

Latin Lessons 24-25

ASSIGNMENT

This is the audio presentation covering the exercises in Latin Lessons 24 and 25, the last two lessons in the Latin section of the class. That's right! When you're done here, you're halfway through the course.

In these lessons, Mr. Ayers introduces no new linguistic principles, well, none worth discussing. He does bring up the principle of metathesis, the transposition of sound elements in a word, but understanding how that works will not in any practical way help you diagnose what Latinate words in English mean, so I'm going to skip it. Besides that, two lessons before the midterm you should be reviewing, not embracing new concepts. And because our job here is to review, there's no need for a video presentation on these lessons. That's why we've cut straight to the audio. So let's do it. Please open your textbook to page 133.

The assignment in Lesson 24 underscores the utility of etymologizing historical texts, where a word may have a meaning that follows a different metaphorical path from the one you know. A good example of this is sentence 2 at the bottom of the page: "The moste *comfortable* Sacrament of the body and bloud of Christe ...". A *comfortable* sacrament? What kind of sacrament is that? The sacrament of His holy recliner? Wanna bet it has a cupholder for wine! I know of no holy sacrament that is "comfortable" in our sense of the word. So what does comfortable mean here? Well, etymologize it! The prefix is *com-* ("with" or just intensive), the base is FORT- ("strong") and the suffix is *-able* ("able to be"). What's the sacrament doing? It's being ... "able to be very strengthening." It makes you stronger. It fortifies you. Oh, that makes way better sense, not that Christ doesn't deserve a recliner. I'm just don't see him in one.

Let's look at sentence 3 at the top of the next page: "There is no *convenience* between Christ and Belial." Belial is another name for the evil demon Ba'al who shows up fairly often in the Old Testament. So, ... what? There's no convenience store, no mini-mart between Christ's and Belial's house? That can't be it. Etymologize it. Convenience means literally "the state of coming together" (*-ence*, VENI-, *con-*). So Christ and Belial don't have any place to meet, no common ground. They don't share any space. That makes much more sense.

What about sentence 6? "The insatiable Appetites of a *decimating* Clergy ...". Decimate today means "to slaughter in great numbers." Whatever you think of the church, priests don't do that. What is the clergy doing it? What's the etymology of decimate? The base is DECIM- ("tenth"). They're "tenth-ing," aren't they? A tenth of what? Oh, yes. Your paycheck. Today we call that "tithing," which comes from the Germanic root for "tenth."

Look at sentence 8 please: "... to be exiled and *dejected* from those high mansions." Today "dejected" means "having a downcast look, feeling sad." It usually signals unhappiness or depression. But can you be "depressed" from a house? Depending on your mortgage, I suppose you can, but I don't think that's what the author is saying here. What does "deject" really mean? "Throw down" (JECT-, *de-*). So the phrase means "... to be exiled and 'thrown down' from those high mansions." We today might say "thrown out of."

Let's try the next sentence, number 9: "The drapery ... that *depends* from his shoulders." We know "depend" as meaning "rely on," but that can't be what it means here. What's the etymology of depend? *de-* ("down") plus PEND- ("hang"). So what does the drapery do? It "hangs down" from his shoulder. Why he's wearing curtains I can't say. Maybe it's just a grandiose way of saying he had a cape.

Jump ahead to sentence 13: "God ... had *pretended* a remedie in that behalf which was ... Manna." Whatever you think of God, he doesn't pretend, at least not the way we understand the word. What's the etymology of pretend? Stretch (TEND-) forth (*pre-*). So God's "stretching forth" Manna. He's offering it, not faking it. God may bake bread, but he doesn't fake bread.

One last sentence, the last sentence here, number 18: "Morley, made at first bishop of Worcester, and soon after ... *translated* to Winchester." I don't think that means he's French and needs to be translated. What's really happening to him? He's being ... "borne (LAT-) across (*trans-*)" to Winchester, that is, transferred, which is etymologically the same thing. Remember that FER- and LAT- are just two different variants of the same Latin base.

Speaking of bases, let's look at the ones in this lesson, which are the last set of Latin bases you have to learn in this class. As the Romans said, *Evoi!* That's Latin for Yippee!

