

Satips

Support and training in Prep,
Primary and Senior Schools

Classics

Editorial

I am delighted to be co-editing the SATIPS Classics Broadsheet and to be sharing ideas with fellow Classics teachers. I have been teaching Classics in Prep schools for a good few years and am currently Head of Classics at Pinewood School, preparing pupils for Common Entrance and Scholarship.

We prep school Classics teachers often find ourselves in a department of one (or maybe one and a half, helped by a colleague from another department), and consequently we can be rather isolated, internalising rather than sharing the highs and lows of the subject. I would like to use this broadsheet as a platform for our thoughts; and so please do not hesitate to get in touch, perhaps to contribute a few lines or a longer article. It would be fantastic to have a diversity of writers from far and wide.

Whilst we eagerly await your thoughts and ideas, here are some of my own.

The French education system sets great store by instilling grammar into young children - and not just nouns, verbs and adjectives. A primary-age French child can tell you, for instance, that *le*, *la*, *les* are definite articles whereas *un*, *une*, *des* are indefinite articles; and everyone learns the difference between a demonstrative pronoun and a demonstrative adjective. As someone who went through this system and started Latin in France I have no memory of grammar being taught in Latin lessons; it was just a matter of learning the Latin forms. Now I spend far too much precious time teaching English grammar in order that my pupils can access the Latin. Often I find that they do not know what an infinitive is, let alone how to find one in a Latin text. Teachers are encouraged to adopt a cross-curricular approach (now a key feature in ISI inspections); and so I think that grammar should be taught as an aspect of literacy, and reinforced widely throughout the curriculum. The parts of speech at least should be second nature by the time pupils reach Common Entrance. This is the sort of thing that preoccupies me. How about you?

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As Emiliana says in her introduction, we are very keen that this broadsheet should be a useful forum for us to share ideas and thoughts. In this, our first edition as co-editors, we have an article from Chris de Souza (whom you may have heard on Radio 3) about his teaching at Dolphin School, a discussion of text books from James Tuck, a notice from Bob Bass about his new Latin and Greek courses, an offering about classics puzzles, and a crossword to finish – if you can.

I have been teaching Classics, mostly in prep schools, for longer than the Peloponnesian War, and cut my teaching teeth in the days of four-level Latin CE and Greek scholarship papers with a verse section. I have always viewed the broadsheet as a reminder that one was not alone: fellow missionaries were also keeping the flame alight in distant Devon or deepest Essex. No doubt like me many of you can remember useful and informative items in past editions. I can recall, for instance, advice for trips, reviews of textbooks, an article about the linguistic interest of Cicero's letters, an analysis of the position of Latin adjectives, amusing anecdotes from the classroom; and, as the behemoth of the internet took the global throne, helpful suggestions of worthwhile websites from the cyber-canny.

Now your new editors wait hungrily for contributions. Our subject deserves a worthwhile and varied broadsheet that can hold its headlines up with the others – and so please send in your offerings, be they just a paragraph or two, for our next edition.

On a final note: When I was at school there was a feature in our school magazine called *His Master's Voice*, which featured teachers' genuine and amusing sayings. (It began, apparently, when a corpulent master said in a physics lesson, 'Suppose I had a large spherical body...') Why not a similar column of ticklish misconstructions from classroom and exercise book: *Our Pupils' Voices* or *Discipulorum Dicta*? If only I had collected the countless chuckleworthy instances that brightened up lessons and marking in terms gone by! Let's hear yours before *Lethe* wipes them.

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This is one of the subject Broadsheets published termly by The Society of Assistants Teaching in Preparatory Schools limited by guarantee and not having a share capital.

Reg. no. 890301 England.

Registered Charity
no. 313688

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Lingua est Latina, Mortua certe, Romanos prima die, Necavit nunc et me.

That's one of the ditties I teach my Year Four and Five pupils. At my extended age I joke to them that when I was young Latin was very much a living language, and indeed it was in a way. Brought up as a pre-Vatican II Catholic, I picked up some vocabulary in a casual, almost subliminal way. Even modern Catholics don't have that. I remember in 1990 at a wedding in a monastery in Italy being surprised to discover that no one, even among the monks there, knew the Ave Maria in Latin. Such cultural memes are disappearing fast – nursery rhymes, folk-song, Shakespeare and Bible stories, and schools need to try and keep them alive. It is all very well trying to make us a multi-cultural nation, but little attempt is made to introduce new communities to our traditional culture.

