

Studying Vocabulary

When you begin holding your students accountable for vocabulary, begin this process by learning the vocabulary in class. Eventually the students will be able to memorize them on their own, but you need to teach them how and help them develop some good habits. Many students need help in how to study. Because children differ in how they learn, offer your students the opportunity to practice several different ways.

Chant the words aloud as a group.

Whatever you require the students to know, chant:

- Chant the words and the meanings.
- Chant the words, the meanings and the spelling.
 - If you choose to hold students accountable for macra, add them to the chant: dūcō – d, u with a macron, c, o with a macron.
 - Another way is to deliberately say the sound of a vowel with a macron longer: dūcō - d, uuuuu, c, ooooo.
 - A hand motion could also be used to emphasize vowels with macra.
 - Teach your students to listen for macra. Except for ‘a’ and ‘o’ there is a distinct difference in pronunciation. Say a word and have them tell if there is a macron in it and what letter should have it. Macra make vowels have a sharp sound (ī = ee, i = ih). Also teach the diphthong Æ, which has a sharp sound (eye). Because it is two letters combined, it doesn’t need a macron to sound sharp. If you do this, it is important to be careful with pronunciation. If you are beginning yourself – there is no rush. Slow down and enjoy learning this together. Good pronunciation is extremely helpful in learning vocabulary
- Chant the words, their parts, the meanings, and the spelling.
 - If you require the students to be able to look at an English word and give the Latin, practice chanting them that way. Going from Latin to English is very different from going from English to Latin.

Index cards

Writing vocabulary on index cards is a common method of studying vocabulary.

- Third, fourth and fifth graders **may have significant problems keeping track of piles of cards**. One way of working up to index cards is to give students a regular 8.5x11 sheet of paper with boxes on it of dimensions similar to the dimensions of index cards. Work out a systematic progression so that by sixth or seventh grade students are able to use regular index cards.
- Older students commonly put the Latin and the parts on one side of an index card and the English on the other. They then repeatedly look them over, flipping them from front to back and can hand the set to a friend and ask them to quiz them by showing them one side of the cards. **This works well with visual learners**, and will benefit all students who are visual learners.
- There is another benefit in using an index card - like method of studying for those who learn kinesthetically. Have students in the fourth - sixth grades decline nouns and/or conjugate verbs on the index cards. This would require students to **write the vocabulary repeatedly with slight variations which is just what a kinesthetic learner needs to do**. Declining or conjugating also helps all students remember vocabulary better and reinforces the fundamental concepts.

1. Basic Vocabulary Card: (parts as required by teacher)

amō, (amāre, amāvī, amātus)

I love

2. Basic Vocabulary Card with all definitions

amō, amāre, amāvī, amātus

I love, to love, I loved, loved

3. Vocabulary Card with Conjugation or Vocabulary Sheet with Conjugation

(English)	I love		(Tense)
(Principle Parts)	AMŌ , AMĀRE		present tense (Latin)
(Number)	S	P	(English)
(Person)	1 st amō I love	amāmus we love	
	2 nd amās you love	amātis you all love	
	3 rd amat he/she/it loves	amant they love	

Choose how much of this information you want your students to write.

4. Vocabulary Card with Declension

Decline the assigned nouns in Latin and in English in these boxes:

(English)	girl		(Gender)
(Dictionary. Frm)	PUELLA, AE		f.
(Number)	S	P	
(Cases)	N. puella The girl (S.N.)	puellae The girls (S.N.)	
	G. puellae of the girl	puellārum of the girls	
(Latin)	D. puellae to/for the girl	puellīs to/for the girls	
(Inflected Meaning)	Ac. puellam the girl (D.O.)	puellās the girls(D.O.)	
	Ab. puellā w/b/f the girl	puellīs w/b/f/i/o the girls	

Because there are no additional words or special forms that distinguish between the subject and the direct object in English, to clarify the nominative case have students add (S.N.) and with the accusative case add (D.O.) = Direct Object. Because of space constraints, abbreviate the prepositions 'with, by, from, in, on' used with the ablative to 'w/b/f/i/o.' **Teach the meanings** of these abbreviations to the students and have them say aloud or mentally the meanings as they write them. It will be meaningless if a student thinks w/b/f/i/o/ as he writes instead of 'with, by from, in, on.'

Write the vocabulary,

whether an index card format is used or not. This is good for all students, but crucial for kinesthetic learners. One way to make a game of this is to pair off students and have them alternate asking each other the words. The one who is answering must write the answer, not say it. If the answer is incorrect, that students must write the vocabulary word three times completely. This can be done using small white boards or pencil and paper.

Recite as lists.

I am reminded of the place in Tolkien's book 'The Lord Of The Rings,' where Treebeard is trying to place this creature that called itself a hobbit. His question was, 'Where does it fit in the lists of Living Things?' In Tolkien's world the ents had used the device of memorizing lists to learn the names of all creatures. Vocabulary can also be learned this way, especially if different rhythms or tunes can be made to suit the different lists. Perhaps, as with different verses of a song, several lists could be learned for any given rhythm or tune. Clapping in time also would also help.

- Find a rhythmic way to say the list with the meanings. This doesn't review the spelling, but is still beneficial.
- If the classroom teacher is comfortable with having them recite a list this can be worked into other parts of the day. Grammar Schools students often stand in lines waiting to go to Art , Music, dismissal, etc. These are great opportunities to recite. This recitation can be quiet, if the waiting is happening in the hall, or enthusiastic if in a classroom. A student could be honored by being given the responsibility to lead a chant. Lists of endings can also be done in this way.
- If lists are learned this way all vocabulary could be easily reviewed (at least verbally) all year. Latin Class is limited in time, so whatever the classroom teachers can do with recitations will be very beneficial.

Use the vocabulary

Encourage students to use the vocabulary

- Have a chart with names and put a star or check by students who correctly use a vocabulary word in class.
- Encourage students to raise their hands and give a Latin word for any English word you use that they might know. This can be turned into a game with the teacher deliberately salting conversation with words the students know. This can also be recognized on a chart or with a special 'seat' for the ones who do it correctly.

Parents often feel at a loss when helping their children study Latin because of the differences in pronunciation and because ‘they don’t know Latin.’ Help them to see that they can call out the words in English and have their children write the words in Latin and their meanings (or whatever is required) and then compare the answers to the vocabulary list. They can also write the Latin word and show it to their child and have them give the required information (parts, meaning etc.) about it. This can be done with a white-board slate or a paper and pencil. Any word that is incorrect should immediately be written correctly 3-5 times with all required information.

Give a pre-test the first time you test a class on vocabulary.