

PROVISIONAL



TEXTBOOK REVIEWS

Review of textbooks for the teaching of Latin

June 2015

GCSE, AS and A Level



**GCSE
REFORM
A LEVEL**

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This resource is an exemplar of the types of materials that will be provided to assist in the teaching of the new qualifications being developed for first teaching in 2016. It can be used to teach existing qualifications but may be updated in the future to reflect changes in the new qualifications. Please check the OCR website for updates and additional resources being released. We would welcome your feedback so please get in touch.

The following reviews were written by teachers from a variety of backgrounds and contexts all of whom have extensive experience in teaching Latin to a diverse range of learners. These reviews are not intended as official endorsements or an indication of OCR's preference for teaching materials, instead they are supposed to be a resource to help teachers make informed decisions about the textbooks they choose to use with their learners. All the opinions are those of the teachers and practitioners consulted, not OCR. These reviews and notes are targeted both at new teachers seeking to teach Latin for the first time, and also those who have been teaching for some time and are looking to update their resources. We hope you find them helpful.

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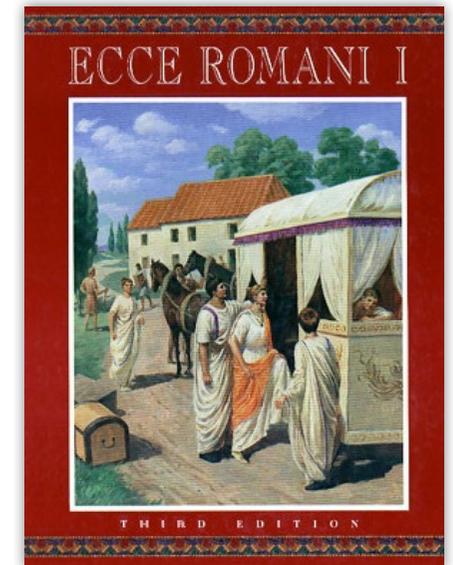
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Prentice Hall, *Ecce Romani!*

The non-linguistic sections of *Ecce Romani* can be used by those preparing for the GCSE 'Sources for Latin' paper and will be equally applicable to the equivalent GCSE (9–1) paper. The historical sections look at discrete topics such as housing, religion, entertainment, the Roman army and the water supply, and supplement very detailed and easy to understand explanations with primary source material in translation; often well selected and enjoyed by students. Students can easily work through these sections outside of class. The only issue for teachers is getting hold of a complete (or near-complete) collection. The Hellenic Book Service can often acquire second hand copies quite quickly.

In short, these are very useful and enjoyable resources for students. They are relevant and make use of key Roman terms in explanations. The sources selected to supplement the text are well chosen and often seem more memorable and accessible than some of the sources from the prescribed booklet.

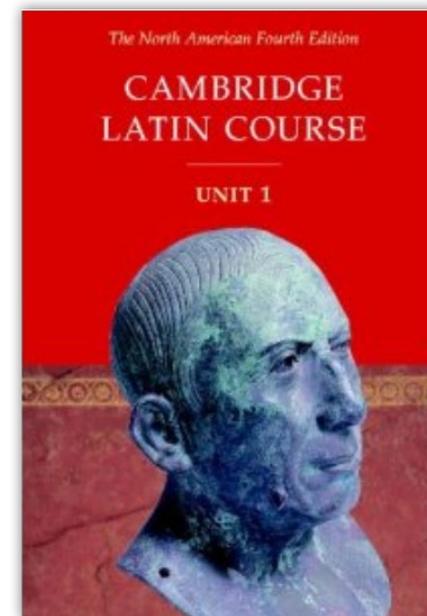


Cambridge Latin Course

Most schools teaching Latin make use of the Cambridge Latin Course and so obtaining copies should be no problem. It is a Latin course in five books, and is useful for teaching GCSE language. The course covers all the necessary grammar and syntax, but is essentially a reading course. The stories form an historical novel, and many students enjoy the development of character and plot. As with any long term series, however, some episodes are more successful than others!

The online support and e-learning resources available from CSCP also make this course worth investigating. However, some teachers do not like the order in which grammar is introduced (e.g. the ablative case in Book 3), and find that they have to supplement the course with their own grammatical explanations. Also, depending on time constraints, it may not be possible to complete the entire course, and many schools only get as far as Book 3/4. In this case, teachers would have to cover some constructions (e.g. indirect statement and ad+ gerundive) using other means. However, I would not be put off by this as the positives far outweigh the negatives.