Another of the elements in my early years teaching is to introduce Latin tags such as Tempus fugit, mottos such as Malo esse quam videri, and abbreviations like i.e, e.g, and N.B. It is extraordinary how quickly even the least able child is able to pick up these. Nobody feels left behind. It is very rewarding when in later years pupils recognize words in Latin texts that they remember from their “nursery” years. Starting Latin in this way, with occasional sessions in years 4 and 5, is a great help when they are expected to get to Scholarship Level on less than two 40 minutes periods a week in Years 6, 7 and 8. I say ‘less than’ because, although two periods are indeed timetabled, over the period of a school year they will be lost to trips, competitions and rehearsals.

I make frequent references to the relationships between words in different languages. The children must be tired of my dictum that “Italian is lazy Latin, Spanish “Essex” Latin, and French just very bad Latin”, though they giggle all the way to the French class with that in mind. I involve in the game those children in the class who speak the Romance languages. I'll take the part of a Roman centurion trying to get the natives to speak Latin. “Unus”, I'll say. The Italian child will give a passable imitation with his “Uno”, and the Spaniard almost as good, but huge hilarity is occasioned by the seemingly uncomprehending French child's “Un”. It is even funnier with Octo. Language after all is a living thing – even Latin – and not just words on a board.

I am lucky enough to teach at Dolphin, a Prep school whose founder is a Classicist, and where Classics, far from being a Cinderella subject, is at the core of the whole school curriculum. The school song is Gaudeamus igitur, the teaching of which provides another opportunity to get used to the sound, and meanings of Latin words.

I believe singing is an extremely effective way of learning a language. We sing Latin versions of nursery rhymes; and there are some witty translations of the traditional English ones that the children pick up very quickly. We learn Mary, Mary, quite contrary in Latin, and then discuss the origins of the verse in History; and our frequent trips introduce even the youngest to the classics. We make Roman forts in the sand-pit, Ancient British roundhouses out of matchsticks, and mosaics out of the playground gravel. However, a one-tenth model of the Colosseum in cardboard was an expensive failure.

The Colosseum itself is familiar to all the children. Year 7s and 8s all make week-long trips to Rome and Hadrian's Wall. Before they go, I give them a summary of all they have learned up to that time, to show them how, as Mary Beard might have it, the Roman Empire lives on, and that the Emperor who built the Flavian amphitheatre with slaves from his Jewish war set up one of today's most intractable political problems.

Chris de Souza

Classics puzzle confused me again (7)

It is delightfully satisfying to solve a good puzzle – as no doubt Oedipus found when he gave the answer the Sphinx did not want to hear. For some time I have been trying to harness this puzzle-lust in the cause of the Classics by setting (for any pupil with mental energy to spare) a weekly poser with a classical connection. Unlike the Sphinx I do not strangle those unable to solve the problem – we do things differently these milder days; and the reward for the first correct answer is not the setter's self-destruction but a small prize. The weekly aenigma (as it is known) ranges from matters of fact (Which planet in the Solar System is not named after a Roman or Greek deity?) to the tricky (What would happen to you if Medusa saw you?) and the surprising (French city named after victorious Greek goddess). Sometimes it can emerge from bread-and-butter classwork (Which is the odd one out of these words: cures, sedes, leges, tenebis, monebis? – and why?); or it can take the puzzled into unusual territory (Egyptian city named for aggressive tropical reptile).

It is not easy to predict which aenigma will be solved with swift ease or abandoned as impenetrable. Some pupils have astonishing wide knowledge about mythology or the Roman military but can be stumped by the seemingly simple. When would Caesar be pleased to hear the number 10? would be answered quickly by a certain member of our Year 5; but the last puzzle of the passing term (Which is the odd one out of the following: Roman, Norman, Frenchman, Dutchman, Kerryman, Englishman? And why?) foxed our finest minds. 🐢

