

Latin 3a Latin Word Study Assignments for the Autumn Semester (keep this doc.)

What is a Word Study?

As you do your translations this semester, you'll find you must often fly through your vocabulary in a hasty attempt to get your translations done on time. If you are like the average Latin student, you'll often find yourself wondering about a word and how it came to mean what it did in Latin and then later in English (or French, Spanish, etc.). These assignments let you slow down and pick a few words for more careful examination.

An example in English: When I use the word '**vet**' in English, I might be referring to a doctor of animal medicine; I could also be talking about a person who fought in a war; or I might also may be ready to give somebody a critical appraisal, as in "the candidates were well vetted."



If I take my **Word Study** beyond mere definitions (as I must or WOW will the writing piece be boring), I would search for uses of the word in contemporary literature (written at a similar time that the ancient author lived) and theorize how and when each different meaning came into popular use based on living uses of the word in context. I might formulate theories and a rough timeline for how meanings for this three-letter word have evolved. I might find other words 'in the family' by spelling out any number

of cognates. Finally, I might conjecture that when certain authors (such as political columnists) use the term 'vet' it is more likely that they are referring to 'vet' as *the process of carefully inspecting somebody or something* rather than a veterinarian, a doctor who specializes in mammals, or a person who participated in military service.

If you choose an interesting word, you may have dozens of thought-provoking things to say about it. If, you choose a run-of-the-mill word like *femina* or *vir*, you may spend lots of time chasing verbal rabbits and writing a boring word study that no one wants to read.

The word study assignments this semester will expand your understanding of a single Latin word. Not wanting all of this knowledge to go to waste, **your study will also be shared with the rest of the class so that everyone enjoys expanded knowledge.**



Since half the challenge is finding an interesting word to study, I hope that this assignment will encourage you to learn how to use a few tools of the trade in the process.

How to pick a good Latin word

Rule #1: Be really picky!

The word may NOT be:

- A proper noun
- A function word (preposition, conjunction, pronoun)
- Painfully common, vague, or non-specific (like *puer* or *poeta* or *malus*)

You will have the best luck if the word is...

- Unusual, unique, interesting, controversial, historically important, impactful, odd...(get the idea?)
- Used more than once in Latin literature
- *Something that you looked up and pondered while translating your assigned passages.*

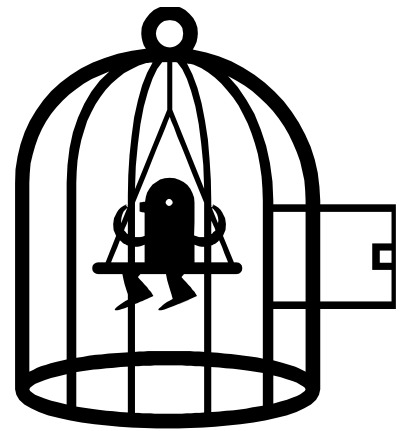
Don't be afraid to try a few words on for size (it might be a good idea to make a list of 5 or 6 and then narrow the list down as you do some preliminary study). It could take a couple of tries before you find a word that is interesting enough for a word study.

You are going to write a properly formatted word study essay once you choose your word. FOLLOW THE FORMATTING RULES OR BE PREPARED FOR Dr. Fisher's WRATH (and poor reviews).

What to do with your word once you have it selected

You will need to put this word through its paces if you want to produce an interesting and well researched word study. Here's your checklist:

1. Provide 1-3 (or more) uses of this word **in passages we have prepared** (choose your word from what you've read up to the week the word study is done or from the last word study). Quote the entire sentence in which the word appears in Latin. **Include your own carefully prepared translation of that passage. Don't forget to carefully cite where this passage is located (author, text, book/chapter and especially line number—look at the note on proper citation in the formatting rules below).**
 - a. Comment about the meaning of the word as it is used in the passage. Make sense of the word in context rather than explaining how a dictionary meaning is one size fits all (which it seldom is).



