



# WELCOME TO YEAR 12 LATIN AT CAMP HILL GIRLS!



We absolutely love teaching the A Level Latin course, and we hope that you enjoy your time learning Latin with us at KS5. Our aim is to develop both your linguistic ability through reading Latin prose and verse, and your skills in the textual analysis of key works of Latin literature. We also hope to enhance your knowledge and awareness of the Classical world and to stimulate a personal interest in the various cultures and histories of the ancient Mediterranean – but especially that of Rome and its empire.

## Year 12 course content

- We will start with an intensive revision of GCSE grammar, before moving on to the more sophisticated grammatical structures required at A Level.
- We will develop our skills in these new structures through unseen prose translation.
- Prose literature: either Tacitus or Nepos.
- Verse literature lessons: Virgil, *Aeneid* 4.

## Year 13 course content

- We will revise and continue refining the grammar covered in Year 12, along with prose unseen translations.
- We will apply our learning to unseen verse translations, along with learning about poetic meter and scansion.
- Prose literature: whichever author was not studied in Yr 12.
- Verse literature: continuing with Virgil, *Aeneid* 4.

## Transition Work

In order to prepare you for getting off to a good start in September, we would like you to keep up with some of your Latin studies over the summer break. You have already put so much effort into learning your grammar and vocabulary for your GCSE exams, and we really don't want you to switch off for seven weeks and lose that momentum. The tasks outlined in this document are a mixture of vocabulary learning, grammar revision and cultural background, and most of it involves watching YouTube videos. Lots of it is optional and we don't expect you to spend more than an hour of your time each week – unless you fall down a YouTube rabbithole!<sup>1</sup>

[Vocabulary Learning](#)

[Grammar Revision](#)

[Cultural Background](#)

**Do as much as you can, which is better than not doing any at all ☺**

If you have any questions, then please drop me a line:

[d.kerr@chg.kevibham.org](mailto:d.kerr@chg.kevibham.org)

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<sup>1</sup> I have made the assumption that you will be able to access YouTube - if for whatever reason you can't, then please let me know and I can provide you with alternative activities ☺

## Vocabulary Learning

Just like at GCSE, there is an official vocabulary list at AS that the words on the language paper will be taken from. It is therefore essential that you know this list, and what better prep than to get started on learning it now?! **Dr Kerr has set up a Memrise course with the complete AS wordlist; please join the course, and start 'planting' some words.**

We suggest learning vocabulary little and often – 5 minutes every other day is generally more effective than half an hour once a week. If you have not used Memrise before then **there are instructions for using Memrise in a separate document** that you can find on the Departmental page; if you have, then please click on the link below and get started! It would be nice if you could drop Dr K an email with your username (she is MagistraK, and your goal is to beat her on the leaderboard each week ;) ):

- <https://community-courses.memrise.com/community/course/5559999/ocr-as-latin-vocabulary-h043-full-dvl-latin-eng/>

If you would rather make your own resources, you can access the official list here:

- <https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/297474-as-level-gce-latin-h043-defined-vocabulary-list.xlsx>

Even if you are not interested in using Memrise, I recommend reading through the separate instructions document, as it also contains important reminders about what information you need to learn when learning Latin vocabulary.

If you do nothing else all summer, please make a start on the vocab list, learning and revising words little and often. We suggest **5 minutes every other day** (if you use Memrise, this would be planting 5 words and keeping up with your watering each session).

The current Year 12s and 13s said that starting to learn the vocabulary over the summer had a huge effect on their confidence when they started the course, and helped to keep their vocabulary knowledge ticking over.

## Grammar Revision

Have you seen the [LatinTutorial](#) videos on YouTube? They are amazing, and Dr K refers to them all the time. **The early videos in the 91 Rules of Latin Grammar series in particular are fantastic for revising the basics.** I would really recommend that you watch some of these – even though they can be covering some relatively simplistic grammar, I think you may well have quite a few ‘lightbulb’ moments as something suddenly clicks.... especially with little reasons why the Romans use X instead of Y which the CLC never really goes into detail about.

I do not expect you to watch all of the videos in the ‘91 Rules...’ series, but **I do strongly suggest that you look through the ‘91 Rules...’ playlist and dip into any that sound interesting.**<sup>2</sup>

They’re each only a couple of minutes long each, and the theme tune is really catchy. I particularly like ‘Rule 1: Apposition’ and ‘Rule 3: Some adjectives describe part of the noun’; ‘Rule 8: Case, number & gender of the relative pronoun’ covers the third most common word in the *Aeneid*! Honestly, even with videos like ‘Rule 9: Subject verb agreement’ or ‘Rule 34: Direct object accusative’, you might think that because these are such Year 7 Rules you can skip them, but there’s some good information about peculiarities that you might not be aware of.

