

UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS

Saint Ambrose Center

The background features a large, faint watermark of the University of Dallas seal. The seal is circular and contains the Latin motto "VERITATEM, JUSTITIAM DILIGITE" at the top and "UNIVERSITAS DALLASENSIS • MCMLXXXIII" at the bottom. The central emblem includes a fleur-de-lis, a star, and a chalice.

**LATIN THROUGH
STORIES
CURRICULUM OVERVIEW**

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Latin through Stories is the only near-immersion curriculum in Latin for elementary age students. Students acquire Latin joyfully and meaningfully through songs, nursery rhymes picture talks about beautiful works of art, our unique “Little Socratic Talks”, oral mini stories (Gouin series), and classic picture books translated into Latin for this curriculum (as well as optional prayers and bible verses). The Teacher Guide is fully scripted, so teachers with no Latin background can use it too.

“Children demand an early introduction to connected discourse, which is the purpose of language”

(Frederick W. Sandford and Harry F. Scott, preface to *A Junior Latin Reader*, 1919)

Overview and Purpose

- Our goal is to provide a rich and joyful linguistic environment through classical nursery rhymes, songs, poems, proverbs, prayers, bible verses and beautiful classical picture books in Latin
- Students learn gradually and incrementally a wealth of full and complete sentences in Latin – in the course of a year students will internalize about 144 sentences in the Gouin series, 7 nursery rhymes (many of them with several stanzas), 6 or more songs (again many with several stanzas), and they will learn to fully comprehend, respond to and interact with the 11 classic children’s books they will be read to in Latin.
- Vocabulary and grammar in meaningful context (sentences, not isolated words), through little “Socratic conversations” and the “Gouin Series” (see “Lesson Components” below)
- Grammar is not taught through drills but is integrated naturally through learning at the sentence level rather than isolated words.
- Instruction is aural, visual, as well as kinesthetic – includes lots of gestures and movement, as well as visual images
 - Students will constantly be doing something to interact with the material, so they will be actively engaged with their whole bodies, so this is a program that will also work well for ELL and students with learning disabilities.

“The Study of language, especially in the young, should be joined to that of objects, that our acquaintance with the objective world and with language, that is to say, our knowledge of facts and our power to express them, may progress side by side. For it is men that we are forming and not parrots”

(John Amos Comenius, *Didactica Magna*, 1633-38)

Lesson Components

Note: Not all components will be present in every lesson. Ideally, schools will have Latin at least 3 times per week, 30 minutes per class. Although some Latin background would be ideal for instructors, Lessons are fully scripted to help instructors with minimal background in Latin to teach K-2nd grade. Instructors in 3rd grade and up should have a decent grasp of Latin grammar.

Settling into Latin

This part constitutes the warm-up and review phase of every lesson, as it helps children settle into the language. The teacher may lead the class in a short prayer in Latin which is accompanied by gestures to help students connect words to ideas. Then, previously learned nursery rhymes, songs, proverbs, or Bible verses are reviewed and one new sentence or line is introduced through the help of pictures and gestures. Throughout this part, students are invited to make the gestures along with the teachers for as many days as needed, until they feel comfortable to join in. All poems, verses and Gouin series that have been memorized are kept active by reviewing them at regular intervals throughout the school year so that students will fully internalize the vocabulary and grammar structure.

Picture Study

Beautiful works of art introduce new vocabulary and grammar and invite students to wonder about and preview the topic of the new Gouin series or Socratic Talk. New words are introduced by pointing to objects or actions in a beautiful work of art. Students are invited to help the teacher point to the right objects, imitate movements or gestures, or invent appropriate gestures for new words.

Little Socratic Talk

Guided by the dialogue between Socrates and the little slave boy in Plato's *Meno*, the Teacher's Guide will include model "little Socratic talks" all in Latin. Just like Socrates, the Latin teacher will start from a concrete object, and begin with simple yes/no questions and questions that require only one-word answers. Such questions that do not require full sentence answers right away serve to provide lots of linguistic input for the students. The Teacher will then gradually move on to short answer questions. In second and third grade, the lesson might be concluded with a brief discussion in English on what the students noticed about the language, a short grammar lesson that focuses on the students' wonder and curiosity about the language.

Little Socratic Reading

The ten picture books that accompany Level 1 are meant to provide abundant comprehensible input through the pictures and simple narratives. The first five are easy and highly repetitive stories about animals and people; the next set is five folktales that have been selected largely for their repetitive structure which reduces the number of new words needed to tell the story and helps students internalize full phrases and language patterns. The Teacher's Guide includes instructions on how to teach interactively with a focus on comprehension of the Latin as Latin, and on how to guide students gradually toward the ability to narrate the story back in Latin.

