

I Speak Latin

A Conversational Latin Course for Young Beginners
Ecclesiastical Pronunciation

Andrew Campbell

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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-vee], 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...
Grade 2	Two years (=1 lesson per week)
Grades 3-5	One year (=2 lessons per week)
Grade 6	One year (=2 lessons per week) if combined with another program; as little as one semester (=4 lessons a week) if used alone

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, *cūr* – why – is pronounced like “kooor,” 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):

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.

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)

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 **chin**, **gym**, and **shell**)
C, G, and SC are “hard” before a, o, u, and consonants (as in **cat**, **got**, and **scum**)
TI before a vowel (as in **tsetse** fly)
GN (as in the word **lasagne** or the Ñ in **piñata**)

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/0Bw7XNVTVwp25fjlaNS0wbndiYTIMY0t2cktvYVFOcFByMGVuOWh3Q28tQIVtMVhVTnF3Nmc?usp=sharing>

This link can also be found at <https://quidnampress.com/i-speak-latin-ecclesiastical-edition/>. 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 *veni* – 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 lessons, 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-neeel!] Julia, come!	Make beckoning gesture until student returns. Repeat the commands several more times. When the student is back at the seating area...	Student returns.
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 *dic* 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.]	Point emphatically at the student.	

You are a student.		
Magistra... [mah-JISS-trah...] Teacher...	Point at yourself...	
... 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!” [deek, “SAHL-vay, mah-JISS-trah!”] Say, “Hello, teacher!”	If the student does not repeat the phrase, point to your mouth and repeat:	
Dīc, “Salvē!” [deek, “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!” [deek, “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

dic: picture of a face with open mouth, lines coming out to indicate sound

Lesson Three

Quid Novi?

This is a review lesson. Choose at least two of the activities listed below to do today.

Lesson Plan

1. Concentration

Write the following words on individual index cards:

surge, conside; ī, venī; magistra or magister, discipulus; salvē, valē

Shuffle the cards and deal them face down in two rows of four. Students take turns flipping over two cards. If they get a match, they keep the cards and get another turn. If you have an odd number of students, play with the one who needs the most encouragement or help.

If you play this game today, store the cards for later use.

2. Artist's Challenge

Call out words from the vocabulary learned so far, and have students draw a stick figure to represent it. Or have the students give you the words to draw. To add some fun and challenge, you can deliberately make mistakes and see if the students catch you!

3. *Simon Dicit* (Simon Says)

Students stand in a line at one end of the room. Say, “**Simon dicit, ‘_____!’**” [SIH-mawn DEEE-chit...] followed by one of the action verbs learned so far: “... *surge*, ... *conside*, ... *ī*, ... *venī*.” For *ī* students move one step forward; for *veni*, they turn around and take one step back, then turn around again. Demonstrate this before beginning the game. Students only move when the command is prefaced by “*Simon dicit*”; otherwise, they are out. The students who reach the other side of the room without making a mistake win the game.

Lesson Four

Quid Novī?

In this lesson, students learn how to ask “who are you?” (*Quis es?*), state who or what they are (*[ego]...sum*), ask for someone’s name (*Quid est nōmen tibi?*), and give their own (*Nōmen mihi est...*). You can use the students’ English names, or they can choose a Roman name. One advantage to using a Roman name is that students will need to use the vocative (direct address) form with certain masculine names. The forms in parentheses are the corresponding vocative forms. As you can see, masculine names ending in *-ius* do not add the final *-e*, but end with *-ī*. Feminine names do not change in the vocative.

Common Roman boys’ names include: Aulus (Aule), Decimus (Decime), Lucius (Lucī), Mārcus (Mārce), Publius (Publī), Quīntus (Quīnte), Sextus (Sexte), and Titus (Tite).

Common Roman girls’ names include: Aemilia, Aurelia, Claudia, Cornelia, Fabia, Flavia, Jūlia, Paula, and Tullia.