To the first base AUD- ("hear") add the variant AUDIT-, its past-tense variant. That will save you time inserting the verb-forming suffix *-it-* which is another way to interpret the form, but simpler is better, wouldn't you agree?

Next, please go down to the base PRESS- and add the meaning "push." Defining PRESS- as "press" breaks the rule of good definition-making that you shouldn't define a word with itself, even if it is itself.

To PROPRI-, the next base ("one's own, fitting"), add the variant form PROPER- which is seen in our word "proper," and also "property." So what is property? It's the stuff that is ... your own, your own stuff. And if your behavior is proper, what is it? It's ... "fitting." It suits the situation. You're doing what you should, given the place where you are.

I have nothing more to say about this last set of bases, other than memorize them all, so let's move on to the last lesson in the Latin section, Lesson 25. Please turn to page 137.

In Lesson 25 Mr. Ayers ends our study of Latin roots by examining words and phrases which have come into English directly from Latin in an unchanged form, endings and all. Okay, I know your brains right now are full to bursting with forms you have to memorize, so I'm going to trim this list down to only those words and phrases I think you really need to know. I'll cite them quickly and then we'll talk about them. Know that all you must do here is recognize these particular words and phrases in matching exercises. In other words, I won't ask you to tell me what any of them mean, only match them to their definition. Got it? Good.

First, let's do the quick list. Please learn the definitions of the following words, starting at the bottom of page 137: #3 (congeries), #9 (effluvia), #10 (extempore), #11 (gratis), #12 (interim) and #15 (prospectus). To this group, add the Latin phrases and expressions beginning at the bottom of page 139: #1 (ad hoc) — and moving to the top of the next page — #3 (ad nauseam), #7 (de facto), #11 (ex officio), #12 (ex post facto), #15 (ipso facto), #16 (modus operandi), #19 (non sequitur), #22 (per se), #24 (prima facie), #30 (sic) and finally #31 (sine qua non).

Now let's back up and talk about these words and phrases, bearing in mind that you need to memorize their definitions only to the extent that you can pick them out in a matching exercise.

Going back to page 137, let's start with number 3: "... a **congeries** of brilliant passages in support of an untenable thesis." Congeries means "a collection." You might be able to gather that from its elements: *con-* ("with, together") and *GER-* ("carry"), that is, "carry together." Things you "carry together" have been gathered into a "collection." Simple enough!

Moving on to the next page, let's look at sentence 9: "An indescribable and complicated smell, made up of damp earth below, of the taint of dried fish and of the **effluvia** of rotting vegetable matter, pervaded the place." Oh, I love Conrad. What a great writer! What's the etymology of effluvia? The base *FLU-* means "flow" and the prefix *ef-* means "out." So it's whatever's flowing out of this dank morass of putrid garbage Conrad's describing, which can't be good. Effluvia, the plural of effluvium, refers to a noxious vapor, an offensive odor. That's some degeneration there.

Next, sentence 10: "They are so natural that they seem to be the **extempore** conversations of two people of wit, rather than letters." The prefix *ex-* means "out, from," and the base *TEMPOR-* means "time." "From the time" implies that the conversations weren't planned in advance; instead, they were spontaneous, that is, "offhand, without preparation," which is what extempore means.

Sentence 11: "It is inconsistent to pay the one, and accept the service of the other **gratis**." The base *GRAT-* means "grateful." When you do something gratis, you're doing it only for the thanks, not the money. In other words, "for free."

Sentence 12: "An as **interim** measure, before the full scientific treatment can be given to this procedure ... " Here you have only a prefix to go on, *inter-* which means "between." Interim measures therefore must come between two other things, suggesting that they don't last very long. They're only "temporary, provisional." In other words, interim things are meant to last only long enough to get you between two points.

And finally sentence 15: "A written **prospectus** of this issue of stock will be sent upon request." Etymologize prospectus: *pro-* ("forward") plus *SPECT-* ("look"). A prospectus "looks forward." It's "a brief sketch of a proposed commercial enterprise," or indeed "a written overview of any future action."