Rome was not 2D

Roman civilization was vast, complicated, creative, and three dimensional. The Romans were **not** a fictional civilization that live only in history books and Latin texts. Their society was every bit as complex as our own. Make sure you understand this fact when you start your research on Roman (Latin) words

- b. Include any reasons why you may or may not be able to refine and narrow the meaning due to its use in the passage.
 - c. Do your own thinking! A word study is NOT a discussion of a dictionary entry but of how the word seems to be working in context!
- 2. Provide 2 – 5 uses of this word by other authors. Quote the entire sentence or at least the clause in which the word appears in Latin. **Include your own carefully prepared translation of these passages, too.**
 - a. Don't be a cheapskate! Unless your word is truly rare, give us a full survey of uses of this word. For example, if a word means 'carry' and 'speak,' you should find circumstances in which the word is used each of these fairly unique ways (either by our author or his contemporaries).
 - b. Again, don't forget to carefully cite where this passage is located (author, text, book/chapter, line number—instructions will appear in the formatting rules below).
 - i. **I do NOT want a web link! I do NOT want the page number of your Latin reader. I want a proper citation from the original author/passage/source of the Latin.**
 - c. You should make well-reasoned comments about what the word means. This is best accomplished by analyzing the Latin at hand and using evidence from various other authors who lived around the same time.
- 3. In the end, define the word to the best of your ability based on your newly gleaned knowledge—again, this is not to be an apology for your dictionary but an examination of the word in action.
 - a. Based on how OUR author used this word and how others (preferably contemporaries) used this word, devise a definition and justify that definition (I'm not looking for a one word answer here—be skimpy at your own peril).
 - b. This is a great time to make observations about how the word's meaning has changed over time. Many words start out meaning something quite simple and, over time, gain quite a different meaning. **I also really like to see mention made of how the word survived in cognates of various languages, especially English.**
 - i. Keep in mind that many Latin words come from EARLIER languages like GREEK. It can sometimes be very helpful to dig a bit in time to see how the word has transformed itself.
- 4. Give us more:
 - a. Conclude your definitive word study with observations about the uses of this word that will be profitable, useful and interesting to your classmates. You **can** include information that other people (ex. scholarly sources but be sure to cite them). Make

sure that we, your avid readers, get a real feel for why all these highly selective authors used this word. Find INTERESTING things to say!

Things to Consider as you Research and Write

If a Latin word has many subtle meanings in ENGLISH, this is due to a deficit in the *English language* not a reality of fact in Latin. In other words, we English speakers just don't have the word that properly expresses that single complex notion that needs just one word in Latin. If you conclude that a certain Latin word can mean X, and it can mean Y, as well as Z in English, you should be aware that the LATIN remains unchanged as a single concept. English must sometimes work very hard to express a translation and will use a mountain of words to get the job done. There was no confusion about the Latin word in the mind of the Latin writers composing literature for a Latin audience.

Think about the word *habeo*. We say it means *have, hold, consider, think, reason; manage, keep; spend/pass (time)* in English. What did it mean in Latin? It didn't mean eight different things. It meant "have"! I have in hand, have in mind, have in time, have on hand, have as a result.

Sometimes it can be very informative to look at all the different ways we poor English-speaking fools have translated the word over the years. It is even more instructive, however, if you can come to understand a word's true core base meaning. This should be a part of your analyses and presentation.

Think: there is a difference between a word's translation and a word's meaning.

Be to look for your word's meaning.

One more thing:

This is a short research paper. Your tone should be *scholarly* ("scholarly" is NOT code for overly complicated, wordy, dull, or overly dependent on a thesaurus). Scholarly writing projects will present relevant data and explain the analytical steps taken to come to one's reasonable conclusions. Avoid writing a dictionary entry, an opinion essay, or a bland single-source report. An essay will be informal, casual, and opinionated. A report will read much like a dictionary entry. A report will also lack analysis of clues presented. It will be bare bones and barely readable unless one enjoys reading dictionaries. Work hard to present your analytical processes and present them in an interesting way.

*Cognates are useful! In any language verbs sometimes give birth to nouns, adjectives, etc. One language loans words to other languages. It is perfectly acceptable to look **at any and all cognates** (in Latin, Greek, and English, Swahili, Dutch) in your research and discussion. Here's a special hint: a great many Latin words come from Greek so it is a good idea to see what you can find in Greek first.*

When was the word used? As you cite examples of the word being used in your word study, please keep time in mind. Has English changed much since Shakespeare? Yes! So, don't mix and mingle evidence from 150 BC and 19 BC with something composed in 350 AD and expect them all to bear equal weight. Time may be a consideration in your analyses. Your examples should be presented in chronological order.

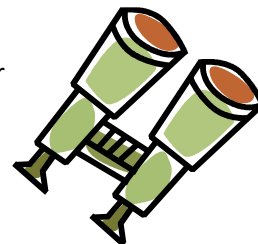
Example:

NOT analytical, this looks like a dictionary entry or report: *Habeo* means “I consider.”