Just be warned that as these videos are American, they use the American way of declining nouns and adjectives, which is a completely different order to us; therefore, when learning from these videos or if you decide to take any notes, be aware that for nouns/ adjectives/ pronouns/ participles, etc., the tables are going to be in the ‘wrong’ order.

**This link should take you to the playlist:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zA0CPJZfoI4&list=PLI76N29qybf-o5U6tvD-8VPILacttSaM3>

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<sup>2</sup> I have only ever got as far as Rule 40 in watching them all the way through rather than dipping in and out, so I **really** don’t expect you to watch them all, *unless you want to and have the time to!* I’m hoping I might get a little further over the summer.

## Cultural Background

This is a long section, but don't panic! It is long because I have explained everything in detail, not because there are lots of tasks (if you know me then this verbosity will come as no surprise). All of these tasks are entirely optional – **I would recommend taking a look at the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, *Aeneid* and Tacitus tasks**, as they are going to be the most relevant for your studies in the first term, but if you don't get round to doing much then it really doesn't matter.

As you know, when we study Latin we don't just study the language, we also study the literature, and in order to really understand the literature then we need to have some background knowledge about Roman culture. There are 10 areas of cultural background detailed (and I do mean detailed) below; the tasks mostly involve watching YouTube videos, but there are some podcasts and websites mixed in as well. Feel free to make notes if you want to for your own benefit, but it is not required for the course.

I know that some of you love mythology, whereas others are history buffs, and so I have tried to cover as many different elements of Roman civilisation and culture as possible. As usual with this document, everything is optional and you can dip in and out. Doing *anything* would be of benefit to you; you certainly don't have to do everything! **And if all this is just too much, then flip back to the vocab page and just get started on the wordlist ☺**

[1: Homer's Iliad and Odyssey](#)

[2: Virgil's Aeneid](#)

[3: General Mythology](#)

[4: Ovid](#)

[5: Early Roman History \("History"\)](#)

[6: Roman History: The Republic](#)

[7: The end of the Republic and the beginnings of Empire](#)

[8: The Julio-Claudians](#)

[9: Tacitus: Historian of the Julio-Claudians and beyond](#)

[10: Livy: Historian of Rome](#)

It would be really useful for you to look over video summaries of two incredibly important ancient Greek poems by Homer: the *Iliad* (a story set in the final year of the Trojan War focussing on the Greek fighter Achilles) and the *Odyssey* (a story following the Greek Odysseus as he attempts to travel home after the war); the third video is a wider discussion of them both. You may wonder why we're looking at Greek poems in preparation for our Latin course, but the reason is threefold:

- a. They are key stories in Greek mythology, and the Romans were huge fans of Greek mythology - often lifting the stories wholesale and just changing the names of the gods, or making allusions to the stories in other works of literature. One of the unseen passages at A Level could be on mythology, therefore having some knowledge of lots of different myths means you might get lucky in the exam and have a storyline that you are already familiar with.
- b. Homer was kind of like the Shakespeare of the Roman world: all Roman schoolboys learned the Homeric poems, and all educated people would be able to drop Homeric quotes in conversation to show how clever they were.
- c. Your verse literature text will be Virgil's *Aeneid*, which was deliberately written to include elements of both Homeric poems (this is mentioned a bit in the third video). The more that you understand of Homer, the more that the Virgil will make sense.

Overly Sarcastic Productions summaries of the poems:

- *Iliad*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch/faSrRHw6eZ8> (12m)
- *Odyssey*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch/A-3rHQ70Pag> (<14m)

You may already know the storylines of the myths already, or you may even have read the poems (if you haven't but think you would like to, I will put some suggested translations in this footnote<sup>3</sup>), but I'd still like you to **watch**

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<sup>3</sup> If you would like to read more about the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, then here is a basic list of resources and recommended translations (don't be tempted by the 1p editions on Amazon; the translations aren't very readable!). There is **no** requirement to do this reading or buy any books; Dr K has copies of the poems in school if you want to borrow them - you can email her to arrange to collect a copy.

*Iliad*:

- Two readable prose translations from Penguin Classics: the one by Hammond and one by Rieu.
- Poetry in Translation have a free translation to read online:  
<https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/Illhome.php>

*Odyssey*:

- A readable translation is the Rieu/Jones Penguin Classics. It's in prose and reads like a novel.

(footnote continues on next page)

**the videos to refresh your memory**; note that the narrator speaks very quickly, you may need to slow down the video speed (under settings).

If you have time, I'd like you to watch Natalie Haynes talk about the Trojan Cycle and elements of the Trojan War in the *Aeneid* (in the last few minutes she talks more about sculpture, which is less relevant):

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch/VX\\_z7\\_AiBv8](https://www.youtube.com/watch/VX_z7_AiBv8) (13m)

If you haven't come across Natalie Haynes before then you have missed out because she is absolutely hilarious as well as incredibly well-researched and straightforward to understand.

