

Latin

Latin and the Classics are thriving at TCA. All 7th and 8th graders are required to study Latin, and the freshman class is required to read the Iliad of Homer. We easily have one of the largest Classics program in Colorado. But why, some families and students are asking, do we focus so much on Latin? Roman language and culture lies at the root of American values – the Romans pioneered Democracy as we know it. We can see how much Latin has influenced the philosophies and practices of our government – we put it on our currency, on our churches and universities, scholars use Latin in scientific names. Latin lives in our everyday effort to expand our vocabulary, and our cultural literacy is rich with mythology and history. Did you know, for example, that Volvo means "I roll" and that the word "venison" is derived from the Latin word "to hunt?" We focus on Latin here because we value the discipline of studying a foundational language, but also because we value the history, traditions, and character of the ancients.

The ideas we share about education, country, citizenship, and character all have roots in Latin and Roman culture. Knowledge of our history, our traditions, and our parent language is essential to understanding who we are. Learning Latin enables us to understand that our language has a history and a depth of meaning. Students see how the Latin prefix "in-" affects the meaning of the words "visible" and "invisible." They delight to re-discover words, like when they realize that the word "amateur" comes from the Latin word "to love" and so amateurs play for love of the game. Through Latin our students understand that there is logic to our language, an ordered system to these words and the way we speak. Moreover, learning Latin lays a foundation for learning other languages, since it is the basis of the modern languages, Italian, Spanish and French.

For students who choose to continue in our Latin program beyond Level I, our goal is to prepare them to read original Latin written by the most important Roman authors: Vergil, Cicero, Horace, Ovid, Caesar and Livy, to name a few. While we sometimes read their works in English, nothing compares to the satisfaction gained from the patience and discipline of translating the original Latin. The ideas and philosophies of these men are the foundation for our students' sense of patriotism, character, duty, and for developing their own identities. In short, by learning Latin and reading the words of the ancients, we are delving into our culture's record of its past, its failures and triumphs, by which we learn about and measure ourselves.