Now let's look at the phrases and expressions you should memorize here, beginning at the bottom of page 139. You're not required to learn all of these, only the ones I mention below, the

first of which is *ad hoc*, meaning “with regard to this.” You’ll find it used most often in reference to a committee which has been set up for a specific purpose or to address a particular matter.

At the top of the next page is #3, *ad nauseam*, which means “to (the point of) nausea,” that is, “to ridiculous extremes.” Repeating any action or statement *ad nauseam* means that you say it over and over until people start leaning out the window and retching. A rather extreme expression, but I know you’ve been there. So, now you have a word for it.

#7 is *de facto*, meaning “from the fact.” The implication of this adjective is “in reality.” People deny the truth all the time, so here’s how to counter that. If someone says the climate isn’t changing, point to the *de facto* evidence of polar warming and more violent weather. The fact is, whatever the reason may be, the world is undergoing a shift in climatic patterns. It’s a *de facto* fact.

#11 *ex officio* (“from the office”) is a phrase used most often as an adjective to describe a type of member on a committee or in an official body. It refers to someone who doesn’t vote or participate on some committee as a full member but attends its proceedings usually for the purpose of relating information to other people or parts of the governing structure.

#12 *ex post facto* (“from what is done afterwards”) is an adjective describing laws or regulations passed to punish a crime before the action of the crime was formally deemed illegal. Let’s say you chew gum in class and I decide to make chewing gum punishable by eviction from the course. So you come to class one day and you’re *not* chewing gum, but I decide to impose my new policy and I throw you out because I’d seen you chewing gum before. That’s an *ex post facto* regulation and it’s not fair or legal. You can’t break a law until the law is created. In this case, right and wrong don’t matter, only the timing.

#15 *ipso facto* (“by the very fact”) is an adverb used when you want to associate two things and put them in the same category. Say you want to assert that teachers are in general mean and unforgiving. One way to express that is to say that people who are teachers are *ipso facto* meanies. In other words, all teachers are cruel sadists just because they’re teachers. So learn the phrase *ipso facto* now, you little student! Or I’ll put it on the test.

#16 *modus operandi* (“a manner of operating”) is a noun which refers to a typical pattern of behavior. It’s often abbreviated M.O. and applied to criminals who repeat activities in a regular fashion, but it can also be used in reference to any set of actions in which the same methods recur.

#19 *non sequitur* (“it does not follow”) is another noun, though in Latin it’s a full sentence. *Non sequitur* denotes “an illogical conclusion.” Some teachers are meanies and other teachers are nice, granted not many. Thus, to say all teachers are meanies is a *non sequitur* because there are some nice teachers out there. Way out there. And good luck finding them.

#22 *per se* (“by himself or itself”) is another adverb. I prefer the translation “in and of itself,” as in “Skipping class is a problem *per se*.” Students who don’t attend their classes create problems

for themselves just because of their absence. They may believe they have good reasons for taking a day off, but their failure to show up is an issue *per se*, in and of itself. There may be excuses, but there are no *good* excuses for not coming to class. You paid for the show. Watch it.

#24 *prima facie* (“on first appearance”) is an adjective used to describe evidence or a legal case which renders a certain impression right at the start, usually one of guilt. If you are found standing over your teacher’s bullet-ridden body and there’s a smoking gun in your hand, that’s *prima facie* evidence that you killed him. While your guilt will still have to be proven in court, it really looks like you did it. And you probably did, but since the jury knows all teachers are meanies, they’ll probably let you off.

You’ll find #30, *sic* (“thus”), in quotations mainly, where the words being quoted have an error of some sort in them and the writer doing the quoting wants to be sure the reader understands that the error belongs to the person who’s being quoted, not the writer who’s quoting the words. For instance, if you had written “All criminals should have a conscious and feel guilty about their terrible crimes” and if I were to quote your words, I would add “[*sic*]” after the misspelling conscious — you meant to say “conscience” — that way everyone knows it’s not my mistake. All too often this little word is abused, in particular, by small-minded reviewers who are looking for ways to denigrate a book or article so they concoct a need to quote a passage that just happens to have a typo in it for the very reason that they can then insert a [*sic*], a sick little piece of business from nasty, small-minded people. They should be ashamed. You can quote me.

