Notes on Learning Latin Vocabulary

Although this document is written for the perspective of students of Latin, students of other languages may still find the instructions for how to use the vocabulary-learning website www.Memrise.com useful.

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What to learn when you learn Latin vocabulary

When learning Latin vocabulary **it is important to learn ALL PARTS of the words**:
- Nouns: nominative singular, genitive singular, gender, meaning. For example, *puella, puellae*, f. girl.
- Verbs: 1st pers. singular present tense, infinitive, 1st pers. singular perfect tense, perfect participle, meaning. For example: *porto, portare, portavi, portatus*, carry.

You might be tempted to simply learn that *porto* means carry, but that is no help when you come across a perfect tense form of the verb. Some verbs have very irregular perfect tenses, for example, *cecidi* is the perfect form of *cado*, or *abstuli* is the perfect form of *aufero*. Some nouns also have significant stem changes: for instance, *pes* means foot in the nominative, but the stem changes to *ped-*, so the genitive form is *pedis*. This is why you must learn all the different parts.

You must also **learn all the different meanings** given for a particular word. For example, the verb *peto, petere, petivi, petitus* can mean attack, or beg for, or seek - these are all very different meanings in English, and if you don't know all of them then you could end up with a translation that is very wrong. You don't want to say that someone was attacking a dog if they were simply looking for it, or begging for enemy soldiers if they were actually attacking them.

Using Memrise to learn vocabulary

Memrise is a free website. There is a paid option, and you will frequently get adverts and emails asking you to pay; **do not pay**. There is **no need** to pay; please **ignore** all references to pay for Memrise. There are some features of the site that you can't use without paying, but you don't need them. Dr Kerr has been using Memrise since 2012 and has never paid anything! I use the website version for all of my learning; I use the website on my school computer & the website on a tablet at home. I think there is an app version, but I haven't used it.

When creating a **username**, keep general safeguarding rules in mind. Your Memrise profile will be publicly available online. I recommend coming up with a **nickname** rather than using your real name, and be sensible when picking a profile picture. Dr Kerr's username is MagistraK, and her picture is, unsurprisingly, an owl, and she makes no reference to where she lives or what school she works at in her profile; use this as a model for your own account.

When you first create an account it will ask you to pick a language. Latin is not one of the options - pick a random language such as French to get your account set up, and then once you have an account you can delete the French beginners course that it will have added to your profile page (unless you want to learn some French too!).

Once you have your account please **click on this course link** and start learning! https://www.memrise.com/course/5559999/ocr-as-latin-vocabulary-h043-full-dvl-latin-eng/

How Memrise works

Each word that you can learn is a 'seed'. You plant your seeds, usually in batches of five, by doing some simple memory quizzes on them. Around 5 hours after you finish planting your seeds, you will need to water, or review, them. You will see all the words again, and will have to type the correct English. If you get them right, then it will ask you to review them again in about a day; if you get them wrong, it will ask you to review them sooner.

If you keep getting a word right, then the time between reviews will get longer and longer. If you keep getting it wrong then it will ask you to review the word more frequently. This is why Memrise is a more effective and efficient method of learning vocabulary than just going through the wordlist, because it is designed to focus your attention specifically on the words that you need most help in remembering.

Do not be tempted to plant lots and lots of words all at once. Plant a **maximum of 10** a day, otherwise you will be completely overwhelmed with watering your plants. **You should aim to go on the website at least every other day to keep up with your watering**, and to plant a few more seeds. If you keep up with watering then you won't need to spend more than 5 minutes on the site each time you visit.

You can set up a daily goal to encourage yourself to learn your vocabulary frequently. This also allows you to log which days you've used the site, and seeing your current daily streak can be powerful motivation. Dr Kerr has a daily goal of earning 1500 points, which generally takes her around 2-5 minutes to achieve (planting 5 seeds will usually generate this many points, as will watering 10-15 plants). This is a great way to get into the habit of learning little and often.