If you are teaching your own children at home, it may seem funny to ask their names. To make the lesson more engaging, act as if you were struck with amnesia. Scratch your head, squint, and act dazed and confused. Begin by pointing to one student. (Remember to substitute *discipula* if you are speaking to a girl.)

Lesson Plan

Teacher says...	Teacher does...	Student does...
Surge, discipule! [SOOR-jeh, dih-SHIH-poo-leh!] Stand up, student.	If necessary, gesture for the student to rise. Then put out your hand for a handshake.	Student stands and shakes hands.
Salvē, discipule! [SAHL-vay, dih-SHIH-poo-leh!] Hello, student!	Prompt as necessary for the reply <i>Salvē, magistra!</i>	Student answers.
Discipule, quis es? [dih-SHIH-poo-leh, kwiss ess?] Student, who are you?	Point at the student, shrug your shoulders in a questioning movement, and look confused.	
Quis es? Quid est nōmen tibi? [kwiss ess? kwihd esst NO-men TIH-be?] Who are you? What is your name?	Continue to point and look confused. Then point to yourself...	
Ego magistra. Magistra sum. [EH-go mah-JISS-trah. mah-JISS-trah soom.] I [am] the teacher. I’m the teacher.	Repeat as necessary: <i>E-go, ma-gi-stra. Ma-gi-stra sum.</i> Then point again to the student.	
Quis es?? Magistra es? [kwiss ess?? mah-JISS-trah ess?] Who are you? Are you the teacher?		The student will likely shake his head no. He may answer <i>discipulus sum</i> (the

		correct answer) or <i>discipulus es</i> , which is not correct but on the right track.
Discipulus es? [dih-SHIH-poo-looss ess?] You're a student?		Student nods.
Dīc, "Discipulus sum." [deek, "dih-SHIH-poo-looss soom."] Say, "I am a student."		Student repeats.
Bene. Sed quid est nōmen tibi? [BEH-neh. sehhd kwihd esst <u>NO-men</u> TIH-be?] Good. But what is your name?	Emphasize <i>nōmen</i> – name. Point to yourself...	Student probably will not answer, or may repeat <i>discipulus sum</i> .
Nōmen mihi est [your name]. [NO-men MIH-he ² esst _____.] My name is...	Emphasize the word <i>mihi</i> – my. When giving your name, use whatever will be familiar to your students: Mom, Mrs. Jones, etc.	
Quid est nōmen tibi? [kwihd esst NO-men TIH-be?] What is your name?	Emphasize <i>tibi</i> – your – while pointing to the student.	The student will probably give his name at this point, but if not ask...
Est nōmen tibi [X]? [esst NO-men TIH-be _____.?] Is your name _____.?	For X, insert incorrect and humorous possibilities: Captain Jack Sparrow, George Washington, Darth Vader, Rumpelstiltskin...	At this point, the student will almost certainly understand and give his name.
Ah! Nōmen tibi est [_____]! Salvē, [name]! [Ah! NO-men TIH-be esst _____.! SAHL-vay, _____.] Ah! Your name is _____.! Hello, _____.!	Insert the student's name in the sentence and shake hands heartily. If the student has only given his name ("John") but not used the whole phrase, write <i>Nomen mihi est</i> plus his name on the board.	
Dīc, "Nōmen mihi est _____." [deek, NO-men MIH-he esst _____."] Say, "My name is _____."	Point to the board and have the student repeat the phrase. When he has done so successfully, continue.	Student repeats phrase.
Bene, [name]. Consīde. [BEH-neh, _____. kawn-SEEE-deh.] Good, _____. Sit down.	Repeat with remaining students.	Student sits.

Complete the lesson by making cards for the following new words and phrases:

Quis es?: Two figures close together, one pointing to the other, dialog bubble with ?? in it

² "Mihi" was sometimes spelled "michi" and pronounced "MIH-key."

[Ego]... sum: Figure with arrow pointing over head.
nōmen: Figure with name underneath. Arrow pointing to name.