The above video is only part of her talk, as the rest had to be removed for copyright reasons. The rest is available as a BBC Sounds podcast, which I'm linking to here if you would like to listen to it. It's 28 minutes long, and you need a BBC Sounds account in order to access it. There is no obligation for you to listen to it though:

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000d7p2>

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- A recent translation by Emily Wilson is the first translation of the *Odyssey* by a woman; I got a copy of this for my birthday but haven't read it yet. I am looking forward to it as I have read a number of articles by Wilson in which she explained her choice of language in translating the text.
  - Greek Myth Comix has turned a number of books of the *Odyssey* into free comics: <https://greekmythcomix.com/odyssey-comix/>
  - Poetry in Translation have a free translation to read online: <https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/Odhome.php>

One of the reasons why it is important to know the storylines of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (see last section) is because we will be studying Virgil's epic Latin poem, the *Aeneid*, and Virgil made strong references to the Greek epics throughout his own poem. You may well have studied some of the *Aeneid* already; if you did the Eduqas 'Superstition & Magic' GCSE unit, then you will have read about Dido in Book 4.

The AS & A Level verse text that you will be studying is the second book of the *Aeneid*, in which Aeneas tells the story of the Trojan horse, the fall of Troy, and how he managed to escape. It is absolutely my favourite book of the *Aeneid*, and I am SO excited that we get to study it together!!!

It would be great for you watch some videos about the *Aeneid*:

- Why should you read Virgil's "Aeneid"? - Mark Robinson (TED-Ed):<sup>4</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch/p4mbk59rbjE> (< 6m)
- Overly Sarcastic: The Aeneid Summarised: <https://www.youtube.com/watch/QRruBVFXjnY> (12m) (note that the narrator speaks incredibly quickly, you may need to slow down the video speed (under settings)).

These two videos between them give you a good overview of the storyline of the *Aeneid*, the historical context behind it, and some key themes.

Finally, I'm linking to the episode of BBC radio programme In Our Time that was on the *Aeneid*. It's 45 minutes long, so this is *definitely optional*, but it's still nice to listen to:

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p003k9c1>

One final optional thing you might consider is to try and get hold of a copy of the *Aeneid* and start reading it (in English!!!), because it would be fantastic if you could have read the whole thing by October half term (definitely by Christmas). I do have school copies that I can lend out to you if you want to email me to arrange to collect one (the current Year 12s got their copies in September, so you won't be missing out if you decide to wait until term starts). Note that you can't make notes in the school copies, and so if you are like me and like to annotate all your books to the extent that you might

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<sup>4</sup> Bonus! There are also TED-Ed talks on the following topics (all around 5min each):

- The *Odyssey*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch/8Z9FQxcCAZ0>
- Did Troy really exist?: <https://www.youtube.com/watch/gQbZX9jEQsQ>
- And the science behind the myth of the *Odyssey*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch/CVo225pUaSA>

as well rename them 'Aeneas and the Half Blood Prince', then you'll need to buy your own copy anyway.

- As with the Homeric poems, be wary of the 1p editions on Amazon. There is a free translation available here; it's not amazing, but you get what you pay for:  
<https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/VirgilAeneid1.php>
- If you want to buy a copy then I would recommend the **Penguin Classics edition** translated by **David West**. It's a prose edition, faithful to the text, and very readable. This is the translation that I can lend out to you.

So far we've been looking at the myth of the Trojan War, and the Greek and Latin poems written about it and its aftermath. It is essential that we know about this myth, because our verse text will be the *Aeneid*, which tells the story of what happens to the Trojan refugees who escaped from Troy.

However, it's also important to have a relatively wide knowledge of Greek and Roman mythology in general. The Roman writers themselves had a great knowledge of all these stories, and dropped references to myths into their texts as anecdotes, similes, [paradeigma](#)... and that's just the prose writers!

An important thing to note with Greek and Roman mythology is that there usually is not one 'true' version of a myth. Unlike something like Harry Potter, where the books are the 'canon' and fans can use the characters or plot points to create their own fiction by riffing off the 'canonical' books,<sup>5</sup> mythology has no official canon. It's basically all fanfiction/fanon – or, to use the official terminology, 'transformative works'. Mythology is the result of hundreds of years of oral tradition (i.e., people telling stories out loud), and there are going to be inconsistencies and multiple – sometimes contradictory – accounts. So if you read a version of the Jason and the Argonauts myth where (spoiler!) Medea purposely kills her children, that's not the 'right' or 'wrong' version compared to another version where the Corinthians kill them, or another where Medea kills them by accident.<sup>6</sup> The former is the most famous,<sup>7</sup> but it's not necessarily the 'correct' form of the myth.

