to translate the sentence "John, come here, please!" into Latin, the name "John" would appear in the vocative case. Many vocative forms in Latin are the same as the *nominative* (subject) form, but most nouns ending in *-us* change to *-e.* So when addressing a *discipulus* directly, you will say *discipule.*

The word *dīc* is an imperative singular form meaning "say."

It is not necessary to explain these points to your students; they are for your understanding and assistance.

Lesson Plan

Warm up by repeating the TPR activity from Lesson One with each student. Some students may have completely forgotten the words; don't worry. Just repeat the activity for a minute or two before moving on. With repeated exposure, the words will sink in. Allow students to refer to their cards if necessary.

Once the students are all seated again, introduce the new material. In the script, the teacher is addressing a male student. A female student would be addressed as *discipula* [dih-SHIH-poo-lah].

Teacher says…	**Teacher does…**	**Student does…**
Magistra/Magister sum. [mah-JISS-trah/mah-JISS-tehr soom.] I am a teacher.	Point to yourself and repeat:	
Magistra. Ma-gi-stra sum. [mah-JISS-trah. mah-JISS-trah soom.] Teacher. I am a teacher.	Now point to a (male) student.	
Discipulus es. Dis-ci-pu-lus. [dih-SHIH-poo-looss ess. dih–SHIH–poo–looss.] You are a student.	Point emphatically at the student.	
Magistra… [mah-JISS-trah…]	Point at yourself…	

Teacher…		
… discipulus. [...dih-SHIH-poo-looss.] Student.	Point at the student.	
Bene? [BEH-neh?] OK?	Raise eyebrows and tilt head to say "Do you understand?"	
Bene. Discipule, surge. [BEH-neh. dih-SHIH-poo-leh, SOOR-jeh.] OK. Student, stand up.	Point to the student and make rising gesture with hands. Approach the student, smile, and hold out your hand for a handshake.	Student stands.
Salvē, discipule! [SAHL-vay, dih-SHIH-poo-leh!] Hello, student.	Shake the student's hand, repeating the phrase several times. Then point to yourself and in a stage whisper, say…	
Dīc, "Salvē, magistra!" [deeek, "SAHL-vay, mah-JISS-trah!"] Say, "Hello, teacher!"	If the student does not repeat the phrase, point to your mouth and repeat:	
Dīc, "Salvē!" [deeek, "SAHL-vay!"] Say… Hello!	When the student says the word, repeat:	Student says, "Salvē, magistra!"
Salvē, discipule! [SAHL-vay, dih-SHIH-poo-leh!] Hello, student.	Shake hands heartily. Then let go, turn away slightly, and wave over your shoulder.	
Valē, discipule! [VAH-lay, dih-SHIH-poo-leh!] Goodbye, student.	Continue walking away and repeating the phrase. If the student does not reply, use your stage whisper.	
Dīc, "Valē!" [deeek, "VAH-lay!"] Say... Goodbye!	When the student replies, applaud.	Student says, "Valē!"
Bene, discipule! Consīde. [BEH-neh, dih-SHIH-poo-leh! kawn-SEEE-deh.] Good, student. Sit down.	When the student returns to his seat, repeat the process with remaining students.	Student sits.

To complete the lesson, make index cards for the new words:

magistra/magister: large figure with graduation cap
discipulus: small figure holding a book
discipula: small figure with hair bow holding a book
salvē: two figures shaking hands
valē: two figures walking away from each other, waving
dīc: picture of a face with open mouth, lines coming out to indicate sound