And finally #31, *sine qua non* (“without which not”), is a noun phrase signifying a necessity, something that you can’t do without. A red pen is a *sine qua non* for meanie teachers grading tests.

Finally, please go to the course web site and open up the handout for this section of the class. You’ll find a link to it on the syllabus under Module 4: Latin Lessons 24-25. Click the handout link and you’ll see a list of 18 “Familiar Latin Abbreviations in English” all of which you should memorize. On the midterm exam you’ll be asked to identify these, but only through matching. Let’s talk about them one by one and how each is used, starting with the first:

- **A.M.** (*ante meridiem*), meaning “before noon.” It’s used to indicate the twelve hours leading up to midday. This is paired with **P.M.** (*post meridiem*, “after noon”) which is number 12 on the list and refers to the hours from noon until midnight. Please learn both abbreviations.
- #2 **cf.** (*confer*) means “compare” and is used mainly in academic writing to refer to another idea or book.
- #3 **e.g.** (*exempli gratia*), meaning “for example,” is another academic abbreviation. Note that it has two periods because it’s a contraction of two different Latin words, *exempli* and *gratia*.
- There are two abbreviations **et al.** (#4 and #5 on the list). Both are used in academic writing, especially in footnotes and references. The first (*et alibi*) means “and elsewhere”

and is used when the writer has cited a specific reference in a book or article and wants to note that the thing being referenced occurs elsewhere in the work. The second (*et alii*) says much the same but refers to additional people, not ideas, and is used when citing a group of collaborators, often co-authors of the same work.

- #6 **etc.** (*et cetera*, “and the rest”) is another way of saying *et alii* and is probably already familiar to you because it’s used so widely and so often.
- #7 **ibid.** (*ibidem*, “in the same place”) is a fast way of referring to a work to which you’ve already made a reference. It’s used mainly in footnotes, as is the next abbreviation ...
- #8 **id.** (*idem*, “the same”) which is a simple way of recalling something mentioned earlier.
- #9 **i.e.** (*id est*, “that is”) is used when an author wants to restate something. Note that, as with e.g., there are two periods here, because i.e. represents two Latin words, as is also true of the next abbreviation ...
- #10 **loc. cit.** (*loco citato*, “in the place cited”) which is yet another way to hearken back to an earlier reference. The two-period rule applies as well to ...
- #11 **N.B.** (*nota bene*, “note well,” i.e. “take careful note”), which is used when an author wants to call the reader’s attention to something and stress it. You may have noticed that I use n.b. a lot in my slides.
- #12 **P.M.** we covered already, so on to ...
- #13 **QED** (*quod erat demonstrandum*, “which was to be proven”). This abbreviation appears at the end of an argument after the author or authors have reached the conclusion they had set out to prove at the beginning. It’s basically philosopher-speak for “I’m done.”
- #14 **R.I.P.** (*requiescat in pace*, “rest in peace”), as you’re probably aware already, is found almost exclusively on tombstones. If you see this with your name under it, that’s bad news.
- #15 **sc.** (*scilicet*, “doubtless”) is used to clarify text which is in some way ambiguous, or to fill in a word that’s missing. Further down the list, #18, **viz.** (*videlicet*, “namely”) operates much the same way but is used mainly to introduce a list of examples.
- Authors use #16 **s.v.** (*sub verbo* or *sub voce*, “under the word or heading”) when they’re referring to an entry in a dictionary or encyclopedia, usually something where the entries have been alphabetized.
- And last of all #17 — we just covered #18 — is **v.** (*vide*, “see”). This is a simple way of directing a reader to another work.

And that's it, not only for these lessons but for all the Latin lessons in this textbook. If you haven't started studying for the midterm exam, get going! It's high time. And be sure to look at the outline (diathesis) of the midterm. You'll find a link to that diathesis on the syllabus of the course web site along with a few exercises to help you study.

Happy Etymologizing! Or if you can't make it happy, at least make it good!