With that in mind, why not look at summaries of Greek and Roman<sup>8</sup> myths that you are not (or less) familiar with? It's up to you how you could do this, but I'll give you a couple of suggestions below:

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<sup>5</sup> Or, if you're into comics, it's like how comics get to reinvent themselves with every new edition whilst still co-existing with each other regardless of the contradictions. Bucky Barnes in the Marvel Cinematic Universe is Steve Rogers's childhood friend who grew up with him, went off to war, blah blah events of *CA:TFA* & *CA:TWS* blah blah; Bucky Barnes in the original *Captain America* comics is basically the Marvel equivalent of Batman's Robin, and is [adult] Captain America's teenaged sidekick; comics Steve Rogers didn't have a childhood friend until an edition in the 1980s, when his friend was a guy called Arnie Roth. Don't get me started on X-Men.

<sup>6</sup> There may even be a version where they survive, but I can't think of one off hand. You often need a strong stomach when dealing with mythology I'm afraid.

<sup>7</sup> It's the version that Euripides dramatised in his Greek tragic play the *Medea*, which we still have.

<sup>8</sup> If you're wondering what on earth a 'Roman' myth is, then for the most part it's a Greek myth with the names of the deities changed to their Roman counterparts. However, there are some distinctly Roman myths – those related to the 7 early kings of Rome (although the Romans would consider this 'history'), or to specifically Roman deities like Janus who do not have a Greek equivalent.

- You may already have a compendium of Greek myths, perhaps from your childhood - it's worth checking your bookshelves or asking at home to see if you've got a book of myths already, no matter what the intended age range is.
- Overly Sarcastic Productions on YouTube have a whole 'Mythology Summarised' playlist. Note that it's a World Mythology playlist, not just Greek, and they're not really in any order so you'll have to hunt out the Greek ones. Obviously I don't want you to watch all of them, but scroll through the titles and pick out the [Greek!] ones that are of interest:
  - <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLDb22nIVXGgeoPb-HBWwzEeoAwDvckSrC> (note that the narrator speaks so quickly that you may need to slow down the video (under settings)).
- There are absolutely loads of websites with mythology summaries on, and if you do a search online you may find websites that you prefer. However, I'll link to two that are pretty comprehensive. If you are already well-versed in myths, then it's probably best to use these sites to try and find some more obscure myths that you haven't come across before:
  - <https://www.theoi.com/>
  - <https://www.greekmythology.com/>
- There is an In Our Time episode on Greek mythology (from Achilles to Zeus!); it's 45 minutes long, but it gives you more of an academic take on mythology so is worth a listen if you have time:
  - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0093z1k>

By the way, if you do end up taking any notes then please use citations (i.e. write down the name of the video or the URL), so that if you ever do want to look up the original source again you know what it was.

In the previous section I suggested that you look at whichever myths you were interested in – preferably the ones that you were less familiar with, and this leads me on perfectly to talking about Ovid. Ovid wrote a lot of poetry, including the epic poem the *Metamorphoses*, which doesn't have a single coherent storyline but instead retells lots and lots of myths all with the theme of transformation. We will study Ovid in Year 13 as he is a set author on the A Level unseen translation paper; what this means is that one of the passages on the Language paper will be taken from a poem by Ovid. We don't know which poem (which is why it is an 'unseen' paper) but obviously the more that you are familiar with Ovid's poetry, the more chance you might have of having a vague idea about the passage that you are translating.

As well as his epic poem about mythology, Ovid wrote an poetic account of the religious festivals and other calendrical events for the first six months of the year (the *Fasti*, considerably more interesting than it sounds), various books of love poetry (the *Amores*, *Ars Amatoria*, *Remedia Amoris*), a poem about make-up (yes really: *Medicamina Faciei Femineae*), various poetic letters and complaints about how rubbish it was being exiled after he had been exiled, and please could he come home because – in case it wasn't clear – he really didn't like being exiled<sup>9</sup> (*Epistulae ex Ponto*; *Tristia*; *Ibis*), and the *Heroides* which are letters written from the perspective of the female characters in different myths who have been in some way abandoned by the hero of the myth.

Natalie Haynes, the Classics comedian and novelist, made videos on social media about each of the *Heroides* letters throughout the first lockdown, under the hashtag #OvidNotCovid, and I would like you to watch some of them. There are two available on YouTube in a compilation along with the Introduction. The Introduction is important as **Natalie discusses some of**

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<sup>9</sup> I mean, to be fair, exile is a punishment for a reason; the Romans didn't have long-term prisons, so for serious crimes (Ovid said that his were "a poem and a mistake", which is super vague and people have been arguing about what he could actually have done ever since; but it's likely that it's in part to do with the fact he kept writing poetry encouraging adultery, whilst the emperor Augustus was enacting morality laws to ban things like adultery) the choices were usually either death or exile. In a culture where belonging to a country (or city state, for the ancient Greeks) was a huge part of your identity then exile would be devastating. For Ovid, it was also kind of the equivalent of someone from London who was part of the entertainment and media scene suddenly having to live in Halesowen for evermore. If you have ever spoken to anyone who lives in London who thinks that anyone who does not live in London lives an impoverished, dull life, then you know what I mean. Ovid was also having to live in a foreign country, away from his friends and family, never mind the usual Roman amenities, and so – mocking aside – we can understand his distress.