The non-linguistic sections at the back of each stage also cover most of the topics on the 'Sources for Latin' specification and will also be helpful for its GCSE (9-1) successor. They can be studied by pupils outside of class and their content discussed in the next lesson. They provide lots of key information, making use of specific Roman terms on areas such as: dinner parties, occupations, the Roman army and entertainment.



L. A. Wilding, *Latin Course for Schools*

L.A. Wilding's *Latin Course for Schools*, published in 1949, will strike many as far too old fashioned to be of much use to today's Latin student. It has no overall story, no illustrations and no paralinguistic material. Its approach, focused on exercises and passages, is not very varied. Grammatical explanations are verbose, and the student is expected to assimilate a comparatively huge vocabulary (including some words quite rare in Classical Latin) at speed. However, it is my view that this course, one of few on the market to fully integrate prose composition from the beginning, and remains a good choice in certain circumstances.

Though not a compulsory element of GCSE Latin, the rigour of writing English into Latin from the outset has proven in my experience, teaching at an inner city comprehensive, to be exceptionally valuable to pupils. Through Wilding's exacting exercises, my pupils have rapidly developed a meticulous - even pedantic - interest in case endings, and have never fallen into the trap of hoping that attention to vocabulary and texts will compensate for a hazy awareness of inflections. In conjunction with Taylor's *Essential Latin GCSE* for revision, I have found volume I of Wilding's course to make a very good introduction to high-flying students. I have even used it successfully for the first year of teaching Latin from scratch to GCSE in two years.



AS and A Level Latin

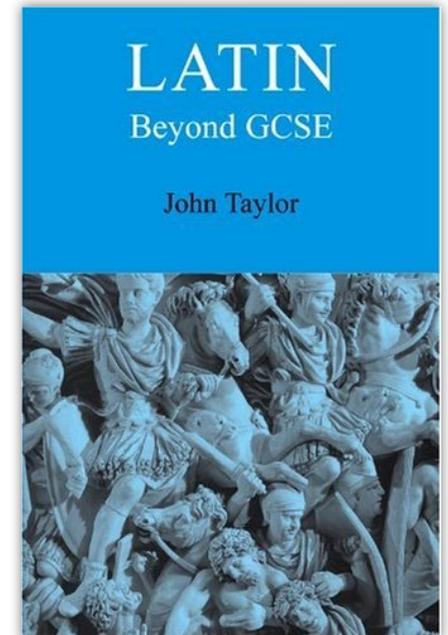
John Taylor, *Latin Beyond GCSE*

This book covers all of the content for the Latin AS language paper, as well as that for A Level verse and prose unseen translations. There are plenty of good exemplar sentences from Latin to English and vice versa, which test all of the constructions on the specification. Each construction is introduced with detailed but easy to understand explanations, followed by exercises which range from straightforward to quite tricky. The sentences and unseens are all supported by an English to Latin and Latin to English vocabulary at the back of the book, which allows students to attempt exercises outside of class readily.

This book really supports the teaching of verse unseens well with a chapter devoted to scansion and passages of Ovid to practise on. A very useful section of the chapter is the “250 common words for verse unseens”, based largely on Ovid (the prescribed unseen verse author).

Students will find the appendices ‘words easily confused’ and ‘important words with more than one meaning’ particularly useful in addressing some of the most common errors.

In short, this is a very useful resource both for students learning Latin on timetable and those who may have limited contact time. It can be used by students to work on the language outside of class as the explanations and layout are easy to understand and very user-friendly.



AS and A Level Latin

North and Hillard, *Prose Composition*

North and Hillard's Prose Composition books are an excellent, if old-fashioned, tool for those wishing to study the languages to an advanced level.

They include an explanation of every grammar point and construction as well as the irregularities that can be found within these. However, due to the often sparse descriptions found in it, it is best used as a teacher-led resource, with appropriate guidance and elucidation through supplementary materials. Also, they do not contain any accident lists, so books such as Kennedy's Latin Primer are necessary to compliment them.

These books really come into their own in the sheer exposure they give the pupil to the world of prose composition. There are hundreds of practice sentences within their pages, backed up with an impressive array of vocabulary to assist with translation. The vocabulary lists are not only tailored to each section, but help train the student in the various nuances of Latin idiom and, while the volume of words included may seem like overkill for an AS student, it is appropriate in preparing those studying A2 to tackle the prose composition elements of the paper.





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