Mr Google is a tiresome know-all and spoilsport, of course; and often what I considered a fiendish challenge has been solved in an instant by the casual throwing of a few words into his near-omniscient engine. One can to some extent google-proof the puzzles by avoiding specific terms. What was sacrificed at the Roman festival of Robigalia? - a question easily Wikipedia'd - could be recast as: What surprising sacrifice did the Romans make to guarantee their bread? - which, if answered correctly, would justly earn a larger than usual reward. The cryptic-crossword type of poser also can evade Google's searchlight, such as Monster beheaded by hero in marshy drama (5) and Sounds like a short journey for hybrid hominivore (8), and the title of this article. These aenigmata - and there have been hundreds over nearly ten years - can set off a rolling snowball of research as profitable and rewarding as any project - or what we drearily call 'extension work'. One of the most determined and successful solvers once spent a good portion of a weekend worrying at a particularly knotty aenigma, co-opting her family into the research operations. (She solved it, happily to report; and her parents made no official complaint.) Not many though have such resolve; and I am not the only one to worry that the cream of our most purposeful intelligence is being drained by cyber-fuss. Nevertheless pupils still gather at the posting-place of the weekly puzzle to win chocolate, Latin-inscribed pencils, classical bits and pieces from museum shops, and on one occasion (in a spasm of generosity to celebrate the solving of an especially demanding puzzle) a coin of Constantine I, identified down to the mint by the Ashmolean.

And having had their mental appetite whetted by such challenges one hopes they will fly on winged sandals back to... Subject found in scroll at Ingleborough (5).

NR

How to have fun teaching hic, haec, hoc

- Write out the forms of the target demonstrative (in cheerful colour) on 30 pieces of card.
- Arrange the classroom chairs in two groups of 3 by 5 (singulars and plurals).
- Give each of the pupils one of the cards.
- At the words Demonstrative Pronoun One! all pupils have to sit in a chair that corresponds with the position of their particular pronoun. (If there are, say, 18 in the class add adverbs hic, huc, hinc, or duplicates or duds such as hiuc, hec, ha.)
- Send casualties to Matron and apologise to next door for disturbing their lesson.

Please send to the above e-mail addresses any methods you would be willing to share for bringing Latin to life. What could be more

useful than a column with fresh ideas for explaining prepositions and third declension stems? Or a dynamic way to make the tamen/tandem confusion a thing of the past?

Latin textbooks

This article is aimed at those who, like myself, are new to teaching in prep schools and who may benefit from a discussion of the main textbooks used in prep schools.

If we are fortunate to have the budget to buy new books, and do not have to stick with inherited resources, we need to decide which book to choose. As professional teachers we obviously go beyond the books, but choice of textbook does affect our scheme of work, and so it is worth discussing some of the main ones.

I inherited several books: Bob Bass' Latin Practice Exercises, whose old edition is out of print [but see below]; Nick Oulton's Latin for Common Entrance, and So you really want to learn Latin Prep by Theo Zinn, both published by Galore Park; and the Cambridge Latin Course (CLC); and I "magpie" from all of them. Apart from CLC these books aim at Common Entrance, with separate books for each level, and are very grammar focused. They introduce a point with an explanation, and then have exercises in English to Latin and Latin to English to drive it home. After the first chapters of grammar explanation and exercises, short passages of Latin are introduced. Oulton's books include passages of Roman history and Greek and Roman myths, providing good practice for CE, as well as introducing the myths and legends in the background section. There are also separate revision books from Galore Park, which include more exercises and exam-style questions.

Most of Bass's book for Level 1 is in the present tense. By contrast, Oulton introduces the imperfect in chapter 3 shortly after the present and case endings, and all tenses for Level 1 are covered by chapter 7. Some might find Bass's approach too slow, but it does offer consolidation for the less able. Others might argue that Oulton introduces the imperfect tense too early. Oulton's book is more useful if one has higher-ability pupils, as one can press ahead quickly to the past tenses - and most Latin was written in the past tense not the present. By introducing the imperfect tense early Oulton can include passages of adapted Latin stories much sooner.

By contrast CLC, although it does have sentences and some discussion of grammar, is mainly a reading course. The problem for those teaching to Common Entrance is that about 60% of the CLC vocabulary is not used in CE, and the grammar is very sporadic: present tense endings

are not introduced all at once, for instance. Cases are even more separated, with the ablative not discussed until Book III. Some schools start off with CLC in Year 6 before switching to Bass or Oulton in Year 7. This causes problems because of their totally different approaches.

If one knows that one is going to continue with the same students to Year 8, it would make more sense to start with Bass or Oulton in Year 6 for consistency. Using CLC in Year 6, and then Bass or Oulton in Year 7 gives two years to Level 3 or scholarship. This is possible, with weaker students taking Level 1 at the end of the two years and stronger students Level 2. Covering more than one level a year is possible: I have taken over a Year 8 class (at chapter 10 of Bass) and managed to get one boy up to scholarship in the same year, but this is exceptional.