**the more challenging aspects of Ovid's poetic persona that I'd like you to be aware of:**

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch/9aPMmT5zjNQ> (this is a 20-minute video: the first three minutes are the Introduction, and the rest is the episodes on Oenone (Paris' wife whom he left for Helen) and Phaedra)

Annoyingly, most of the videos are not on YouTube, so they're not that easy to find. If you have different social media accounts then you might be able to track them down (they were posted to Twitter and Instagram during lockdown with the #OvidNotCovid tag, but it was so long ago that it will be hard to find them now). If you are on Facebook (I'm not, so this doesn't work for me), or if you live with someone with an Facebook account who is happy for you to use it, then this link should have all the videos on:<sup>10</sup>

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/nataliehaynesstandupclassicist/1649832641846815/>

If you actually want to read the *Heroides* (you don't need to, but might be interested) there's a free translation by Tony Kline here:

<https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/Heroideshome.php>

and the Wikipedia page for the *Heroides* is quite comprehensive:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heroides#The\\_collection](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heroides#The_collection)

Some optional extras if you want to find out some more about Ovid; I think you'll need a BBC Sounds account to access them both:

- This is Natalie's BBC podcast 'Stand Up for the Classics' on Ovid:  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07756bd>
- This is a one-hour documentary about Ovid by Tom Holland. I haven't listened to it, but it's probably Tom-Holland-the-ancient-historian, rather than new Spiderman, but you never know:  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08cq9fk>

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<sup>10</sup> In fact, it has pretty much all Natalie's videos on, so you will have to scroll back some way, past lots of new exciting and interesting things (which I haven't had a chance to watch yet). I did warn you about those rabbit holes!

So far we’ve been focussing on mythology and, as I’ve explained a few times, having a good knowledge of mythology (& works of literature based on mythology) isn’t just useful for your verse unseen & verse literature: mythology is so common-place in the ancient world that prose authors drop it into their writing and assume that their reader will understand it. It will therefore help you for your prose unseen and literature, if your author does make any mythological allusions.

However, a lot of prose works are history (or “history” – more on this later) and so having a good working knowledge of Roman history will also help us to understand the events that may come up in our passages. The set prose unseen author is Livy, whose only surviving work is an account of the entire history of Rome, called *ab urbe condita* (‘From the founding of the city’), and the prose literature unit will be studying the historian Tacitus.

I did do the bunny-ears around “history”, and that’s because a lot of the early part of Roman “history” is more like legend, a bit like how the stories of King Arthur, or Robin Hood, are part of Britain’s “history”. Roman history can be split into three distinct periods: the regal period, in which Rome was ruled by kings; the republican period, when Rome was a republic; and the imperial period, when Rome moves back under the rule of one man, but he is now an emperor rather than a king (the Romans really didn’t like kings after they got rid of them and ended the regal period, so the emperors took pains to try and make themselves look as little like a king as possible). The late Republic and the Empire are very well attested historically: we have lots of written evidence and archaeological finds to back it up. However, for the regal period and the early Republic it is harder to find real evidence, and for the most part this “history” is basically myth and legend. For a start, it’s particularly suspicious that there were only 7 kings for the entirety of the nearly-250-year-long regal period, despite it being a particularly violent period of Rome’s “history” with different factions competing for the throne. As a contrast, from 1702-1952, a relatively stable period of history,<sup>11</sup> Britain managed to have 12 monarchs!

**If you’re intrigued by this, why not take a look at the regal period:**

- the founding of Rome
- the seven kings
- and the overthrow of the monarchy and switch to the Republic.

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<sup>11</sup> I know there’s been a lot of wars, but the monarchy itself has been stable.

Please note that there are content warnings for violence against women (including sexual violence) at multiple points during key events of the regal period.

- Start with this overview video, 7 kings in 7 minutes:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch/zTzGk\\_-bKnA](https://www.youtube.com/watch/zTzGk_-bKnA)
- Then watch this one, which is about 10m, and also talks about why there are issues with knowing what happened in this period:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch/9x0V2DyF9uE> (this one only goes as far as Romulus, but you can also watch parts 2 (8m) & 3 (10m) if you want to stick with this guy for the rest the regal period).

From this point on I'm going to give you a few different options:

- Overly Sarcastic's History Summarised series on Rome. This is Blue, rather than Red, and he speaks *slightly* more slowly, and does have mostly-accurate subtitles, so you might not need to slow the video down. He doesn't have a video specifically about the regal period, but it is covered here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch/SGJltq0cpg> The Roman Republic (13m)
- The History of Rome podcast, here's the index page:  
<http://www.sal.wisc.edu/~jwp/thor-episode-index.html> If you expand out the first section (6th century BC and before) then there are two podcasts on the seven kings (3a & b), which between them last just over 30 minutes, or episode 4 is 16m long on the beginnings of the Republic. If the link doesn't work, all THoR episodes are available on Spotify & Apple.
- If you prefer to read your history, you can take a look at some of these websites:
  - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman\\_Kingdom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Kingdom)
  - <https://www.unrv.com/empire/kings-of-rome.php>

As usual, if you decide that you want to make any notes then please ensure that you give citations (i.e. write down the name of the video or the URL as a title).