Analytical! This is research! *Habeo* sometimes means “I have” based on examples A and B, and sometimes means “I consider” based on examples C and D. Taking into consideration various cognates (examples E and F) I conclude that *habeo* means at its core, “I have X” such as “I have” ...in hand, in mind, in time, on hand.

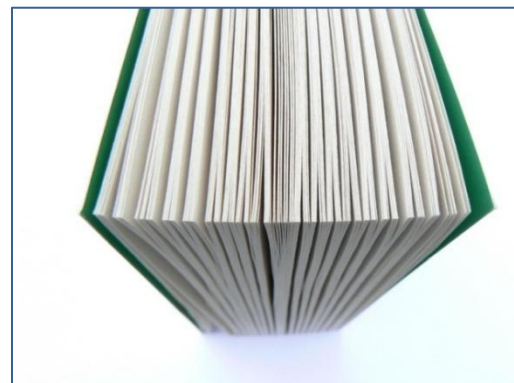
Where to find what you need to know:

A lovely source for fantastic Latin information is a paper Latin dictionary, the larger the better. If you have a *Cassell's* you will find a little survey about the use of a Latin word over time. Your local library might also have an **Oxford Latin Dictionary** (the BIG one...not the pocket size) which is a treasure trove. Call first, they may not have a copy in today's world of eTexts (and presume I'm thinking ill-thoughts about the quality of public libraries now-a-days).



A great source of information is just a click away on the computer:

The Perseus Digital Library: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/> (it includes the digital version of the 20 pound dictionary I used in graduate school by Lewis and Short). Learning how to navigate Perseus is ever challenging so please notice that there is a link to see a brief tutorial at the top of the link I've provided. Start with the specific text in which you originally find the word then expand your word study from there. Tenacity is key to using Perseus because, alas, it was built by academics, not computer specialists. On the bright side, there's a wealth of information in it if you are brave enough to find it.



Other online goodies:

<http://www.latin-dictionary.net/q/latin/.html>

What are the specific assignments this semester?

I'm terribly glad you asked. Below are the author/passage constraints for each Word Study:

1. **Word Study #1** due by 7 PM ET on Tuesday, September 30
 - a. Select a word that appears in the assignments from weeks 1-6
2. **Word Study #2** due by 7 PM ET on Tuesday, October 28
 - a. Select a word that appears in the assignments from weeks 7-10

Tone and method:

- This is a research assignment. Don't be too colloquial or conversational. Take an authoritative tone as you persuasively present your data and prove your case. **You will be evaluated by your peers based on how well you accomplish this task. Edit carefully to avoid errors.**

Formatting LAWS:

Learn to use your word processing program effectively. Most of these formatting laws can be set for the entire document. For example, line spacing is the amount of space between lines of text and not between words. Set the spacing for the entire document (do not manually hit return...as if you could accomplish this by hitting the return button...which you can't).

OBEY the following formatting RULES. I REMOVE points from those who ignore these laws.

1. Times New Roman font (*only*)
2. 11 pt. Font (*not 12 nor 10*)
3. LINE spacing 1.15 (*this is not a typo for 1.5, folks*)
4. **Remove ALL extra spaces before/after paragraphs which your MS Word program will wish to add automatically** (learn how to do this on your computer)
5. 5-space indentation at the beginning of paragraphs (usually automatic when you press “tab” — don’t hit tab twice or adjust your tab so that it is more than 5 spaces)
6. All Latin words should be presented in italics
7. All passages should include a citation in text after the last word in the sentence but before the period like this (Vergil, *Aeneid* 4. 567-8).
 - a. **Do not use footnotes or endnotes ever for any reason or your submission will be rejected.**
 - b. **When citing a passage from your reading, kindly do not give me the page number of your reader, nor web links to Perseus or an online dictionary: find the actual location of the passage in the actual Latin text.**
 - c. Ancient passages are cited a bit like the Bible, with which many of you are familiar. For example, you may know the citation John 3:16. This citation refers not only to the author but also the “book” of the Bible by the same name. The 3:16 refers to the chapter and the verse. Your citations will look similar except please separate the “chapter” number — also sometimes known as the “book” — with a period instead of a colon so that it looks like this (*John* 3.16).
 - d. Citations should be **IN TEXT** and be located between these things: ()
 - i. First, provide the author’s (last only) name — Vergil
 - ii. Second, provide the abbreviated text name—*Aeneid* (*put the title in italics like this because book titles are meant to be in italics.*)
 - iii. Third, provide the book number/paragraph number (if applicable)—4
 - iv. Fourth, provide the line number ranges—567-8
 - v. It should now look like this: (Vergil, *Aeneid* 4.567-8). (NOTE: the citation goes before the period).
 - vi. **There is no need for quotation marks for either the Latin or the English.**
8. Give your word study a title—preferably an interesting one.
9. Tuck your name and the date safely in the upper right corner of the text.
10. If you provide a Works Cited list, put the list **directly under the last paragraph of your essay or I will leave it off the peer compilation** (do not put it on the next page unless it directly follows the end of the essay—I will otherwise leave it off the compilation)
11. SAVE the project as .doc or .docx ONLY [This is not code for “send me whatever you wish” nor send me a link to an open source cloud file. If you don’t know how to hit ‘SAVE AS’ on your word processing product and choose “.docx,” please find a techie person who does. Please be certain that your assignment is turned in as an attached document ONLY.]