Gouin Series

Frenchman François Gouin (1831–1896) was a Latin teacher who developed a “series method” of language learning. After repeatedly failing to acquire German despite his efforts in employing a long repertoire of “classical” methods, he realized that his young nephew had acquired his native language French, effortlessly and perfectly in the same amount of time. He noticed how the child was eager to retell new experiences as sequential actions. This led him to the insight that language is learned “sentence by sentence and not word by word.” Based on his observations and insights, Gouin developed the “series method,” also known today as “Gouin series.” A Gouin series is a series of actions that form a logical or chronological sequence. Each sentence hinges on a verb (which is “the soul of the sentence”) that can be acted out, demonstrated, or gestured. Language production is not forced immediately but develops naturally as the students assimilate the experience through action.

For young children, the Gouin series is taught over several class periods. The teacher guide explicitly lays out the procedure. Once a Gouin series is mastered, it is kept active by frequent reviews throughout the school year (during the warm up phase), so that students will fully internalize the vocabulary and grammar structure.

“What a great way to use some of the early years of schooling to establish a basic sense of the language. Your stress on known sense-based realities (rather than things like *lex, forma, bellum, culpa, consul*), and particularly the attention to animals for the youngest ones, are inspired I had never heard of the Gouin series, but I was immediately persuaded by the idea. Your colorful images are splendid. They appeal to the imagination and make the learning of Latin interesting. Congratulations on a brilliant new initiative in Latin pedagogy.”

Review of *Living Latin* by Fr. Claude Pavur,
Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies, Boston College

Overview of Levels

Level 1: Bēstiae Ubique/Animals Everywhere

Students learn to understand and say sentences about what animals do in various habitats: pets in the home and backyard, animals on the farm, animals in the forest, animals in the water, and animals in the wild. Students learn content knowledge about animals, such as animal life cycles and habitats, while learning Latin!

Students in this level learn...

- to recite three prayers, four bible verses, six religious songs and hymns (optional components)
- to sing 10-15 traditional children's songs and nursery rhymes, many with several stanzas
- to understand and say around 16 "Gouin series" of approximately 6-8 sentences each (over 100 complete sentences)
- to understand and respond to questions about animal actions and habitats in the Little Socratic Talks (building from yes/no answers to increasingly long sentences)
- to describe dozens of beautiful works of art from Western and non-Western cultures
- to understand, act out and interact with 10 beautifully illustrated picture books in Latin

Students in 3rd grade and up also learn explicit grammar:

- verb conjugations, with a focus on 1st and 3rd person singular and plural verb forms (all four conjugations are used)
- nouns in the nominative singular and plural, and accusative singular and plural (nouns used are from the 1st, 2nd and 3rd declensions) – the focus is on fully understanding the function of subject and direct object in a sentence
- adjectives in the nominative and accusative singular
- ablative of location
- throughout, sentence analysis is foregrounded (e.g. finding the subject, verb, direct object, prepositional phrase)

Level 2: Per Annum Latīne/ Through the Year in Latin

Students learn to understand and say sentences about their daily activities throughout the year. Not only will they learn to talk about seasons and weather in Latin, but also about what various family members do, wear, and eat throughout, and how some animals adapt to the changing seasons.

Students in this level learn...

- to recite four new prayers, four new bible verses, five new religious songs and hymns, while reviewing all Level 1 prayers and songs (optional components)
- to sing 12 new traditional children's songs and nursery rhymes, many of them with several stanzas, while reviewing those learned in Level 1

- to understand and say around 16 new “Gouin series” of approximately 6-8 sentences each (over 100 complete sentences)
- to understand and respond to questions about people’s daily activities throughout the seasons of the year (building from yes/no answers to increasingly long sentences)
- to describe dozens of beautiful works of art from Western and non-Western cultures
- to understand, act out and memorize parts of 7 new folk tales in Latin

Students in 3rd grade and up also learn explicit grammar:

- a review of Level 1 grammar plus:
- complete verb conjugations
- dative of indirect object
- genitive of possession
- new prepositions with ablative and accusative
- throughout, the focus is on increasing students’ understanding the function of subject, direct and indirect object and possessive nouns in a sentence

Teaching Materials for Levels 1 and 2:

- ❖ 3 or 4 **Teacher Guides** per Level (one per “theme” or unit)
- ❖ **individual picture books** that go with the lessons in the Teacher Guides (10 for Level 1; 7 for Level 2)
- ❖ Access to the **Teacher Resource Website** which includes:
 - **PPTs** for all Little Socratic Talks (a total of around 40)
 - **Audio files** for all lesson elements (in classical and ecclesiastical pronunciation)
 - Optional **quiz banks** (a total of ten, one roughly every 9 lessons)
 - **Links and external resources** (e.g., links to videos of all ASL signs and to the images for picture studies)
 - Additional **handouts** (e.g., for the Gouin Series “comic strip boxes” for Student illustrations, for additional games, image files with image props that can accompany the Gouin series if you don’t have physical props)

Optional but Highly Recommended:

- ❖ The **Teacher Resource Book** which includes all prayers, bible verses, song lyrics, Gouin series (in Latin and English) and the Readers Theater versions of most of our Level 1 picture books (as well as two additional bonus stories)
- ❖ The **Student Book** (meant for grades 3 and up):
 - Includes texts and translations of all songs, mini stories, the optional prayers, bible verses and hymns, and Reader’s Theater versions of most of the Level 1 picture books (like the Teacher Resource Book)
 - Also includes optional grammar and writing components for most of the lessons, starting in Theme 2
- ❖ We also recommend a good supply of **stuffed animals or animal puppets** to help you act out the Gouin series!

“Not one day goes by that I am not amazed by the joy that this curriculum is bringing to me and my students. Not a week goes by that I am not enthralled by how much Latin we are all learning. I say it all the time, but it bears repeating: this curriculum is amazing! I had no idea you could teach so much quality language to little kids in such a short amount of time!”

- Amy Carrillo, Latin teacher at St Joseph’s Catholic School, Killeen, TX

Level 3: Fābulae dē Bēstiīs et Hominibus/ Fables of Animals and Men

The fables in this level are organized around the following four broad themes/virtues: Friendship and Charity; Fortitude and Perseverance; Prudence; Justice and Honesty. Each of the four themes includes 3-4 fables. Level 3 is suitable from 2nd grade up through Middle School, for students who have had at least two years of input-rich Latin classes.

Students in this level learn...

- to recite four new prayers, eight new bible verses, five new religious songs and hymns, while reviewing Level 1 and 2 prayers and songs (optional components)
- to sing five new children’s songs, all of them with several stanzas, while reviewing songs from Level 1 & 2
- to understand and memorize 14 new “Gouin series” of approximately 8-10 sentences each, one for each of the fables
- to understand and respond to questions about the fable characters and events
- to describe and discuss many beautiful illustrations of those fables
- to understand, act out and, depending on their age, also practice reading longer dramatized versions of all 14 fables in interactive read-alouds or Readers Theater

Students in 3rd grade and up can also learn explicit grammar:

- Contextualized noun declension and verb conjugation drills
- Sentence analysis (parts of speech, cases)
- Introduction to the perfect tense
- Introduction to the imperfect tense
- Past tense versions of all Gouin series
- Introduction to present participles in nominative and accusative
- Adjective agreement
- Adsum / absum conjugation
- Prepositional phrases with accusative and ablative
- Placet/placent & dative
- accusative pronouns

- verb prefixes
- Introduction to Superlatives

Teaching Materials include:

- Fully scripted and planned out lessons for more than 14 fables, each taught over a series of 6 lessons, for a total of a 84 lessons
- Each fable is presented in 3 tiers, with illustrations, PPTs, and activities
- Each lesson incorporates a steady review of everything learned, already planned out
- Additional lesson elements include optional bible verses, Latin proverbs and quotes to memorize, songs, games, contextualized grammar drills and grammar and writing activities

Four Student Books (approx. 100 pages each)

- The Student Books in Level 3 include the texts of all fables with color illustrations, fable activities, and all grammar and writing activities.
- Student Books are not meant to be standalone resources; the main elements are still the Teacher Guide.

Additional Materials on the Website:

- PowerPoints for almost every lesson (including the complete texts of the fables with color illustrations)
- games and other activities, extra worksheets
- input rich, contextualized quizzes
- audio files in both classical and ecclesiastical Latin

Level 4: Roman Mythology is currently being created/piloted and not yet publicly available.

For more information, please read about [why we want students to study Latin](#), our [Pedagogical Principles](#), the idea of [comprehensible input](#) this curriculum is based on, why we include both [sheltered and unsheltered language](#), and get a glimpse of our [Curriculum in Action](#).