Let's move on to the next key period in Roman history: the Republic. The regal period – according to Roman tradition (because as we discovered in the last section, this era is only dubiously attested and is more like legend than history) – lasted for around 250 years; the Republic manages about 500 years. Within the period of the Republic there are plenty of battles, wars and events that it is useful to know about if they are the topic of an unseen,<sup>12</sup> but the key points which we really need to know about in order to understand Roman history are the beginnings of the Republic (i.e. the end of the regal period), and the end (the beginnings of the Empire, which are covered in the next section).

I think it is worth looking a little more into the social tensions that existed between the different classes in Rome. There were huge social and political changes that occurred during the Republic due to the various protests and revolts by the Plebeians (common people). This tension between the Plebeian and the aristocratic Patricians is an intrinsic part of the first half of the Republic, and also became a contributing factor to the end of the Republic as well:

- Historyden: [https://www.youtube.com/watch/s1ny-\\_aFg88](https://www.youtube.com/watch/s1ny-_aFg88) This video discusses the Roman class and social system (~ 8m)<sup>13</sup>
- The History of Rome podcast: I don't think the original link is working ([https://thehistoryofrome.typepad.com/the\\_history\\_of\\_rome/2008/11/4-the-public-thing.html](https://thehistoryofrome.typepad.com/the_history_of_rome/2008/11/4-the-public-thing.html)), so try this one, or find episode 4 of THoR on Spotify or Apple: <https://archive.org/details/the-history-of-rome/20100225+-+004-+The+Public+Thing.mp3> (~ 15m)
- Overly Sarcastic: <https://www.youtube.com/watch/SGJltq0cpg> The Roman Republic (~ 13m)

(You may have already listened to/ seen the latter two, as I gave them as optional links in the previous section).

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<sup>12</sup> For example, the Punic Wars, which are the wars between Rome and Carthage featuring Hannibal and his elephants. Overly Sarcastic have done a video on them: [https://www.youtube.com/watch/2yB2\\_NN7myI](https://www.youtube.com/watch/2yB2_NN7myI). Historyden has done incredibly detailed videos on many different battles during the Republic: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLZr2JvFQqLWTNZsQi95708h57TjT2rlpB>. Likewise, The History of Rome podcast also covers a huge number of different events during the 500 years of the Republic: <http://www.sal.wisc.edu/~jwp/thor-episode-index.html>. If the link doesn't work, all THoR episodes are available on Spotify & Apple.

<sup>13</sup> If you are struggling to follow the Roman political system, then this video is a good primer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch/Cz2qu7Sow2Y> (~ 11m)

## 7: The end of the Republic and the beginnings of Empire

[Return to Cultural Background overview](#)

We are moving on to one of the most turbulent – and exciting – periods of Roman history: the end of the Republic in the first century BC. This is a period of history that is really well attested: we have lots and lots of written evidence, both from contemporary Romans who were intrinsically involved in events (such as politician and general Julius Caesar, or politician and lawyer Cicero), and from Romans writing historical accounts of the time at a slightly later point. Cicero is a particularly interesting case, because we have not only accounts of political speeches that he made in public, but also his private letters to friends and family, which give us an intimate glimpse into the life of a leading figure of the late Republic.<sup>14</sup>

One of the most important things to note about the key players in the late Republic and early Empire is that Julius Caesar was **not** an emperor. People often assume he was one for a few reasons: he acted like one (this is why he ends up stabbed 23 times by people he thought were his friends, because remember from the last few sections: the Romans did not like kings<sup>15</sup>); his adopted son becomes the first emperor; his name - Caesar - gets used by future emperors; and the Roman historian<sup>16</sup> Suetonius includes him in his work 'The Twelve Caesars', along with eleven actual emperors.

Caesar actually becomes dictator for life (so admittedly the difference between this, being an emperor and being a king is basically semantic), which is essentially a death-knell for the Republic. He is assassinated by a group of senators worried that he is taking too much power, and who think that by executing him the Republic will go back to its democratic roots. Unfortunately, the assassins don't really have much of a plan for what will

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<sup>14</sup> I would definitely recommend Robert Harris' *Imperium* trilogy, written from the point of view of Cicero's slave, Tiro. It's incredibly well researched, incredibly well written and gripping, and a great introduction to this period of history. For me, the fact that the historical characters really come to life made it easier to understand what was going on, rather than just reading a historical account. Some of the hardest hitting elements which have stuck with me in the years since reading the book, have been the parts related to the fact that Tiro is a slave and therefore not in charge of his own life. This is only a subtle part of the books, but I think it is handled very well (much better than the cheery attitude to slavery that you might remember from Cambridge Latin Book 1). The Romans weren't abolitionists; they thought that slavery was normal, and even freed slaves would go on to buy their own slaves. Tiro is in a really good position – secretary to a politician, highly thought of and treated well – but Harris makes it clear that even a slave with all the benefits that Tiro has can only live a half-life compared to a free man.

