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Latin: First Year (Henle Latin)



Synopsis

Thorough mastery of forms, basic syntax, and simple vocabulary are primary objectives of Henle First Year Latin that enable students to handle simple readings and translations. Humanistic insight and linguistic training are the goals of the Henle Latin Series from Loyola Press, an integrated four-year Latin course. Time-tested and teacher endorsed, this comprehensive program is designed to lead the student systematically through the fundamentals of the language itself and on to an appreciation of selected classic texts.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This classic Latin text, having stood the test of time and still in print after decades of use in schools and homes, offers a fairly simple, but rigorous introduction to reading and writing Latin. A diligent student will take from it, not only a useful grasp of vocabulary (which can be very helpful on the SAT as well as for those going into scientific or medical fields), but a better understanding of the English language, the experience of a mind-broadening exercise and the development of a more precise and logical way of thinking about language. The text is designed for high school (and three more volumes follow this first year text), but could be used as early as 6th or 7th grade if taken at a slower pace and with some supplementation. Its companion Grammar volume is an essential component. Henle uses a relatively brief vocabulary (focused primarily on Caesar's Gallic wars) in order to hone in on the grammar concepts. By the end of this book, a student should have a solid

foundation and be ready to start translating some basic Ancient texts. This text does assume a certain grammar foundation prior to tackling Latin. Some of this can be reviewed while studying the Latin. A helpful prior grammar understanding would include: basic diagramming and an understanding of the following terms: subject, verb, direct object, indirect object, pronoun, adjective, adverb, conjunction, preposition, possessive adjective, predicative nominative, etc. The downside of the limited vocabulary is that the rather un-varying vocabulary can make the book somewhat tedious. In our homeschool co-op, where I've been teaching Henle to a group of teens, it has worked quite well to spread this text out over two years, but supplement with other material. We have added some fun vocabulary to our working base from the "Latin is Fun" text by John Traupman (which we had studied before Henle). Each student also has a Latin dictionary. I frequently assign the students to write additional sentences (in English or Latin) for their fellow students to translate. These are particularly enjoyable when the students are encouraged to write funny sentences. We play some games on occasion - Latin Bees, Latin "Pictionary", Latin Rummy (write Latin words on playing cards and try to make grammatically correct, if silly, sentences), etc. We have also recently started reading from "Lingua Latina" by Hans Oerberg in addition to Henle. This has worked out well as pronunciation practice as well as helping the students think through some of the Latin without translating. Another fun assignment is a "Latin Treasure Hunt". I gave the students a list of common Latin words, phrases and abbreviations that are used in the U.S. today - such as "emeritus" and "bona fide" (you can find a very extensive list of such words in "Amo, Amas, Amat and More" by Eugene Erlich). The students translate the list and look for examples in text, print, conversation, on the Internet, etc. and see who can come up with the most. This has really opened my students eyes up to noticing relations between the Latin language and "real life." Finally, a good exercise for the mind that requires some of the same multi-level thinking skills as Latin is to play chess!

This is an excellent first year Latin text, probably the best I've seen. The presentation of the rules of grammar and supporting examples is methodical--very old-school Jesuit. Unlike many modern Latin texts, Henle assumes that the student will learn how to write in Latin, as opposed to only reading for translation. The exercises are geared to developing an active mastery of Latin grammar.

Latin: First Year by Henle will give you a solid base in the language. Even though it is titled First Year, the material may take over two years to cover. To use this book you must also have Henle's Latin Grammar book. The Latin Grammar is referred to throughout this book, right from the start.

I wanted to learn Latin on my own and have just finished the first year text. If you are diligent and willing to finish all of the examples and exercises given in this book, it is extremely helpful. Yes, the vocabulary is limited, but I found myself knowing all of the different declensions of nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc. without even thinking about it. After all the practice, it just started coming naturally. I think that as a beginning book, the memorization of the forms is more important than vocabulary, especially since in Latin, one little wrong letter and you have an entirely different meaning. The only criticism I have is that an answer key is not provided. Many an hour I sat there trying to understand how a sentence was translated, but in the end, I was able to translate 99% of the exercises on my own, and if you already have a background in Latin, it would of course be much easier. I borrowed a Wheelocks Latin Grammar and read through the book in order to compare the teaching methods. Wheelocks is definitely organized more stringently, with all the topics together in straightforward chapters (which I liked) but the exercises were such that one would have to spend an exorbitant amount of time trying to learn what the words meant, how it was declined and so forth, and the exercises themselves were flimsy and minimal. And contrary to what Wheelock wrote about it being more important to translate from Latin into English, I would have to disagree. It is just as important to have exercises translating from English into Latin-one actually has to concentrate on the declensions as opposed to opposite way, where one can really get by merely by guessing what the declension means because of the fact that Latin and English language have so many words in common.

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