So why use CLC at all? In Kent, where we have the 11+, prep schools lose a lot of students at the end of Year 6, so for some this might be their only opportunity to study Latin and Classical Civilisation, and if they are not aiming for CE there seems little point in forcing upon them a grammar-heavy book which they are not going to complete. A greater focus on Roman culture with some Latin is arguably more useful as well as more widely appealing. This is where CLC excels. It has a section on Roman culture at the end of each chapter, and a website which has recently added some more cultural resources. It also has photocopyable workbooks.

This explains why some schools start with CLC and then use Bass or Oulton in Year 7. Personally I prefer the scheme in Oulton, but have used a combination rather than confining myself to one book.

Incidentally, A. M. Wright's (So you really want to learn) Greeks and Romans is an excellent book for background. It covers the relevant Greek myths, the early History of Rome, Roman entertainment, housing, slavery, Roman Britain, gravestones and the Roman army, and is an essential purchase for any Classics Department.

James Tuck

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Prep School Latin: A Handbook for Students and Teachers

Prep School Latin is a substantial, one-stop resource suitable for prep school pupils working at any of the four levels of the ISEB prescription, and caters also for the more advanced 13+ scholarship demands of some public schools. The explanations and lay-out are unsophisticated but clear, and there are plentiful exercises, in both directions, affording practice in exactly the sort of questions pupils will face at Common Entrance and Public School Scholarship levels.

Teachers will find the vocabulary checklists invaluable for reference and the setting of learning work.

The book combines the best features, and omits the less successful ones, of my *Ab Initio*, *Latin Practice Exercises* and *Latin as an Honour* series, based on my own experience and the feedback received from colleagues. As such it can be used as a traditional coursebook for pupils of all abilities whilst still catering for the needs of those who favour the heavy English-into-Latin bias of *Latin as an Honour*.

It is also intended to be user-friendly; hence the grammatical tables, syntax summary and two-way vocabulary at the end. The numbered vocabulary listings, arranged by word type within each level, may be found useful for the setting of learning work. My own practice is to operate a 'five-a-day' learning policy, but that's another story...

Prep School Latin is in effect three textbooks in one, taking pupils from *amo* to fear clauses. Uncluttered and set in the ISEB house font, it runs to more than 500 pages and is compact (7 x 10 ins, 17.78 x 25.4 cms) in format. It could form the core of a prep school course, from which teachers can cherry-pick, or simply stand alone as the single course book to serve pupils throughout their prep school career. It is available from Amazon at £14.99.

Prep School Greek: A workbook leading to Common Entrance Level 1

More Prep School Greek: A workbook leading to Common Entrance Level 2

You won't need me to tell you that curriculum time specifically for Greek in a prep school is usually at a premium, hence these self-contained workbooks which, mapped exactly to ISEB's Level 1 and 2 syllabuses, require very little actual teaching or contact time. They are A4 in format and pupil-friendly: the font is that of ISEB's Greek house style (New Athena Unicode), explanations are simple and the lay-out spacious. After working through each book pupils will be well equipped to tackle the respective practice papers with confidence before hopefully progressing further. These workbooks are available from Amazon at £7.50 each.

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CRUCIVERBA

Answers are in Latin and English.

Across

- 1** Censors' term (12)
-
- 8** Beloved female (5)
-
- 9** Tell – in Latin and English! (8)
-
- 10** What conquers all, wrote Virgil (4)
-
- 11** Where waiting beasts were held (3,5)
-
- 13** Things placed (6)
-
- 15** Analysed messy drapes (6)
-
- 17** We shall snatch purse? I am confused! (8)
-
- 18** Keen, showing top card and king (4)
-
- 21** Homeric Greek (7)
-
- 22** Greek hospitality (5)
-
- 24** Deeds not words (4,3,5)
-

Down

- 1** Relative - as in English (3)
-
- 2** Statue, perhaps – or ghost (5)
-
- 3** How is feminine relative? (4)
-
- 4** Trilingual hexametricisit (6)
-
- 5** She was obeying imperative of 9 across (8)
-
- 6** Gottlieb's alias (7)
-
- 7** Poorly mannered source for Terence (8)
-
- 10** Where they put Hannibal to scare children (2, 6)
-
- 12** ... and the rest (2,6) *Integer vitae* metre (7)
-
- 14**
-
- 16** When no quad is to be disturbed (6)
-
- 19** I try to sort out Ron & co (5)
-
- 20** Aetas Augusti
-
- 23** Some horsemen in area of house (3)