<sup>15</sup> There's a great 5m TED-Ed on the conspiracy against Caesar here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch/wgPymD-NBQU> If I've ever taught you in March then I've probably played this video to you on the *Ides* (the 15th).

<sup>16</sup> I say 'historian', but 'writer for the Roman equivalent of Hello! magazine, if Hello! magazine published a book that they claimed was a history book' is probably more accurate.

happen afterwards; Cicero in fact warns them that they'll need to deal with Caesar's second-in-command, Mark Antony, as well, otherwise Antony will just take over. They don't and... Antony basically takes over, along with Caesar's great-nephew and newly adopted son<sup>17</sup> Octavian, and a guy called Lepidus (whom everyone always forgets). This triumvirate split the lands that Rome rules (it's not an empire yet!) between them, and eventually they fall out as well. Lepidus is side-lined into obscurity, and Octavian declares war on Antony and his partner Cleopatra.<sup>18</sup> Octavian wins the war (spoiler!) and becomes sole leader of Rome, and takes on the name/title 'Augustus', which is what we refer to him as once he becomes emperor.

You might wonder how Octavian, as the Emperor Augustus, manages to not get assassinated in the same way that Julius Caesar did. This was down largely to very clever PR, and Augustus essentially claiming that a) he wasn't really in charge anyway and that b) even if he was in charge then the Senate had asked him to do it, and he had only agreed to do them a favour.

There's so much for this period of history, so again I'm going to give you a couple of options, depending on how you prefer to learn:

Overly Sarcastic videos (these come in at a total of 38 minutes):

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch/BrZm6tkw87Y> Julius Caesar and the Fall of the Republic (~ 16m)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch/rs090TiREol> Augustus Versus the Assassins (< 10m)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch/8UT65SZyrOM> Augustus versus Antony (~ 12m) (there's an advert at the end)

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<sup>17</sup> It was pretty common for Romans to adopt adults if they didn't have a biological [male] heir; I guess if you adopt an adult then they are less likely to die in childhood and you don't have to spend time, money and effort bringing them up! The adopted person would change their name to show that they have been adopted, hence Gaius Octavius Thurinus becomes Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus.

<sup>18</sup> Yes, that Cleopatra. She had had a relationship – and son – with Caesar, which ended when Caesar was assassinated. A few years later she began a relationship with Antony, which lasted until they both committed suicide. This relationship didn't help Antony's Roman PR: the Romans didn't really like women in power or foreigners, and so a foreign woman-in-power was a double-whammy – Cicero also didn't like the fact she said she'd lend him some books and then didn't. Another problem was that at the time Antony was actually married to Octavian's sister Octavia. Antony and Cleopatra were survived by their three children, and Octavia ended up taking them all in, along with Antony's son by his previous wife, and Octavia's own kids by Antony and by her previous husband too (Octavian had Cleopatra's son by Julius Caesar executed, as he was more of a threat to Octavian's rule). If you can't tell I absolutely love this period of history and if you get me started on Cleopatra I probably won't stop. There's an Overly Sarcastic video on her here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch/9eGPBX7gY44> and a TED-Ed video discussing the issues with the Roman propaganda against her here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch/Y6EhRwn4zkc>

The History of Rome podcast:<sup>19</sup> There are 24 (!) episodes just on the 1st century BC; each one is around 15 minutes long, so you could look through the episode list and pick two that you would like to listen to; I'd recommend the ones with an episode number in the 40s (if the link doesn't work, all THoR episodes are available on Spotify & Apple):  
<http://www.sal.wisc.edu/~jwp/thor-episode-index.html>

If you prefer to **read** rather than listen or watch,<sup>20</sup> then the UNRV website is well researched (although it would be nice if it had more hyperlinks!):

- This page links to lots of information about Caesar and the end of the Republic: <https://www.unrv.com/julius-caesar/index.php>
- And this one talks about Augustus <https://www.unrv.com/augustus/index.php> (don't go too far into Augustus and the empire, because that's spoilers for next time!)

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<sup>19</sup> The History of Rome is also available on Spotify and Apple. There's also an In Our Time episode on the Roman Republic (45 minutes):

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p004y26w> but I haven't listened to it yet.

<sup>20</sup> There are also Khan Academy lessons on this period which have a 'transcript' option, which might work for those who prefer to read rather than watch/listen. I have managed to look at a few lessons without having to get an account, so you could try. Note that I **haven't** looked at these in detail. The first lesson is:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/world-history/ancient-medieval/roman-a/v/rise-of-julius-caesar> and then the next 3 lessons are linked to in the left-hand side-bar.