These laws apply to all word studies turned in for third year Latin.

Finally, SAVE your document as: YOUR LAST NAME_YOUR FIRST NAME_WS# (use the correct NUMBER, 1-3) for example: Fisher_Sue_ws1 or Fisher_Sue_ws2, etc. Attach your word study document (.doc or .docx) to an email and send it to me on time: sfisher@lukeion.org

- Word studies are most effectively completed using between 500-1000 words. IF your study is fewer than 500 words, please be certain that they are most excellent words indeed.
- If you quote a long section of poetry, it should be added to your text with line breaks followed immediately by the translation. The whole thing should look like this:

Arma virumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris / Italiam, fato profugus, Laviniaque venit / litora, multum ille et terris iactatus et alto / vi superum saevae memorem Iunonis ob iram; / multa quoque et bello passus, dum conderet urbem, / inferretque deos Latio, genus unde Latinum, / Albanique patres, atque altae moenia Romae. I sing of arms and of the man who first [as] an exile from the shores of Troy, because of fate, came to Italy and the Lavinian shores; that man [having been] tossed about much both on land and at sea by the power of the gods, on account of the unforgetting anger of cruel Juno, and having endured many things also in war, until he could found a city and bring [his] gods into Latium; whence came the Latin people, the Alban fathers and the walls of lofty Rome (Aeneid 1.1-7).

Likewise, if you quote a bit of prose, follow it immediately with your translation and citation like this:

Nam et navium figura et remorum motu et inusitato genere tormentorum permoti barbari constiterunt ac paulum modo pedem rettulerunt, for the barbarians being startled by the form of our ships and the motions of our oars and the nature of our engines, which was strange to them, stopped, and shortly after retreated a little (Caesar *de Bello Gallico* 4.25.7-8).

1. In general, avoid any formatting that is not the typical paragraph format of a normal essay. Bullet points, lists, run-on sentences, lengthy poetry quotes that take up a pile of room, etc., will normally be deflated so the essay fits into the compilation better.
2. When in doubt, remember we are trying to combine a great many pages into a long document.
3. Anything that gratuitously adds to the length of that document must be streamlined for publication for your peers. **Kindly save your instructor the trouble of reformatting by keeping things streamlined for yourselves.**

All Word Studies will be Peer Reviewed

These assignments offer an excellent opportunity for each of you to expand your vocabulary considerably. After the word studies are turned in, I'll publish them to you in a packet for you to read online or print (as you wish). You'll then assign a score for each of your peer's word studies and leave a comment about what you liked and what should be improved. **This scoring will all be done through a survey that I post online.** The link will be available on the packet of word studies that I'll post on your class page. It may take you an hour+ to read the word studies and leave a comment *so plan accordingly!* **Your evaluation of others is PART of your own word study grade. There will be a deduction if you**

don't contribute to the peer review on schedule. Peer reviews is not a way for Dr. Fisher to get out of work. On the contrary, this is a MUCH more labor-intensive way for me to grade!

Grumbly grumblers who grumble should be aware that my experience proves the efficacy of this approach for multiple skills acquisition. *Translation: trust me, this works.*

The Word Studies will be compiled and published to your class page within a few days after they were due. There will be a link to an online survey and instructions for completing your peer reviews on each compilation.

Peer Reviews for Word Study 1 are due by 7:00 pm ET October 14

Peer Reviews for Word Study 2 are due by 7:00 pm ET November 11