I hope you have enjoyed looking at the events of the end of the Republic and the beginnings of the Empire... Now let's look at the first Roman empirical dynasty: the Julio-Claudians.

What did you think of Augustus (Octavian), the first Roman emperor, and how he came to power? I sometimes wonder whether we historians have been taken in by Augustus' own propaganda, with his bloodthirsty acts that took place during the fall of the Republic glossed over as the deeds of "Octavian", and the wonders of Empire being attributed to "Augustus". This is the subject of this TED-Ed video which I'd like you to watch - be warned, all the characters in the video seem to be voiced by the same person, so it can be really confusing unless you are paying close attention:

- History vs. Augustus <https://www.youtube.com/watch/QrcmojhFmzY> (~ 5m)

The following link is an index page of information about all the emperors.

- <https://www.unrv.com/government/emperor.php>

You've already found out quite a lot about Augustus, so perhaps look at the other four emperors in the Julio-Claudian line. **Use the link above to read about the following four emperors:**

- Tiberius (just read the first section and the last section; you can look at the other sections if you have time)
- Caligula
- Claudius (again, just read the first section and the last section; you can look at the other sections if you have time)
- Nero (again, read the first section and the last section; you can look at the other sections if you have time)

**You could take brief notes on them - nothing too detailed, just maybe 5 bullet points or so (dates of reign, any key events, how they died, etc.), to help you remember which emperor was which.**

### Optional Extras

These sections just don't feel complete without some Overly Sarcastic videos, so here are the two videos on the Empire:

- History Summarized: How Augustus Made an Empire  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch/xbxwIfjGvc> (< 10m)
- History Summarized: The Roman Empire  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch/9HPj2NggOSk> (~ 11m)

The History of Rome podcast: If you like listening to the THoR podcast, then you could select episodes from 1st Century AD (there are 24 to choose from! Also available on Spotify & Apple): <http://www.sal.wisc.edu/~jwp/thor-episode-index.html>

## 9: Tacitus: Historian of the Julio-Claudians and beyond

[Return to Cultural Background overview](#)

Murder! Corruption! Decadence! Welcome to the Early Roman Empire! In this section we're going to consider the works of the Roman historian **Tacitus** who documented events during the Julio-Claudian dynasty of Emperors – and is your **Prose set text author for Year 12 and 13**. There is a BBC radio In Our Time episode discussing a summary of Tacitus' works, and it will give you a great introduction to his style of "history" (and the bunny ears are intentional here!) and the historical period in question. Warning: this was a tumultuous period of Roman history so be prepared for discussions of violence.

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00cdtxp> (45 minutes)

It's a real treat for the final section: the Natalie Haynes Stands up for the Classics podcast episode on the historian **Livy**. It is 28 minutes long and is available on BBC Sounds:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0bfxxm4>

All the NHSUftC (terrible acronym!) episodes are available on Spotify too.<sup>21</sup>

The reason why I'm asking you to focus on Livy - specifically Natalie Haynes' lecture on Livy - is two-fold:

1. Livy will be your **unseen prose author** for AS and A Level. This means that the prose passage that you have to translate on the language paper will be an extract of Livy (you already know that your unseen *verse* author will be Ovid).
2. Livy was a historian, but we would probably say 'historian'. He rarely cites any sources, he makes up rousing speeches for his characters, and he's more interested in why something happened and the moral decisions made, than noting down exactly *what* took place. Natalie and her guests talk about this, and it's an important part of understanding both Livy and Roman attitudes to history.

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<sup>21</sup> The History of Rome (THoR, much better) podcast is all up on Spotify too.

# LEARNING LATIN VOCABULARY

[What to learn when you learn Latin vocabulary](#)

[Using Memrise to learn vocabulary](#)

[How Memrise works](#)

## **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, *cecidisti* 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 website offering spaced repetition software to help you learn vocabulary. "Spaced repetition" is one of the most effective ways of learning vocab: you learn a word, then a few days later (so your learning is "spaced out") you repeat and revise this word. Gradually the spaces between revision become longer and longer, as the word is transferred into your brain. Spaced repetition was originally designed to be done with physical flashcards, and this is still an effective method. Memrise is essentially online flashcards that automate the spaced repetition process for you. See 'How Memrise Works' below for more details.

If you prefer to stick with flashcards then you can create your own spaced repetition system using the Leitner system (I like using empty grape boxes):

<https://subjectguides.york.ac.uk/study-revision/leitner-system>

Note that as of 2024 Memrise seems to be trying to close down all free user-created courses ☹️ They currently have a banner saying that these courses are "sticking around throughout 2025", but they haven't clarified what this means. We are looking into alternatives, but in the meantime just be aware that the site might close down.

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.

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://community-courses.memrise.com/community/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.